

## CONTENTS

Preface xvi

New to the Fifth Edition xvii

Instructor's Manual and Companion Website xvii

A Note on the Companion Volume xviii

Acknowledgments xix

### INTRODUCTION 1

The Lay of the Land 1

Doubts about Ethics 3

Ethical Starting Points 5

What Is Morality? 7

Moral Reasoning 9

The Role of Moral Theory 15

Looking Ahead 17

Discussion Questions 19

### PART ONE

## The Good Life

### CHAPTER 1 Hedonism: Its Powerful Appeal 23

Happiness and Intrinsic Value 23

The Attractions of Hedonism 25

*There Are Many Models of a Good Life* 26

*Personal Authority and Well-Being* 27

*Misery Clearly Hampers a Good Life; Happiness Clearly*

*Improves It* 27

<i>The Limits of Explanation</i>	28
<i>Rules of the Good Life—and Their Exceptions</i>	28
<i>Happiness Is What We Want for Our Loved Ones</i>	29
Discussion Questions	31
<b>CHAPTER 2 Is Happiness All that Matters?</b>	32
The Paradox of Hedonism	32
Evil Pleasures	34
False Happiness	35
The Importance of Autonomy	36
Life's Trajectory	38
Unhappiness as a Symptom of Harm	39
Conclusion	41
Discussion Questions	41
<b>CHAPTER 3 Getting What You Want</b>	43
A Variety of Good Lives	44
Personal Authority	44
Avoiding Objective Values	45
Motivation	46
Justifying the Pursuit of Self-Interest	47
Knowledge of the Good	48
Discussion Questions	49
<b>CHAPTER 4 Problems for the Desire Theory</b>	50
Getting What You Want May Not Be Necessary for Promoting Your Good	50
Getting What You Want May Not Be Sufficient for Promoting Your Good	51
<i>Desires Based on False Beliefs</i>	51
<i>Disinterested and Other-Regarding Desires</i>	52
<i>Disappointment</i>	53
<i>Ignorance of Desire Satisfaction</i>	54
<i>Impoverished Desires</i>	54
<i>The Paradox of Self-Harm and Self-Sacrifice</i>	55
<i>The Fallibility of Our Deepest Desires</i>	56
Conclusion	57
Discussion Questions	59
Cases for Critical Reflection	59



## PART TWO

## Normative Ethics: Doing the Right Thing

## CHAPTER 5 Morality and Religion 65

First Assumption: Religious Belief Is Needed for Moral

Motivation 66

Second Assumption: God Is the Creator of Morality 68

Third Assumption: Religion Is an Essential Source of Moral

Guidance 72

Conclusion 75

Discussion Questions 76

## CHAPTER 6 Natural Law 77

The Theory and Its Attractions 77

Three Conceptions of Human Nature 79

*Human Nature as Animal Nature* 80*Human Nature Is What Is Innate* 80*Human Nature Is What All Humans Have in Common* 81

Natural Purposes 82

The Argument from Humanity 86

Conclusion 88

Discussion Questions 89

Cases for Critical Reflection 89

## CHAPTER 7 Psychological Egoism 93

Egoism and Altruism 93

Does It Matter Whether Psychological Egoism Is True? 96

The Argument from Our Strongest Desires 97

The Argument from Expected Benefit 99

Two Egoistic Strategies 101

*Appealing to the Guilty Conscience* 102*Expanding the Realm of Self-Interest* 102

Letting the Evidence Decide 103

Conclusion 106

Discussion Questions 107

## CHAPTER 8 Ethical Egoism 109

Why Be Moral? 110

Two Popular Arguments for Ethical Egoism 112

*The Self-Reliance Argument* 113

<i>The Libertarian Argument</i>	114
The Best Argument for Ethical Egoism	115
Three Problems for Ethical Egoism	117
<i>Egoism Violates Core Moral Beliefs</i>	117
<i>Egoism Cannot Allow for the Existence of Moral Rights</i>	117
<i>Egoism Arbitrarily Makes My Interests All-Important</i>	119
Conclusion	120
Discussion Questions	121
Cases for Critical Reflection	121

