Ethics in Argumentation

Ethics (plural noun)
1. (used with a singular or plural verb) a system of moral principles: the ethics of a culture.
2. the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group, culture, etc.: medical ethics; Christian ethics.
3. moral principles, as of an individual: his ethics forbade betrayal of a confidence.
4. (usually used with a singular verb) that branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain actions and to the goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions.

Focus:
- Why we need to be concerned about ethics in Persuasion
- Ethics for Arguers and Receivers
- Code of Conduct for practicing argumentation discourse

Why we need to be concerned about ethics in Persuasion
- It involves
  - one person (or a group of people)
  - attempting to influence other people
  - by altering their beliefs, attitudes, values, and actions
- It involves conscious choices among ends sought and rhetorical means used to achieve the ends
- It necessarily involves
  - a potential judge: any or all of the receivers, the persuader, or an independent observer

Argumentation is dialogue
- Dialogue means two
  - It involves both:
    - Senders and Receivers

J. Vernon Jenson, 1997
Questions:

• Is it an ethical violation if the violation is made by...
  ... accident?
  ... a slip of the tongue?
  ... ignorance?
• Do arguers have an ethical obligation to
  • double check the validity, accuracy, and reasoning of their arguments and evidence
  • before presenting it to others?

Ethics for Arguers
✓ Be accountable and responsible
✓ Provide audience with the ability to make voluntary decisions
✓ Promote positive relationships with your audience

Ethics for Recipients
✓ Be aware of attempts to influence you
✓ You should be informed
✓ Be aware of your own biases
✓ Understand how fallacies persuade

Code of Conduct for practicing argumentation discourse
✓ Don’t silence to prevent exchange
✓ Be willing (and able) to support your claims
✓ Address what was really said
✓ Defend with relevant arguments
✓ Don’t intentionally mis-state yours or others’ presumptions
✓ Establish a genuine starting point
✓ Advance a claim only with proper argumentative support
✓ Use valid arguments
✓ Admit when you can’t establish your claim, and when others can
✓ Avoid ambiguity and interpret others’ arguments clearly
Processing Time!

• Why is it important for a society to have a system of ethics?
• What is the underlying principle behind the Code of Conduct for practicing argumentation discourse?
• Are there ever any exceptions to ethics?