

Morality (Part 2)

INTRODUCTION

Remind the students that they are looking at the question, 'What does it mean to be 'good'?'

Should we live according to set moral laws?

This session is designed to develop students' ideas about whether or not moral absolutism is the way forward. It is mainly based around watching a video of the American lecturer Michael Sandel talking to a group of students at Harvard University. Really stress to the students that they are watching a recording of a lecture done by one of the top philosophers on the planet delivering this lesson to a group of university students. As such, they should be very proud of themselves for doing this level of work, but also not worry about asking you questions if they get a bit lost at any point.

Begin this lesson by asking the students to remind you about the difference between moral absolutists and moral relativists. Then ask them which position they personally tend towards. At this point tell them they are about to watch a video (see paragraph above). The video is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBdfcR-8hEY

Play the video from the start until Sandel finishes his lecture at just over 24 minutes.

ACTIVITY

Throughout the video stop and question the students about how they would react in each of the dilemmas and ask them whether or not they regard themselves as 'consequentialists', that is, believing that whether an act is right or wrong depends only on the *results* of that act and that the more good consequences an act produces, the better or more right that act.

You might want to ask them to draw up the strengths and weaknesses of consequentialist and categorical approaches to morality. You might want to outline what Utilitarianism is and build on Kant's views which you highlighted in the previous lesson.

Finish the lesson by getting the students to consider why Sandel thinks that philosophy is fascinating, useful and unsettling at the same time!