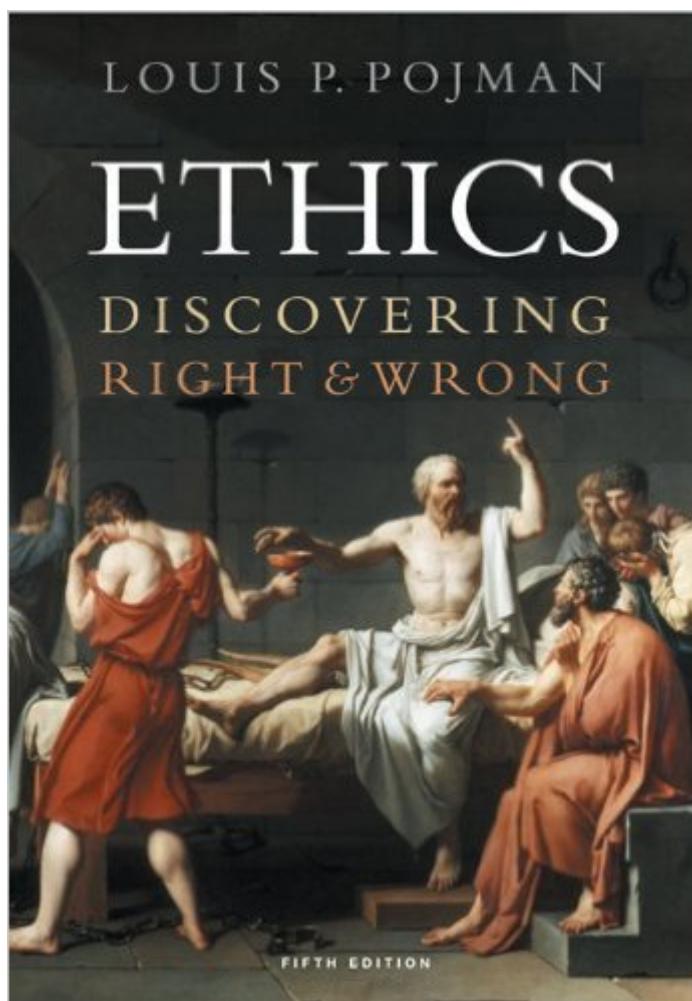


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Ethics: Discovering Right And Wrong



Synopsis

How do you know right from wrong? ETHICS: DISCOVERING RIGHT AND WRONG shows you how history's greatest thinkers have understood ethics and gives you the tools to decide for yourself what's moral and immoral. And, of course, along the way you'll master the basics of ethical philosophy.

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Customer Reviews

Readers familiar with ethical literature will notice that the title of Pojman's book is similar to that of the late J.L. Mackie's book on ethics, Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong. The differences in titles reflect the differences in opinion among the two authors: Mackie was a relativist while Pojman is an objectivist. Despite Pojman's rejection of relativism, though, he does an admirable job of presenting both sides fairly. He also writes in a clear and conversational way, making this introductory text accessible to everyone. Finally, his book is comprehensive; it includes a discussion of egoism, self-interest, and altruism; the question, "Why should I be moral?"; religion and ethics; and metaethics.

Overviews of philosophy in general or a particular area of philosophy (such as ethics) run the risk of oversimplification. "Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong" by the late Louis Pojman and James Fieser does an admirable job of avoiding this. As a result it does a good job of acquainting the introductory student with the various options in ethical theory. After an introductory chapter discussing what ethics is, subsequent chapters provide an overview of ethical relativism, moral

objectivism, value and the quest for the good, social contract theory and the motive to be moral, egoism, self-interest, and altruism, utilitarianism, Kant and deontological theories, virtue theory, religion and ethics, the fact-value problem, and moral realism and the challenge of skepticism. At the end of each chapter is a section entitled "For Further Reflection" and suggestions for further reading. As is true of the other Pojman texts with which I am familiar, there is an appendix on "How to Read and Write a Philosophy Paper."

Pojman does a superb job of illustrating many different approaches to ethics, providing examples of practical application of each. This helps the reader develop a critical mind, capable of reasoning his or her way through ethical dilemmas that we all face on a daily basis. Pojman is not afraid to go for the jugular on approaches in which he finds serious flaws, such as cultural and ethical relativism. The reader will find that Pojman does not adhere to one ethical theory in particular, but rather calls for reason and judgment, based on strong moral principles, in every situation. Some situations call for a utilitarian approach, some for a virtue-ethical approach. Whatever approach he takes, however, will be based in thorough and sound reasoning. This book makes its readers want to be better people.

"Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong" by Louis Pojman is one of the best brief introductions to ethical theory on the market today. Although intended as an overview, which leads to the occasional but inevitable oversimplification, it does its job of providing the introductory student an acquaintance with the various options. Its chapters include an introduction ("What is Ethics?"), followed by chapters on ethical relativism, moral objectivism, value and the quest for the good, social contract theory and the motive to be moral, egoism, self-interest, and altruism, utilitarianism, Kant and deontological theories, virtue theory, religion and ethics, the fact-value problem, and moral realism and the challenge of skepticism. The book also has some very helpful features. Each chapter ends with a section entitled "For Further Reflection," which includes several thought-provoking questions on the issues the chapter discusses as well as suggestions for further reading. Finally, an appendix is included that contains a four-page article on "How to Read and Write a Philosophy Paper."

Dr. Pojman (poy-man) does a brilliant job of presenting the ethics rooted in Aristotle and Aquinas and the thought of the moderns, such as Kant, in a very easy read. This is a fabulous book for anyone.

Louis Pojman does an excellent job of discussing ethical decision making by presenting a variety of arguments and analyzing each one in a variety of different situations. He uses a wide scope of information from ethicists, philosophers and Christian teachings to promote self examination of your own personal code of ethics, all the while reminding you of what is at the core of ethical decisions: people. This thought provoking and unique look at ethics will challenge the reader and help them in their personal interactions and ethical decision making.

I read this book for a Communications Ethics class, and really ended up enjoying it. Pojman presents ethical theories in a discussion that is wide in scope, yet intimate in interpretation. He explores a theory, expounds its virtues, has the reader convinced to change their own code of ethics to follow said theory, and then explains a whole new side to the theory that shows its complications and inconsistencies. The book displays so many sides to one debate it might leave the reader confused if it wasn't so well written. The whole time Pojman's personal ethics are kept ambiguous. I felt challenged when reading this text to discover the "theory" that defines my own choices - why I have the code of ethics I have, and if it is correct. The different case studies provide insightful examples of real-life moral dilemmas, and inspire the reader to truly contemplate their morality in action. It's difficult to think about these vignettes, and that's what makes it rewarding. I appreciated the knowledge I gained from this book as well as the application of its ideas into my own thinking. I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in taking a deeper look at not only society, but their own process of thought.

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