IE 380
The Responsible Engineer
Discussion Questions for
Chapter 2, Moral Reasoning and Codes of Ethics

Answer the following questions. Questions in boldface are required. Others are optional, but you might be required to answer them in class!

1. What is a moral (ethical) dilemma? (Yes, this is review.)
2. Review your own personal moral principles (from your answer in Study Questions for Chapter 1). How, if at all, would you reformulate them based on thinking and discussion since you wrote them?
3. Read Case 1 from the Discussion Questions on pp. 38-39 and answer the following questions: a) What are the competing moral principles? Besides using your own personal ethical principles, consider the principles in the NSPE Code of Ethics (pp. 300-306). b) What concepts (ideas) in the case need to be clarified? c) What additional facts would be needed to finally resolve the dilemma? d) What options appear to be available? e) Which of these options is required? Which are permissible?
4. In your view, do most ethical dilemmas have right/wrong solutions or do most in fact have better/worse solution options? Explain.
5. What were some of the moral values brought out in the aluminum cans case described in this chapter?
6. Should US companies “off-shore” manufacturing and other jobs to foreign countries? Why or why not?
7. Is the off-shoring issue a right/wrong issue or a better/worse issue? Explain.
8. How is the process of moral reasoning like the process of engineering analysis and design?
9. How did the NSPE Code help or hinder you in addressing the above cases?
10. More generally speaking, of what value is an engineering code of ethics?
11. How can engineering codes of ethics be abused?
12. What are some limitations to engineering codes of ethics?

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1 This is an example of a micro ethical issue.
2 As presented, this is a macro ethical issue, but it could be recast as a micro ethical issue by posing the problem to a single company or to a decision maker in that company. In either case, this might not be considered to be a problem of engineering ethics, but in reality, industrial or manufacturing engineers or engineering managers might be involved in the decision making and legal compliance processes.
13. In the NSPE Code I.1 (Fundamental Canon 1, p. 250), what, in your view, does "welfare" mean?


15. In II.1, what does "paramount" mean? How might that term be useful in resolving ethical dilemmas the engineer encounters?

16. In I.4, II.4, what is a "faithful agent"? How does that relate to the idea of responsibility? How might the intent to be a faithful agent lead to ethical dilemmas?

17. In III.1, what is meant by "integrity"?