Participation Quiz

• A wizard has two boxes. One is opaque, and one is clear.
• The clear box contains $1000.
• The wizard offers you a choice:
  A. Take an opaque box only.
  B. Take the opaque box AND the clear box.
• Before he made the offer, the wizard predicted what you would choose, and filled the opaque box like this:
  • Predicted one box: put $1,000,000 into the opaque box.
  • Predicted two boxes: put nothing into the opaque box.
• The wizard is very good at predicting what people will do.
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  • Predicted two boxes: put nothing into the opaque box.
• The wizard is very good at predicting what people will do.
• Should you take one box, or two?
  A. Opaque box only
  B. Both boxes
  C. Flip a coin
In today’s class:

1. Recap the four ethical theories from the readings.
2. Think about an ethical dilemma.
3. Take the ethical theories for a test drive.
Subjective Relativism

Who are you to criticize my values?

- There’s no universal standard of right or wrong.
- Every individual must decide for himself or herself.
Who are you to criticize my culture’s values?

- Moral actions are based on a culture’s actual moral guidelines.
- Different cultures have different moral standards.
- It is presumptuous to judge another culture’s values.
Stealing is wrong, because the Bible says so.

- Good actions are actions that God has willed.
- We should therefore use holy books as guides for moral decision making.
Ethical Egoism

Surly looks out for one guy: Surly!

- People’s self-interest is their only ethical obligation.
- Morally right actions are those which advance one’s own long-term interests.
- Helping others is moral only insofar as it advances one’s own interests.
Scenario: Intellectual Property

- A software company has created a financial management program.
- The program stores extremely sensitive financial data about the user on the user’s hard drive.
- The program is very popular, and widely pirated.
- During an automatic software update, the company installs a back door that deletes the data of users that are running a pirated copy.
  - Only pirates have their data wiped; no user of a legal copy loses any data.

Has the company behaved unethically?

A. The company behaved unethically
B. The company has not behaved unethically
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Scenario Variations

Would your answer be different if:

- The program was for managing photos instead of finances?
Scenario Variations

Would your answer be different if:

- The program was for managing photos instead of finances?
- The data was stored on the company’s servers instead of the user’s hard drive?
Scenario Variations

Would your answer be different if:

- The program was for managing photos instead of finances?
- The data was stored on the company’s servers instead of the user’s hard drive?
- The back door existed from the beginning instead of being installed with an update?
Scenario Variations

Would your answer be different if:

- The program was for managing photos instead of finances?
- The data was stored on the company’s servers instead of the user’s hard drive?
- The back door existed from the beginning instead of being installed with an update?
- The back door was disclosed in an End User Licensing Agreement?
Scenario Variations

Would your answer be different if:

- The program was for managing photos instead of finances?
- The data was stored on the company’s servers instead of the user’s hard drive?
- The back door existed from the beginning instead of being installed with an update?
- The back door was disclosed in an End User Licensing Agreement?
  - (that nobody ever reads)
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

1. Groups of 4
   - Person A, B, C, D by alphabetical order

2. Person A: Argue using subjective relativism [5 min]

3. Group: Critique Person A’s argument [5 min]

4. Person B: Argue using cultural relativism [5 min]

5. Group: Critique Person B’s argument [5 min]

6. Person C: Argue using divine command theory [5 min]

7. Group: Critique Person C’s argument [5 min]

8. Person D: Argue using ethical egoism [5 min]

9. Group: Critique Person D’s argument [5 min]

10. Report back
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

1. Groups of 4
   - Person A, B, C, D by alphabetical order
Try to persuade the other members of your group:

2. Person A: Argue using **subjective relativism** [5 min]
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

3. Group: Critique Person A’s argument [5 min]
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

4. Person B: Argue using cultural relativism [5 min]
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

5. Group: Critique Person B’s argument [5 min]
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

6. Person C: Argue using *divine command theory* [5 min]
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

1. Groups of 4
   • Person A, B, C, D by alphabetical order

2. Person A: Argue using subjective relativism [5 min]
3. Group: Critique Person A’s argument [5 min]

4. Person B: Argue using cultural relativism [5 min]
5. Group: Critique Person B’s argument [5 min]

6. Person C: Argue using divine command theory [5 min]
7. Group: Critique Person C’s argument [5 min]

8. Person D: Argue using ethical egoism [5 min]
9. Group: Critique Person D’s argument [5 min]

10. Report back
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

8. Person D: Argue using ethical egoism [5 min]
Persuasion Exercise

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

9. Group: Critique Person D’s argument [5 min]
**Persuasion Exercise**

Try to persuade the other members of your group:

1. Groups of 4
   - Person A, B, C, D by alphabetical order
2. Person A: Argue using subjective relativism [5 min]
3. Group: Critique Person A's argument [5 min]
4. Person B: Argue using cultural relativism [5 min]
5. Group: Critique Person B's argument [5 min]
6. Person C: Argue using divine command theory [5 min]
7. Group: Critique Person C's argument [5 min]
8. Person D: Argue using ethical egoism [5 min]
9. Group: Critique Person D's argument [5 min]
10. Report back
Discussion

• What was most convincing about the different arguments?
• What was least convincing?
• Was there a critique that applied to all of the theories?