## CHAPTER 9 Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions 124

The Nature of Consequentialism	126
<i>Its Structure</i>	126
<i>Maximizing Goodness</i>	127
<i>Moral Knowledge</i>	128
<i>Actual Versus Expected Results</i>	129
<i>Assessing Actions and Intentions</i>	130
The Attractions of Utilitarianism	131
<i>Impartiality</i>	131
<i>The Ability to Justify Conventional Moral Wisdom</i>	132
<i>Conflict Resolution</i>	133
<i>Moral Flexibility</i>	134
The Scope of the Moral Community	135
Slippery Slope Arguments	139
Discussion Questions	142

## CHAPTER 10 Consequentialism: Its Difficulties 143

Measuring Well-Being	143
Utilitarianism Is Very Demanding	147
<i>Deliberation</i>	147
<i>Motivation</i>	148
<i>Action</i>	149
Impartiality	151
No Intrinsic Wrongness (or Rightness)	153
The Problem of Injustice	155
Potential Solutions to the Problem of Injustice	156
<i>Justice Is Also Intrinsically Valuable</i>	157
<i>Injustice Is Never Optimific</i>	158
<i>Justice Must Sometimes Be Sacrificed</i>	158



Rule Consequentialism	159
Conclusion	162
Discussion Questions	163
Cases for Critical Reflection	163

## CHAPTER 11 The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice 167

Consistency and Fairness	168
The Principle of Universalizability	170
Morality and Rationality	173
Assessing the Principle of Universalizability	177
Integrity	178
Kant on Absolute Moral Duties	179
Discussion Questions	180

## CHAPTER 12 The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy, Free Will, and Respect 182

The Principle of Humanity	183
The Importance of Rationality and Autonomy	185
The Problem of Free Will	187
Four Problems with the Principle of Humanity	190
<i>Vagueness</i>	190
<i>Determining Just Deserts</i>	191
<i>Moral Luck</i>	193
<i>The Scope of the Moral Community</i>	194
The Good Will and Moral Worth	196
Conclusion	199
Discussion Questions	200
Cases for Critical Reflection	201

## CHAPTER 13 The Social Contract Tradition: The Theory and Its Attractions 204

The Lure of Proceduralism	204
The Background of the Social Contract Theory	205
The Prisoner's Dilemma	206
Cooperation and the State of Nature	209
The Advantages of Contractarianism	210
<i>Morality Is Essentially a Social Phenomenon</i>	210
<i>Contractarianism Explains and Justifies the Content of the Basic Moral Rules</i>	211

<i>Contractarianism Offers a Method for Justifying Every Moral Rule</i>	212
<i>Contractarianism Explains the Objectivity of Morality</i>	212
<i>Contractarianism Explains Why It Is Sometimes Acceptable to Break the Moral Rules</i>	213
More Advantages: Morality and the Law	213
<i>Contractarianism Justifies a Basic Moral Duty to Obey the Law</i>	213
<i>The Contractarian Justification of Legal Punishment</i>	214
<i>Contractarianism Justifies the State's Role in Criminal Law</i>	215
<i>Contractarianism and Civil Disobedience</i>	215
Discussion Questions	216

## CHAPTER 14 The Social Contract Tradition: Problems and Prospects 218

Why Be Moral?	218
The Role of Consent	222
Disagreement among the Contractors	224
The Scope of the Moral Community	226
Conclusion	229
Discussion Questions	229
Cases for Critical Reflection	230

## CHAPTER 15 Ethical Pluralism and Absolute Moral Rules 233

The Structure of Moral Theories	233
Is Torture Always Immoral?	234
Preventing Catastrophes	235
The Doctrine of Double Effect	237
<i>A Reply to the Argument from Disaster Prevention</i>	238
<i>How the DDE Threatens Act Consequentialism</i>	239
<i>Distinguishing Intention from Foresight</i>	239
Moral Conflict and Contradiction	241
Is Moral Absolutism Irrational?	242
The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing	244
Conclusion	248
Discussion Questions	249
Cases for Critical Reflection	249



