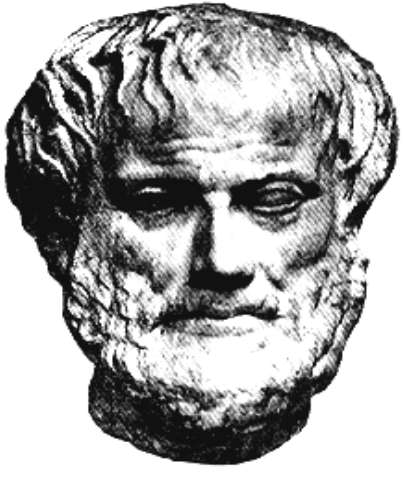
Philosophy = reasoning about the big questions of life – like "Is there a God?" or "How ought we to live?"



Aristotle

How does philosophy differ from theology, history, psychology, literature, and so on?

Logical reasoning (as expressed in *arguments*) goes from premises to a conclusion – and is *valid* if the conclusion logically follows from the premises:

If P is true, then Q would be true.
Q is false.
∴ P is false.

It's important to examine a view for flaws. We can show a view to be false by showing that it has false implications; and we cast doubt on the view by showing that it has doubtful implications.

Moral philosophy (*ethics*) = reasoning about the big questions of morality. It has two main branches: *metaethics* and *normative ethics*.

Metaethics asks "What is the nature and methodology of moral judgments?"

For example, is ethics based on social conventions, individual feelings, God's will, or self-evident objective truths?

Normative ethics asks "What principles ought we to live by?" It defends claims about four main areas:

- what actions we *ought to do*,
- what ends are *intrinsically good*,
- what character traits are *virtuous*,
- what *moral rights* we have.

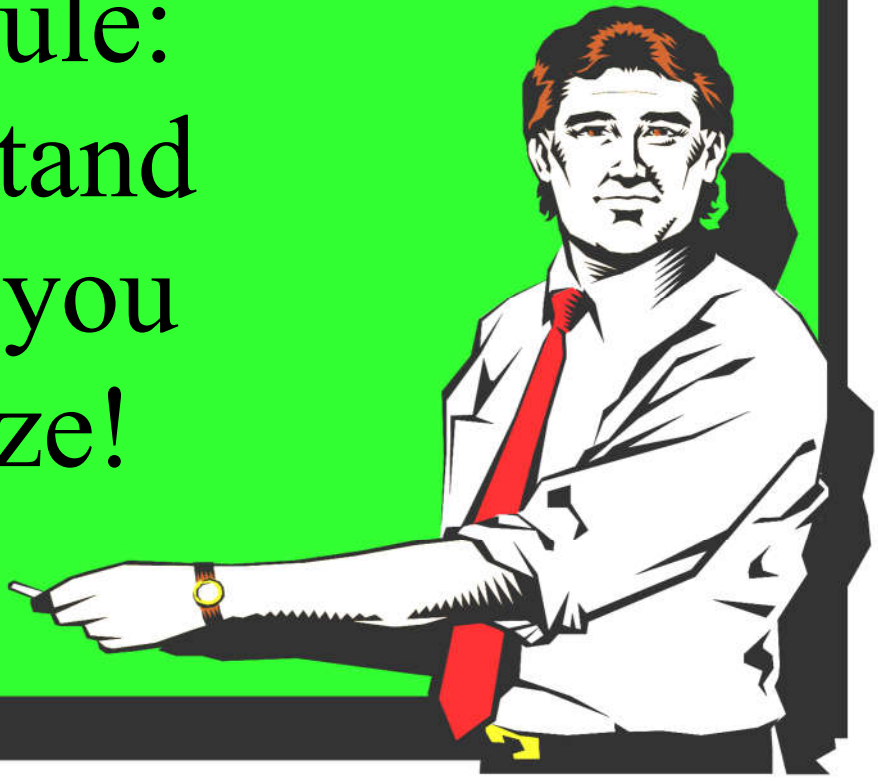
Normative ethical theory studies general principles; *applied ethics* studies specific issues.

Studying ethics can

- deepen our reflection on life's big questions,
- improve our moral thinking,
- enrich our professional and parental lives,
- sharpen our general thinking skills.

This book has many study helps: boxes or bullets with key points, chapter summaries, study questions, computer exercises, class slides, and suggestions for further readings.

Class rule:
Understand
before you
criticize!



EthiCola is a computer program to help you learn ethics. It runs in Windows, Mac, and some other systems. To install it, go to **http://www.harrycola.com/ec** or **http://www.harryhiker.com/ec**

Install on your flash drive if you want to use EthiCola on various computers.

Install on your computer if you want to use EthiCola just on your computer.