

Additional Topics for Integration into the Core Curriculum Courses

Language, Philosophy & Culture

Cultural Connections: Issues related to

- Everyday artifacts that may have larger ethical issues connected to them. Identify one that you use personally, and disseminate the positive and negative impacts this object may have ethically on people individually, socially, economically, and/or environmentally.

Ethical Dilemmas Philosophy:

- The Ring of Gyges was a mythical, magical artifact mentioned by the philosopher Plato in Book 2 of *The Republic*. It was said to grant its owner the power to become invisible at will. Plato puts the tale of this ring in the mouth of Glaucon, who uses it to make the point that **no** person is so virtuous that he could resist the temptation of being able to steal at will by the ring's power of invisibility. In contemporary terms, Glaucon argues that ethics is a social construction, whose source is the desire to maintain one's reputation for virtue and honesty. When that sanction is removed, ethics would evaporate. In other words, anyone who had the ability to be unseen in their actions, be it with a ring, or simply with the belief they will not be caught, would abandon all ethical standards. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Cooperative Behavior:

- The Prisoner's Dilemma is a standard example of cooperation. Two members of a criminal-gang are arrested and imprisoned. Each prisoner is in solitary confinement with no means of communicating with the other. The prosecutors lack sufficient evidence to convict the pair on the principal charge. They hope to get both sentenced to a year in prison on a lesser charge. Simultaneously, the prosecutors offer each prisoner a bargain. Each prisoner is given the opportunity either to: betray the other by testifying that the other committed the crime, or to cooperate with the other by remaining silent. The offer is:

If A and B each betray the other, each of them serves 2 years in prison



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Integrating Ethics:

From Thought to Action

If A betrays B but B remains silent, A will be set free and B will serve 3 years in prison (and vice versa)

If A and B both remain silent, both of them will only serve 1 year in prison (on the lesser charge)

What would you do?

Ethical Dilemmas in a Cross-Cultural Context: Issues related to

- Cultural values being relative or universal;
- Should one change behaviors to fit with the beliefs, values and norms of those you are interacting with?
- Is it ethical to send missionaries who intend to change another culture?

Language: Issues related to

- The English-Only Movement
- Language and cultural identity



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