

# Media Ethics: Issues & Cases Chapter Notes

## Chapter 1 An Introduction

### Terms

Dilemmas: present an ethical problem with no single or simple right answer

Quandary ethics: the feeling that no best choice is available and that everyone's choice is equally valid

Ethics: rational process founded on certain agreed-on principles

Morals: the realm of religion

Phronemos: person of practical wisdom

Virtue ethics: flows from both the nature of the act and the moral character of the person who acts

### Notes

-Answers come from within you

-Ethics is situational; something you have, or have not to do

-Ethics takes us into the real of "This is what I should do" or "This is the action that can be justified"

-Ethics begin when elements within a moral system conflict

-Ethics is about the choice b/n good and wrong/better and worse

-Ethics helps you make tough choices

### Bok's Model

#### Two Premises

-Must have empathy for the people involved in the ethical decision

-Maintaining social trust is a fundamental goal

#### 3 Steps

-Rightness of an action

-Seek expert advice for alternatives to the act forming the ethical problem

-Discuss with the parties involved (both direct and indirect)

Note: Must go through all 3 steps to make a final choice and it is best conducted in advance

## Aristotle's Golden Mean:

- Happiness is the ultimate human good
- Statesmen is the highest honor
- Virtue lies at the mean between the two extremes of excess and deficiency

## Kant's Categorical Imperative

- An individual should act as if one's choice could become universal law
- Treat others as yourself
- Based on the act itself, not the person who acts (unlike Aristotle)

## Utilitarianism

- Founded by John Stuart Mill (called a utilitarian hedonist)
- The consequences of actions are important in deciding whether they are ethical
- It may be considered ethical to harm one person for the benefit of the larger group
  - “The need of the many outweigh the need of the one” – Spock

## Pluralistic Theory of Value

- There is more than one ethical value competing for preeminence in our ethical decision making
- Bound by duties:
  - Fidelity, reparation, gratitude, justice, beneficence, self-improvement, not harming others

Prima facie duties: seem to be right b/c of the nature of the act itself

Ex: cancelling an interview to save a person from a car accident

Duty proper (actual duties): those duties that are paramount given specific circumstances

Ex: attending job on time

## Communitarianism

- Seeks to provide ethical guidance when confronted with society-wide issues
- Question current events