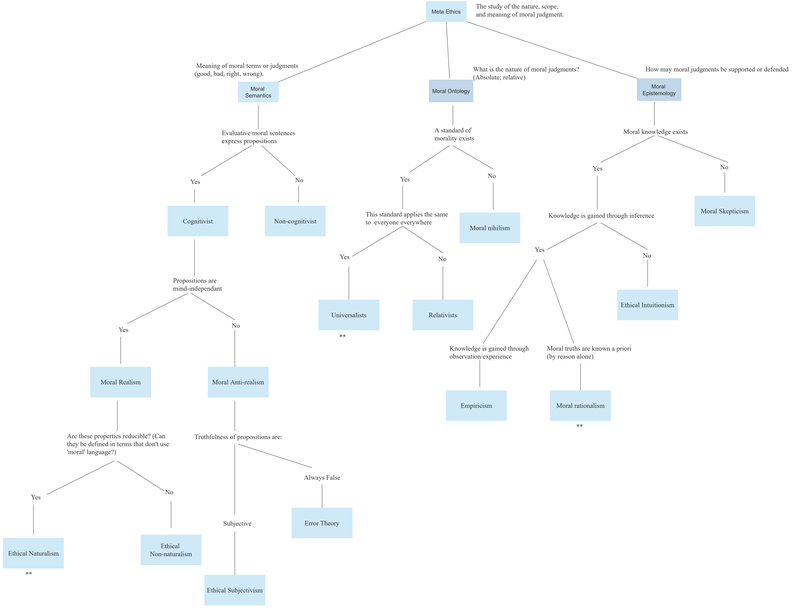
Ethics


Meta Ethics
The study of the nature, scope, and meaning of moral judgment.
Meaning of moral terms or judgments (good, bad, right, wrong).
Moral Semantics
What is the nature of moral judgments? (Absolute; relative)
Moral Ontology
How may moral judgments be supported or defended
Moral Epistemology
Evaluative moral sentences express propositions
Yes
No
Cognitivist
Non-cognitivist
Propositions are mind-independent
Yes
No
Moral Realism
Moral Anti-realism
Are these properties reducible? (Can they be defined in terms that don't use 'moral' language?)
Yes
No
Ethical Naturalism
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Ethical Non-naturalism
Truthfulness of propositions are:
Subjective
Ethical Subjectivism
Always False
Error Theory
A standard of morality exists
Yes
No
This standard applies the same to everyone everywhere
Yes
No
Universalists
**
Relativists
Moral nihilism
Moral knowledge exists
Yes
No
Knowledge is gained through inference
Yes
No
Knowledge is gained through observation/experience
Empiricism
Moral truths are known a priori (by reason alone)
Moral rationalism
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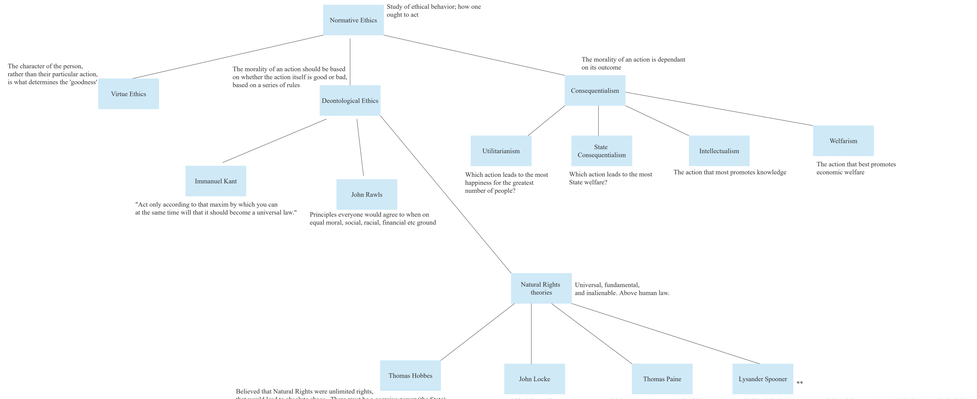
Ethical Intuitionism
Moral Skepticism


Normative Ethics
Study of ethical behavior; how one ought to act
The character of the person, rather than their particular action, is what determines the 'goodness'
Virtue Ethics
The morality of an action should be based on whether the action itself is good or bad, based on a series of rules
Deontological Ethics
Immanuel Kant
"Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."
John Rawls
Principles everyone would agree to when on equal moral, social, racial, financial etc ground
The morality of an action is dependant on its outcome
Consequentialism
Utilitarianism
Which action leads to the most happiness for the greatest number of people?
State Consequentialism
Which action leads to the most State welfare?
Intellectualism
The action that most promotes knowledge
Welfarism
The action that best promotes economic welfare
Natural Rights theories
Universal, fundamental, and inalienable. Above human law.
Thomas Hobbes
Believed that Natural Rights were unlimited rights, that would lead to absolute chaos. There must be a coercive power (the State). Rights do not derive from 'Natural Law', as law = obligations, and rights are the absence of obligations.
John Locke
Life, Liberty, Estate
Thomas Paine
Rights cannot be granted, for this would imply they can be taken away
Lysander Spooner
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Believed in absolute property rights, right to contract, and the homestead principle. The initiation of coercion is immoral.

Applied Ethics
What is a person obligated to do in specific scenarios
Bioethics
Business Ethics
Military Ethics
Technology Ethics

Descriptive Ethics
What are people's beliefs about Ethics?