Philosophy 1100: Ethics

Topic 1 - Course Introduction:
1. What is Philosophy?
2. What is Ethics?
3. Logic
   a. Truth
   b. Arguments
   c. Validity
   d. Soundness

What is Philosophy?

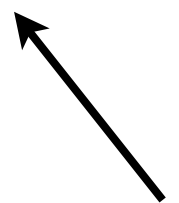The Three Fundamental Questions of Philosophy:

- What is there? (Metaphysics)

- What should I do? (Ethics)

- How can I know? (Epistemology)

the fourth main branch → (Logic)

The three main branches of philosophy

What is Philosophy?

(there are actually many more specific subfields of philosophy as well ...)

feminist philosophy

philosophy of mind

philosophy of action

philosophy of language

philosophy of law

philosophy of science

philosophy of time

philosophy of race

philosophy of mathematics

philosophy of religion

What is Ethics?

The Three Main Areas of Ethics:

- <u>Metaethics</u> - the attempt to discover
  (i) the meaning of moral claims
  (ii) the nature of moral facts
  (iii) how we can know moral facts.

- <u>Normative Ethics</u> - the attempt to discover the correct moral principles.

- <u>Practical Ethics</u> - the attempt to discover the answers to certain specific moral questions.

our class
is on
these two

Logic

Logic is the study of correct reasoning.

In logic, we try to separate the good bits of reasoning (also called *inferences*, or *arguments*), from the bad bits.

Some concepts from logic that we'll be introducing: statement, truth, argument, validity, soundness.

Statements

A **statement** is a sentence that describes the world as being a certain way.

Statements are either <u>true</u> or <u>false</u>.

Statements

Some examples of statements:

'The Earth is round.'
'The Earth is flat.'
'God exists.'
'I hope that God exists.'
'Abortion is wrong.'
'Some people believe that abortion is wrong.'

Statements

Some examples of sentences that are <u>not</u> statements:

    'What time is it?'
    'Close the door, please.'
    'Yay Tulo!'

(notice that none of these is either true or false)

Truth

A statement is **true** when the world actually is the way the statement says the world is.

For example:

The statement 'The Earth is round' is true just in case the Earth actually is round.

Arguments

An **argument** is a sequence of statements, the last of which (the conclusion) is supposed to follow from the others (the premises).

Sample argument #1:

P1. All men are mortal.

P2. Socrates is a man.

C. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Sample argument #2:

P1. A fetus is a person.

P2. If a fetus is a person, then abortion is wrong.

C. Therefore, abortion is wrong.

Validity

A **valid** argument is one with the following property: <u>if</u> all of its premises are true, then its conclusion must also be true.

In other words:
an argument is valid when it is impossible for its premises to be true and its conclusion false.

A valid argument does not require that any of the premises or the conclusion actually be true!

Validity

Validity Exercises:

<u>Sample argument #1</u>:
P1. All men are mortal.
P2. Socrates is a man.
C. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

(VALID)   or   INVALID   ?

Validity

Validity Exercises:

Sample argument #3:
P1. All men are mortal.
P2. Socrates is not a man.
C. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

VALID   or   INVALID   ?

Validity

Validity Exercises:

Sample argument #4:
P1. All men are mortal.
P2. Socrates is <u>not</u> a man.
C. Therefore, Socrates is <u>not</u> mortal.

VALID   or   INVALID   ?

Validity

Validity Exercises:

Sample argument #2:
P1. A fetus is a person.
P2. If a fetus is a person, then abortion is wrong.
C. Therefore, abortion is wrong.

VALID   or   INVALID   ?

Validity

Validity Exercises:

Sample argument #5:
P1. If a fetus is a person, then abortion is wrong.
P2. A fetus is <u>not</u> a person.
C. Therefore, abortion is <u>not</u> wrong.

VALID   or   INVALID   ?

Validity

Some common valid argument forms:

Modus Ponens
P1. P
P2. If P, then Q.
C. Therefore, Q.

Modus Tollens
P1. If P, then Q.
P2. not-Q
C. Therefore, not-P.

Hypothetical Syllogism
P1. If P, then Q.
P2. If Q, then R.
C. Therefore, if P, then R.

Multiple Modus Ponens
P1. P
P2. If P, then Q.
P3. If Q, then R.
C. Therefore, R.

Multiple Modus Tollens
P1. If P, then Q.
P2. If Q, then R.
P3. not-R
C. Therefore, not-P.

Categorical Syllogism
P1. All A's are B.
P2. x is an A.
C. Therefore, x is B.

Soundness

An argument is **sound** when
(i) it is valid, and
(ii) all of its premises are true.

So ...
- all sound arguments are valid, but not all valid arguments are sound
- it's much easier for an argument to be valid than it is for it to be sound
- if we see that an argument is sound, we must accept its conclusion.

Soundness

Some sound arguments:

Sample argument #1:
P1. All men are mortal.
P2. Socrates is a man.
C. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.   SOUND

Sample argument #6:
P1. Either Heathwood lives in Denver or he lives in Boulder.
P2. Heathwood does not live in Denver.
C. Therefore, Heathwood lives in Boulder.   SOUND

Logic

Let's keep the terminology straight ...

It is <u>statements</u> that can be <u>true</u> or <u>false</u>.

It is <u>arguments</u> that can be <u>valid</u> or <u>invalid</u>, <u>sound</u> or <u>unsound</u>.

There is no such thing as a "true argument"!