## CHAPTER 16 Ethical Pluralism: Prima Facie Duties and Ethical Particularism 252

- Ross's Ethic of Prima Facie Duties 252
- The Advantages of Ross's View 254
  - Pluralism* 254
  - We Are Sometimes Permitted to Break the Moral Rules* 254
  - Moral Conflict* 255
  - Moral Regret* 255
  - Addressing the Anti-Absolutist Arguments* 256
- A Problem for Ross's View 257
- Knowing the Fundamental Moral Rules 258
- Self-Evidence and the Testing of Moral Theories 259
- Knowing the Right Thing to Do 261
- Ethical Particularism 262
- Three Problems for Ethical Particularism 264
  - Its Lack of Unity* 264
  - Accounting for Moral Knowledge* 265
  - Some Things Possess Permanent Moral Importance* 266
- Conclusion 267
- Discussion Questions 268
- Cases for Critical Reflection 269

## CHAPTER 17 Virtue Ethics 272

- The Standard of Right Action 273
- Moral Complexity 274
- Moral Understanding 275
- Moral Education 277
- The Nature of Virtue 278
- Virtue and the Good Life 280
- Objections 282
  - Tragic Dilemmas* 282
  - Does Virtue Ethics Offer Adequate Moral Guidance?* 284
  - Is Virtue Ethics Too Demanding?* 285
  - Who Are the Moral Role Models?* 286
  - Conflict and Contradiction* 287
  - The Priority Problem* 288
- Conclusion 290
- Discussion Questions 291
- Cases for Critical Reflection 291

<b>CHAPTER 18 Feminist Ethics</b>	295
The Elements of Feminist Ethics	295
Moral Development	297
Women's Experience	298
The Ethics of Care	301
<i>The Importance of Emotions</i>	302
<i>Against Unification</i>	303
<i>Against Impartiality and Abstraction</i>	304
<i>Against Competition</i>	305
<i>Downplaying Rights</i>	305
Challenges for Feminist Ethics	306
Conclusion	308
Discussion Questions	309
Cases for Critical Reflection	309

### PART THREE

## Metaethics: The Status of Morality

<b>CHAPTER 19 Ethical Relativism</b>	315
Doubts about Objective Morality	315
Two Kinds of Ethical Relativism	317
Some Implications of Ethical Subjectivism and Cultural Relativism	318
<i>Moral Infallibility</i>	318
<i>Moral Equivalence</i>	320
<i>Questioning Our Own Commitments</i>	321
<i>Moral Progress</i>	321
<i>Ethical Subjectivism and the Problem of Contradiction</i>	322
<i>Cultural Relativism and the Problem of Contradiction</i>	324
Ideal Observers	327
Conclusion	331
Discussion Questions	331

<b>CHAPTER 20 Moral Nihilism</b>	332
Error Theory	333
Expressivism	338
<i>How Is It Possible to Argue Logically about Morality?</i>	340
<i>Expressivism and Amoralists</i>	341
<i>The Nature of Moral Judgment</i>	342



Conclusion	343
Discussion Questions	345

## CHAPTER 21 Eleven Arguments Against

### Moral Objectivity 346

Objectivity Requires Absolutism	347
All Truth Is Subjective	348
Equal Rights Imply Equal Plausibility	348
Moral Objectivity Supports Dogmatism	350
Moral Objectivity Supports Intolerance	351
Moral Objectivity Cannot Allow for Legitimate Cultural Variation	352
Moral Disagreement Undermines Moral Objectivity	354
Atheism Undermines Moral Objectivity	355
The Absence of Categorical Reasons Undermines Moral Objectivity	357
Moral Motivation Undermines Moral Objectivity	358
Values Have No Place in a Scientific World	361
Conclusion	364
Discussion Questions	364

## CHAPTER 22 Is Moral Knowledge Possible?: Five

### Skeptical Arguments 366

The Skeptical Argument from Disagreement	366
Certainty	367
Who's to Say?	368
Irrelevant Influences	370
Hume's Argument	372
Conclusion	375

Glossary G-1

References R-1

Suggestions for Further Reading FR-1

Index I-1