Ethics:
The study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person.

Is it ethical?
It depends….

Ethics and Communication

Ethical Perspectives
- The Golden Mean
- The Categorical Imperative
- Utilitarianism
- Justice and the Veil of Ignorance

The Golden Mean
- Morality is to be found in moderation
- Virtues:
  - Prudence
  - Temperance
  - Magnanimity
  - Magnificence
  - Wisdom
- CAVEAT: Not all behaviors are acceptable

The Categorical Imperative
- Categorical = absolute; no exceptions or conditions
- Imperative = command or obligation to act
- Telling the truth is a sacred duty – in ALL situations

Utilitarianism
- Look to the outcomes/consequences of our actions.
- Greatest Happiness Principle: Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.
- Seek the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Justice / The Veil of Ignorance
- Realize that we are ignorant of our situations in society/natural assets
- If so, no one is in a position to tailor principles to his/her advantage
- Correct the ignorance, we will make a fair choice
  - Protect those who are weakest in society

The Veil of Ignorance
- Realize that we are ignorant of our situations in society/natural assets
  - If so, no one is in a position to tailor principles to his/her advantage
  - Correct the ignorance, we will make a fair choice
    - Protect those who are weakest in society

Justice
- Realize that we are ignorant of our situations in society/natural assets
  - If so, no one is in a position to tailor principles to his/her advantage
  - Correct the ignorance, we will make a fair choice
    - Protect those who are weakest in society
Other Ethical Perspectives

- **Nihilism**: There is no moral right or wrong
- **Subjectivism**: Moral is only good to s/he who holds it
- **Relativism**: It’s all relative; it’s up to the culture to decide what is right or wrong
- **Universalism/Absolutism**: There is one universal right
- **Egoism**: If it’s right for me, then it’s right
- **Altruism**: What is right benefits other(s)—one person is enough to justify decision
- **Pragmatism**: Whatever leads to good, is good.

Ethics and...

- **Lying**
  - Commission
  - Omission
- **Plagiarism**
  - Paraphrasing
  - Copying/Pirating
- **Identity**
  - Online
  - Cookies
- **Whistleblowing / Leaks**