Phil. 430(5): Ethics and Society
T/Th 3:40-5:00
Spring 2016

Instructor Information
Instructor: Kristian Olsen
Office: Nesmith 325
Email: kristian.olsen@unh.edu

Course Description
This course will provide you with an introduction to the philosophical study of ethics. The first half of the course will be devoted to theoretical ethics. We will discuss the nature of the good life, the meaning of moral terms, and the relationship between ethics and the attitudes of society. We will also discuss several leading theories about what makes an action morally right—we’ll examine Divine Command Theory, Natural Law Theory, Ethical Egoism, Consequentialism, Kantianism, and a few others. The second half of the course will be devoted to applied ethics. We will likely discuss abortion, animal rights, famine relief, sweatshops, affirmative action, and possibly other topics if time permits. Along the way, you’ll learn a bit about logic and argumentation, and you’ll learn how to write an argumentative philosophical essay.

Course Requirements
Course requirements will include in-class exams, some short papers, a few homework assignments (which will function as drafts for the papers), and regular in-class reading quizzes. You will also need to participate regularly in class and in an online discussion forum.

There are no prerequisites for this course. It satisfies the Discovery Humanities (HUMA) Category and Gen. Ed. Category 8.

Textbook Information
The textbook for the course will likely be Russ Shafer-Landau’s The Fundamentals of Ethics, 3rd Edition, Oxford University Press, 2014. Other readings will be put online.