Questions on the Foundations of Ethics

What is the difference between ethics and morality?

- **Ethics**: Provides a toolbox of ethical rules and principles to help you make moral decisions. Doesn’t always show a single right answer – some situations lead to morally ambiguity
- **Morality**: one’s own personal principles regarding right and wrong behavior

As we prepare to embark on our exploration of ethics this term, ask yourself some of the following questions to better understand your current approach to ethics.

- What makes an issue a moral issue?

- Are you a moral **realist** or a moral **non-realist**?

- Are there universal moral rules that apply to all people across all times (moral absolutism), or can moral rules change across culture and time (moral relativism)?

- What is the interaction between laws and ethics?
● What are we saying when we make an ethical statement like “murder is bad”?  
  ○ “It is (universally) wrong to murder.”  
    ■ *Moral realism*  

  ○ “I disapprove of murder.”  
    ■ *Subjectivism*  

  ○ “Down with murder!”  
    ■ *Emotivism*  

  ○ “Don’t murder people.”  
    ■ *Prescriptivism*  

● From where can/should morals be drawn?

● What should be considered when making an ethical decision?
When assessing an action with moral implications, should we focus on consequences/outcomes or motivations?