

24.400: Proseminar in Philosophy I

Fall 2013

1. What is the subject matter of Ethics, according to Moore? What meanings may be given to the question 'What is good'? (Ch. 1, Sections 3-6) And what meanings may be given to the question 'How is good to be defined?' (Sections 6-8) What is the difference between *good* and *the good*?
2. Why does Moore think 'good' is indefinable? What is 'the naturalistic fallacy', and why does Moore think it matters? Is it a fallacy? (Chapter 1)
3. Moore says that 'the value of ... a whole bears no regular proportion to the sum of the values of its parts' (Chapter 1, section 18). What does he mean, and why does he say it? Is he right? Say briefly why it is it, according to Moore, 'absolutely essential to consider each distinguishable quality, in isolation, in order to decide what value it possesses.' (Chapter 3 section 55)
4. What, if anything, is wrong with Hedonism, according to Moore? Pay particular attention to his criticism of Mill (sections 39-44). Is Egoism absurd? (sections 58-62)
5. What is Moore's method for discovering the great intrinsic goods and evils? Did he discover them? According to Moore, 'from the proposition that a particular kind of value is 'intrinsic' it does follow that it must be 'objective'. Is he right? ('The Conception of Intrinsic Value')
6. Moore says that the following both express unconditional necessities: 'if x and y possess different intrinsic properties, their nature must be different'; and 'if x and y are of different intrinsic values, their nature must be different'. He finds difficulty explaining the two different meanings of this 'unconditional must'. What is the difficulty, and can it be resolved? (final paragraph of 'The Conception of Intrinsic Value')

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