

an overview of ethics

core areas of ethics

1. **Normative ethics**—the attempt to discover a criterion of morally right behavior.
2. Axiology (aka "theory of value")—the attempt to discover a criterion of good and evil.
3. Virtue/Vice Theory—the attempt to discover criteria of excellence and deficiency of character.

other areas of ethics

1. The semantics of ethics—the attempt to discover the meanings of the central concepts of the core areas of ethics.
2. The logic of ethics—the attempt to discover the logic of the central concepts of normative ethics and axiology.
3. The epistemology of ethics—the attempt to discover if and how we have knowledge of moral facts.
4. Moral psychology
5. **Applied ethics**—a branch of ethics which attempts to apply normative ethical theories, e.g. utilitarianism, to real world dilemmas. Examples of areas of applied ethics include medical ethics, legal ethics, environmental ethics, computer ethics, corporate social responsibility, or business ethics.
6. Moralizing
7. History of ethics

some ethics-related terms and definitions

An **act type** is a repeatable kind of action; something that can be performed by different people at different times and places.

An **act token** is a non-repeatable concrete individual action; something that is performed by just one person (the "agent"), on one occasion, and in one place.

An act token is **morally right** if and only if it is permissible, OK, allowed, possible to do, "all right", acceptable from the point of view of morality.

D1. An act token, x, is **morally wrong** =df. it would not be morally right to perform x.

D2. An act token, x, is **morally obligatory** =df. it would not be morally right to fail to perform x.

D3. C is a **criterion of morally right action** =df. C is a non-trivial, interesting statement of this form: S: An act token, A, is morally right if and only if ____A____.