Philosophy 430.01: Ethics and Society  
COURSE DESCRIPTION  
Fall 2015  

_Instructor:_ Prof. Ruth Sample  
_Meeting:_ Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:10 a.m. -12:30 p.m., Nesmith 119.  
_Sample's Office:_ TBA  
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**NOTE:**
This course satisfies the Ethics requirement for PCBE Students.  
There are no prerequisites for this course.  
This course satisfies the Discovery Humanities (HUMA) Category.  
This course cross-counts for credit as a Women’s Studies (WS) course.

**Course Description:**

It’s hard being a human.

Every day we face questions about what we ought to do, and often the answer is not obvious. How can we make difficult moral decisions? Are there any right answers?

This course is designed to help you understand the major approaches to ethical decision-making, and to give you some techniques for thinking about ethical problems. We will survey the major theoretical frameworks of utilitarianism, Kantianism, and virtue ethics, and apply these frameworks to specific ethical concerns. You will learn how to evaluate claims and arguments, and to formulate and defend your own ethical point of view.

- What is it to be an ethical person?  
- What makes an action right or wrong?  
- Should physician-assisted suicide be permitted?  
- Is pornography inherently unethical?  
- Is abortion morally permissible?  
- When is war morally permissible?  
- Is torture ever permissible?  
- What do we owe the poor and hungry people on earth?  
- What is environmental justice?  
- Is it wrong to kill animals for food and leather? Do animals have rights?

**Course Requirements:**
Two short essays, regular quizzes, and two in-class examinations. Attendance and participation in discussion are required for this course, including some Blackboard discussions.

**Course Texts:**