Basic Definitions:

We talk about **morality**—defined as norms about right or wrong about human conduct that are widely shared among members of a society.

**Ethics**—generic term—for various ways of understanding, evaluating, debating the moral life. Ethics can be normative [can relate to or determine norms or standards of moral behaviour that ought to be the case “should”—ought implies “can”]. Can also be non-normative. Can relate to or determine what factually or what conceptually is the case “is”. Example—there’s something called descriptive ethics—studies how a person would act or reason on the basis of their morality.

Example—analyzing what conceptually is the case. “analyzing what you mean when you use the word “good””—applied ethics fell out of the non-normative ethics picture.

“Focusing on normative ethics” → 2 levels:

- **General normative ethics**—investigates the question, which guidelines of the moral conduct should we accept and why—→ Consequentialism, character based theory or virtue ethics [basically both are about setting forth reasons or criteria for determining the rightness or wrongness of actions]; virtue based ethics is about determining criteria for deciding upon the goodness and badness of persons from which ideas can emerge to determine the rightness or wrongness of actions; duty based

- **Applied Ethics**—Utilitarian “spends lots of time to show how a particular argument should influence your decision”—analyzes that are thought to support the various positions people may take on a moral problem—3 fields:

  a) Environmental ethics
  b) Business ethics
  c) Bioethics ethics

“what ought we to do?”