IE 380
The Responsible Engineer
Class Discussion Questions for
Chapter 3, Moral Frameworks

Martin, M.W. & R. Schinzinger. *Ethics in Engineering*, fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005.

Plus supplemental reading, "The Nature of Value", accessible from the IE 380 online Schedule.

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

1. **What do you propose as the issue for your IE 380 Micro Issue Essay?** Draft an Issue statement section for an original issue or quote and cite an issue from the "… Potential Issues ..." handout. Also propose a second, backup issue in case your first proposal turns out to be unsatisfactory, but for this you do not need to give a whole Background, just a sentence or two to give the instructor an idea of what you have in mind.

2. **What is *value* (or *goodness*)?**

3. In your opinion, why is it important to discuss value? But why is it sometimes difficult – even dangerous?

4. **What is an *instrumental good*, that is, something that has positive instrumental value? Give some examples of instrumental goods.**

5. **What is an *intrinsic good*, that is, something that has positive intrinsic value? Give an example of an intrinsic good.**

6. In your opinion, what is the greatest good (called by philosophers the *summmum bonum*)?

7. **Is value objective (i.e., a property of the object) or subjective (i.e., existing only in the mind of the subjective observer)? Justify your answer. NB: This is not the same as the next question!**

8. **Is value absolute (universal, for all places, for all cultures, for all times) or relative to a particular person, group, place, or time? Justify your answer. NB: This is not the same as the previous question!**

9. **What is the main principle of utilitarianism?**

10. What is the difference between act-utilitarianism and rule-utilitarianism?

11. **Should US companies off-shore manufacturing and service jobs to workers in foreign countries? Use a rule-utilitarian approach to answer the question.**

12. Is a utilitarian (acts- or rights-) solution to the off-shoring dilemma necessarily a just one? Explain.

13. **What is a *right*? What is a *rights ethic*?**

14. Look at the off-shoring dilemma that we addressed earlier from a rights ethics perspective. What rights and whose rights should be considered? How did that perspective change your approach to this dilemma and your opinion on it, if at all?

15. **What is a duty ethics?**

16. **What are some general moral duties (rules) that you believe should pertain to an engineer?**

17. What is a prima facie duty?

18. **What is a virtue? What virtues should an engineer posses? (If you are not an engineer, apply this question to your profession.)**

19. **What is a *self realization ethics*? Is it necessarily a selfish ethics?**

20. **What is the difference between ethical egoism, psychological egoism, and predominant egoism?**

21. Are you an ethical egoist? A psychological egoist? A predominant egoist? Something else?

22. On pp. 71-72, the authors offer three criteria for judging ethical theories. In your opinion, are these criteria satisfactory? Explain.

23. Under the third criterion, the authors write "... if an ethical theory said it was all right for engineers to create extremely dangerous products without the public's informed consent, then that would show the theory is inadequate."Does that assertion follow from their criteria?

24. **See page 83, discussion question 3. What is your idea of *Good Work?* That is, besides good pay (and other financial compensation), what are the attributes of work that make it good (desirable) *from the worker's perspective*?**

25. **If you were to define and design the work of others (as industrial and manufacturing engineers often do), would you have a <u>moral</u> responsibility to design *Good Work*? Why? Give an explanation based on sound moral reasoning.**

26. **How does your religion (your worldview, if you like), shape your personal ethical principles and shape your moral reasoning, if at all?**