

# Phil. 430(5): Ethics and Society

Tues., Thurs. 3:40-5:00

Nesmith 110

Spring 2016

## Instructor Information

Name: Kristian Olsen

Email: kristian.o.olsen@gmail.com

Office: Nesmith 325

Office Hours: Monday 12:30-2:00, Wednesday 2:00-3:30, and by appointment

## Course Description

This course provides you with an introduction to the philosophical study of ethics. We will begin by discussing the nature of the Good Life. We will look at several different accounts of what it is that makes a life good for the person living it, including Hedonism, Desire Satisfaction Theory, and the Objective List Theory. Next, we will discuss the nature of moral rightness. We will look at the main theories about what it is that makes an action right, including Divine Command Theory, Natural Law Theory, Egoism, Utilitarianism, Kantianism, and Rossianism. Finally, we will discuss some issues in applied ethics. We will study several contentious moral issues, including animal rights, sweatshops, affirmative action, deception in business, whistle-blowing, and famine relief. Along the way, you'll learn a bit about logic and argumentation, and you'll learn how to write an argumentative philosophical essay.

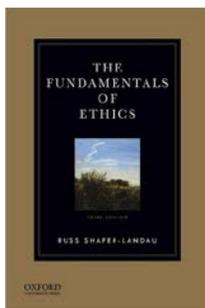
There are no prerequisites for this course. It satisfies the Discovery Humanities (HUMA) Category and Gen. Ed. Category 8.

## Book

There is one required textbook:

Shafer-Landau, Russ. *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford University Press, 2014.

It looks like this:



You can buy the textbook at the campus book store and at the Durham Book Exchange. New copies are about \$30.

There will be other required readings for the course that don't appear in the textbook. I will put them on Canvas.

### **Course Requirements**

#### *1. Three Tests (10%, 15%, 20%)*

The first test is tentatively scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup>.  
The second test is tentatively scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup>.  
The third test will be during Finals Week.

The tests will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Their purpose is to test you on the material that we've discussed in class.

This Is Important:

*If you miss an exam, you will not be permitted to make it up, unless you have a legitimate, documented excuse (such as an illness, a death in the family, or a conflicting religious obligation). If you need to miss an exam, you must let me know in advance.*

#### *2. Two Short Papers (15% each)*

You will have to write two short (2-3 page, double-spaced) papers for this course. In the first paper, you will have to write a paper defending an ethical claim of your choosing (e.g., schools ought to require students to wear uniforms). In the second paper, you will have to write a paper defending some ethical claim relevant to the course (e.g., utilitarianism is false). The purpose of these papers is to teach you how to write like a philosopher.

The tentative due dates for the papers are March 10<sup>th</sup> and April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Important:

*I will accept late papers, but they will receive a 10% penalty for each day they are late. Papers turned in more than 5 days late will receive no credit.*

#### *3. A Few Homework Assignments (10% total)*

There will be a few written homework assignments over the course of the semester. Mostly, the homework assignments will serve as drafts for the short papers. If you make a serious attempt to complete the assignment, you will get credit. The purpose of the homework assignments is to make your short papers better.

Stay tuned for the due dates on these.

Read this:

*I will accept late homework assignments, but they will receive a 10% penalty for each day they are late. Assignments turned in more than 5 days late will receive no credit.*

#### 4. *Reading Quizzes (15%)*

About once a week, there will be an unannounced quiz at the beginning of class. The quizzes will be based on the assigned readings, and are open note (but not open book!). If you've done the reading, they should be easy. The purpose of the quizzes is to get you to do the reading before coming to class (and also to come to class). I will drop your lowest *two* quiz scores.

Crucial Point:

*Quizzes cannot be made up. So, it would be wise to save your dropped quiz scores for times when you have to miss class.*

#### 5. *Participation (Bonus)*

I highly encourage you to participate in class. You'll learn more that way. If you participate regularly in class, I will take this into consideration when assigning final grades. For instance, if you are a good classroom participant, I may bump your grade up from a B+ to an A- if you're near the borderline.

### **Other Stuff**

#### *Office Hours*

I encourage you to come to my office hours and talk to me about the class. Don't be afraid to ask me your questions! If you are not available to meet during my office hours, I'd be happy to arrange another time to meet with you. Also, feel free to just drop by my office unannounced. If I'm there, I'd be glad to talk.

#### *Canvas*

There is a Canvas page associated with this course. You should check it regularly. On it you will find the syllabus, readings that don't appear in the textbook, any handouts that I distribute, a solution to the Israel/Palestine problem, and other miscellaneous documents relevant to the course.

#### *Academic Dishonesty*

You should familiarize yourself with the UNH academic honesty policy. You can find this policy by doing a simple Google search, or you can go to:  
<http://www.unh.edu/vpsas/handbook/academic-honesty>. Acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to the maximum penalty allowed by this policy.

#### *Laptops/Smartphones*

Using these things during class is distracting and negatively impacts class discussion. Please do not use them. If you absolutely must use a laptop to take notes, please speak with me.

#### *Disability Services*

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services for Students (DSS) in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities.

*Assigned Readings/Paper and Pencil*

Please bring the assigned reading with you to class. I will often refer to them during class. Also, please bring paper and a writing utensil. Some classroom activities may require you to have paper and a pen/pencil.

**Schedule**

Below is a *tentative* schedule for the course. Note, this schedule will likely change in various ways. Always check Canvas for updated scheduling information.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Jan. 26	First Day Stuff	
28	Logic 1, Hedonism	Introduction, Chap. 1
Feb. 2	Logic 2, Hedonism	Chap. 2
4	Desire Satisfaction Theory	Chaps. 3-4
9	Objective List Theory	Jean Kazez, "Necessities" Chris Heathwood, "Welfare"
11	Loose Ends, Review	TBD
16	Test 1	
18	Divine Command Theory	Chap. 5
23	Natural Law Theory	Chap. 6
25	Egoism, Utilitarianism	Chaps. 8-9
Mar. 1	Utilitarianism	Chap. 9
3	Utilitarianism Problems	Chap. 10
8	Kantianism	Chap. 11
10	Rossianism	Timmons, "Moral Pluralism"
15	Spring Break	
17	Spring Break	
22	Relativism, Review	Chap. 19
24	Test 2	
29	Animal Rights	Rachels, "Vegetarianism"
31	Animal Rights	Regan, "Empty Cage, Animal Rights, and Vivisection"
Apr. 5	Sweat Shops	Maitland, "The Great Non-Debate Over International Sweatshops"
7	Sweat Shops	Arnold and Bowie, "Sweatshops and Respect for Persons"
12	Affirmative Action	Hettinger, "What Is Wrong with Reverse

		Discrimination?"
14	Affirmative Action	Pojman, "The Case Against Affirmative Action"
19	Deception	Carson, "Deception and Information Disclosure"
21	Deception	TBD
26	Whistle-Blowing	Brenkert, "Whistle-Blowing, Moral Integrity, and Organizational Ethics"
28	Whistle-Blowing	TBD
May. 3	Famine Relief	Wellman, "The Duties We Have to Others"
5	Famine Relief, Review	Cohen, "Famine Relief and Virtue"