

**Dialogue Project 1**

**Due:** Feb. 26 at 11:59 pm on Blackboard

**Assignment:**

- Find one dialogue partner from class. (Groups of three only by permission of Prof. Robinson in case of odd numbers; 1 per class.) Set a date and time to meet.
- Record a dialogue between you and your partner for *at least 10 minutes* (15 minutes for groups of 3).
  - A. Begin the dialogue by stating your names and the date.
  - B. Your dialogue should focus on the topics of Epistemology and Ethics as presented in the assigned readings and discussed in class. See below for conversation starters. You do *not* have to stick precisely to the questions provided, so long as the dialogue remains on topic.
  - C. Your objectives are to:
    - i. Come to understand both what your partner's views are *AND* their reasons/arguments for those views. If either part is unclear to you, ask follow-up questions until they are clear to you.
    - ii. Express your own views so that your partner understands your view *AND* your reasons/arguments for that view.
  - D. If, during the dialogue, both of you have the same view on an issue/topic, you can:
    - i. Discuss an objection to your shared view and how you'd respond to that objection, or
    - ii. Have someone play devil's advocate and present the strongest possible argument for an alternative view, or
    - iii. Move on to another topic.
- Each student should individually write a report on what you and your partner discussed during the dialogue. This is a report on the dialogue, not a restatement of it or a term paper. Your report should include each of the following, broken into sections and each section clearly indicated:
  - A. List the dialogue participants and the date of the dialogue.
  - B. List all the conversation starters used during the dialogue.
  - C. What was one challenging or interesting follow-up question your partner asked you? What was one challenging or interesting question you asked your partner? (**NB:** Prepared conversation starter prompts or questions do not count here.)
  - D. What was one of *your* views/responses to a prompt? How did you argue for that view (1-2 paragraphs).

- E. What was one of *your* partner's views/responses to a prompt? How did she/he argue for that view (1-2 paragraphs).
- F. What was another of *your* partner's views/responses to a prompt? How did she/he argue for that view (1-2 paragraphs).
- G. Also write at least some of the following:
- i. Did either you or your partner change her/his views on a topic discussed? If so, why?
  - ii. What assumptions were either of you making? How was that assumption revealed?
  - iii. Were you and your partner ever talking past one another (i.e., was there ever any miscommunication)? If so, what was the miscommunication, and how was it revealed.
  - iv. List any philosophical terms that were used.
- H. Assess the quality of the dialogue:
- i. On a 1-5 scale (1=terrible; 5=great), how did the dialogue go?
  - ii. On a 1-5 scale, how well did you express your ideas and arguments?
  - iii. On a 1-5 scale, how well did your partner express their ideas and arguments?
  - iv. Briefly explain your reasons for those ratings.
- Turn in *BOTH* your written summary (PDF or MS Word file) and the audio file on Blackboard separately. Both partners are responsible for turning in the audio file.

Dialogue Conversation Starters

Agree or Disagree? Why?

- There are no objective moral truths.
- Lying is always wrong.
- Some character traits are more useful or agreeable and so are virtues.
- A virtue is a means between two vices.
- An opinion is either subjectively true (or false) or else not well supported by the available evidence.
- When evaluating the consequences of an action, the pleasure or pain experienced by everyone counts equally.
- People are inherently selfish.
- Everyone should only act out of self-interest.
- I can know something without being certain of it.
- It is never permissible to treat someone merely (solely) as a means.
- In order to attain happiness (a flourishing life), one must be virtuous.
- Some beliefs may be true without being known.
- I know (with absolute certainty) that I am not a brain in a vat being deceived to think that I have a body and am a college student.

What do you think?

- Is the moral status of an action determined only by its consequences? The agent's intentions? Both? Neither?
- To what extent does our knowledge rely on the trustworthiness of others? What are some ways we grant people credibility when they're not actually trustworthy?
- Can morality be based on the commands of God? Why or why not?
- Is all morality relative to culture? To each person individually? Not relative at all? Only partially relative to culture or each individual?
- Do you agree with any of the 3 theories of normative ethics? All of them? None of them? Why?
- What is the difference between science and pseudo-science?
- Are some pleasures of a higher quality than others? Why or why not?
- Can virtue ethics provide sufficient guidance for what one should do?