I. Administrative
   A. Roll
   B. Extra credit lectures
   C. Standard Form Exercise – questions?
   D. Schedule review
   E. Questions?

II. MCE’s

III. Ethics and Morality
   A. What Ethics Is
      1. Philosophical thinking about morality. The discipline involves:
         a. Systematic reflection on moral concepts in an attempt to construct theories that explain and justify moral phenomena, and
         b. Application of these general theories to particular situations.
      2. “Philosophical thinking” here consists primarily in conceptual analysis. As we have seen, this involves determining the meanings and applications of our concepts. In assessing meaning, they concern themselves with what is possible, and so distinguish themselves from scientists and others who are primarily concerned with what is actual.
3. Moral phenomena include many types of things—e.g., problems, judgments, rules, laws— but the focus is primarily on human action, where this includes inner actions (e.g., moral reasoning and judgment) and outer actions. (Question: can it apply to behaviors that are not actions?)

B. What Ethics Isn’t

1. Philosophical ethics combines an interest in getting morality right, i.e., in explaining moral phenomena, with an interest in determining how we should act. The latter follows from an application of the former to particular cases. So it is both descriptive and normative.

2. An interest in moral phenomena does not make something ethics in the sense meant here. There are two different ways to diverge from this discipline:

   a. Descriptive Only: We can study moral phenomena, e.g., moral institutions, judgments, reactions, etc., as they are realized in the world with a view to describing them properly. If we do this, we operate as scientists. If we do this, we are anthropologists or sociologists or psychologists. Philosophers need to be sensitive to the results of these studies, but their concerns are more abstract and general.

   b. Normative Only: If we are only interested in moral phenomena because we are interested in shaping character—that is, in determining how to act—then we operate as moralists, counselors, or ministers. Philosophical ethics is not religion.

C. The Value of Philosophical Ethics

1. Most of us hold a hodge-podge of moral principles, applied somewhat unsystematically. The study of philosophical ethics can bring systematicity to our moral principles.

2. This study can also reveal your moral principles to you and help you come to understand them.

3. Further, it can enable you to work out the implications of those principles, generating insight and direction for you as a moral agent.
4. Finally, this study provides you with a firm conceptual foundation and depth of insight into the complexity of moral phenomena, enabling you to resist “faddish” attempts at morality.

D. The Business of Philosophical Ethics

1. Philosophers who work in ethics are interested in developing knowledge about moral phenomena. To this end, they operate no differently than those who pursue knowledge in other domains, viz., they construct theories that are designed to explain the phenomena in question.

   a. Ethicists operate under the assumption that moral phenomena form a natural class, i.e., that these phenomena do not represent a random, unconnected collection. As such, they are related to one another by general rules (or laws) that underpin our judgments and actions. The business of philosophical ethics, then, is the business of identifying these rules and the elements they relate.

   b. In other words, ethics is about structures. An ethical theory can be understood as a model of an ethical structure, where this is a systematically related set of fundamental moral elements.

2. In constructing theories, then, the philosopher will identify and analyze (a) the fundamental moral elements, and (b) the rules that relate them. In doing this, they will operate as philosophers, looking to analyze these elements and rules in ways that account for all possibilities, i.e., in ways that are maximally abstract and general.

   a. The moral elements are concepts, such as GOODNESS, RIGHTNESS, JUSTICE, VIRTUE, etc.

   b. Analysis of these concepts will aim for a list of conditions satisfaction of which is both necessary and sufficient to count as an instance of them. For example, one might say that X is GOOD just in case (or “if and only if”) it generates more happiness than unhappiness.

   c. The rules that relate them will be the moral laws.
IV. Ethical Theories

A. Ethical Theories

1. Thus, the construction of ethical theories will consist of two stages: (a) identification and analysis of fundamental moral concepts, i.e., notions used to classify fundamental aspects of moral phenomena, and (b) identification and analysis of the law-governed relationships that connect these elements.

2. The result will be a theoretical model of moral phenomena. This model will explain the phenomena as we find them in the world, and so should prove invaluable for understanding what happens and determining what should happen.

3. Stage One: Identification and analysis of moral concepts

   a. GOOD: This applies to more than just actions; in fact, it can apply to almost any object, event, or situation. Something qualifies as GOOD if it meets or exceeds a positively-valued, nonmoral standard. Examples of this standard include pleasure production, knowledge production, beauty production, being “Godlike”, etc. (Something that is good according to one of these standards can become known as a good, if it consistently and persistently meets the standard.)

   b. RIGHT: In its ethical employment, this is ambiguous between its adjectival and its nominal uses. Thus, something can be right, as opposed to wrong, or it can be a right, as opposed to a privilege, say. The former use typically applies to actions and events involving actions; actions are said to be right if they satisfy a standard of rectitude, e.g., they maximize the good, or they conform with duty, or they agree with God’s will. The latter use is taken to specify a type of entitlement that moral agents have to certain goods, or to certain forms of treatment. We are familiar with this concept, e.g., consider our Declaration of Independence, which says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

   c. JUSTICE: This applies to actions, either of individuals or institutions, that balance (or keep balanced) the moral ledger
sheet, so to speak. Thus, it is essentially an ethical concept that applies to society, or at least to groups. The Golden Rule is an example of a principle that expresses a form of justice. One could argue that social justice demands equal treatment of moral agents unless there is some overriding moral reason to justify differential treatment.

d. VIRTUE: A characteristic of agents that counts as an excellence, e.g., courage, honesty, fidelity, integrity, wisdom, etc. It is the developed form of positive character traits that mark good people.

4. **Stage Two: Identification and analysis of relationships between these concepts.**

   a. There are many ethical theories out there, and as you might conclude based on this fact, there is little consensus about any of them.

   b. For now, we will consider a few of the more important of these, measured in terms of (a) traditional influence, (b) number of adherents, or at least noisy adherents, and (c) resonance with intuition.

B. We will distinguish between two general types of theories, viz., *ends-based* and *means-based*. As we noted above, ethics is ultimately about action, and actions are typically performed in order to achieve ends at which we aim. We use this fact to frame our examination of theories: are they primarily interested in the ends that result from our actions (i.e., *ends-based*), or are they primarily interested in the means that result in our actions (i.e., *means-based*).

   1. Utilitarianism is an ends-based theory

   2. The deontological theory of Kant is a means-based theory

**V. Mill and Utilitarianism**

A. What does Mill mean when he says, “Questions of ultimate ends are not amenable to direct proof” (461)?

B. What is the Greatest Happiness Principle?
1. How sophisticated can a utilitarian be when detailing the nature of HAPPINESS?

2. Does this apply to each of us individually? That is, what is the unit of ethical analysis on this view?

3. Can a utilitarian privilege oneself over others in her moral evaluation?

C. How can a utilitarian respond to the following objections:

1. The utilitarian standard is “too high for humanity” (464-5).

2. Utilitarianism renders people “cold and unsympathising” (465).

3. Utilitarianism is a “godless” doctrine (466).

4. It is an “immoral doctrine” that recommends expediency over principle (467).

5. It demands that we calculate and weigh the effects of every action on the general happiness, which is impossible (467-8).

6. Utilitarians will make exceptions of themselves (468).

D. Mill is concerned with establishing the “ultimate” sanction of the Principle of Utility. He distinguishes between internal and external sanctions. What are examples of these? What does he take the ultimate sanction to be?

E. What sort of proof can be provided for the Principle of Utility?