Normative Ethical Evaluation Process

Position ⟷ Values ⟷ Ethical Theory

Values
(our most deeply held beliefs) → **Morals**
(applied values in right/ wrong personal decisions) → **Ethics**
(applied morals In universalistic & relativistic policies)
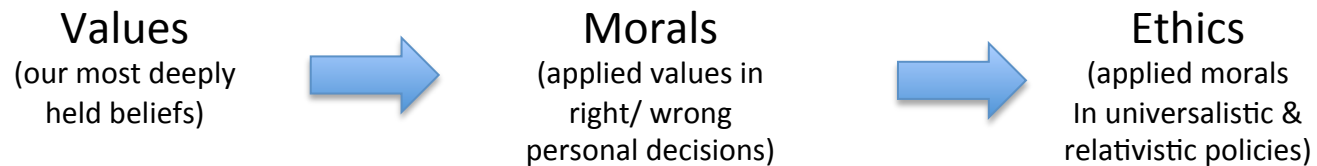
Major Normative Ethical Theories

- **Utilitarianism** - (consequential) <u>Jeremy Bentham/ John Stuart Mills</u>: Do what is in the best interest of the masses. The best interest of the masses will make us all happy. This will yield good consequences for most. Right/ wrong not really a factor.

- **Kantianism / Positivism/ Deontology** – (non-consequential) – <u>Emanuel Kant</u>: Categorical imperatives and strict ethical rules. Do what is right because it is right. Regardless of consequences. Rights and wrongs are universally agreed upon or dictated. The rule of law. The word of God etc…

- **Relativism** – (virtue ethics) – <u>Plato and Aristotle</u>: Focuses on personal virtue and moral character and what is right under specific circumstances. (Differs from Kantianism in that Kant believed in universal beliefs in right/ wrong. Plato/ Aristotle believed in individual beliefs about what is right/ wrong based on our own unique life experiences.

- Plato would ask if the individual was ethical. Kant would ask if the act was ethical. Utilitarianists would ask if the action was ethical for society at large.