Aristotelian Ethics
The Virtue of Success
Aristotle

• 384BC – 322BC
• Greek Philosopher
• Physics to Zoology to Ethics to Poetry.
• Nicomachean Ethics
• Searching for “best” v “absolute”
Utilitarianism
The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number

- A matter of “pain” v “pleasure” (or contentedness?)
- The **Ends** of an action are its only measure (v. intent)
- May NOT cause any harm (animals too?)
Telos – that a thing works to final “goal”

• True wisdom comes from examining the objects of experience and not from trying to look beyond them (no perfect). (v Platonic)

• Our function in life is to realize our full potential as rational beings. If we are not fully rational, we are falling short of our true nature.
The “GOOD”

- Intentions & Action v. Ends
- The Highest Good
- Arête – Excellence
- Why We Do, What We Do.
Arête

• Excellences of:
  – Intellect and Character

• **Intellect** = knowledge and wisdom.

• **Character** = “moral virtues”

• The “good” of *friendship*
“Contentedness”

• To flourish and achieve…
• Friendship…
• Not on a given Day…
VIRTUE

• Virtue of Character
  – Intellectual and Moral
• Habituation OR hexis
• Virtuous ACTION and Virtuous CHARACTER
The “STATES”

- The Four “States”
  - Viciousness
  - Intemperance
  - Temperance
  - Virtue (Excellence)
The VIRTUES

- Courage
- Temperance
- Liberality
- Magnificence
- Magnanimity
- Proper Ambition/Pride

- Good temper
- Truthfulness
- Wittiness
- Friendliness
- Modesty
- Right Indignation
The “MEAN”

• What is the “Mean”?  

• Extremes
  – Excess
  – Deficiency
Excess

Virtuous

Action

Deficiency

Mean

Virtue

Excess

Issue
A Specific Virtue: Courage

Mean

Deficiency  Excess

Courage

Cowardice  Rashness
To “Flourish”

• As one looks back…
• Sum total of many things…
• Graduation a first time?
• Eudaimonia!