

# Kristian Olsen

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Philosophy Department  
Nesmith Hall Room 309  
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## Employment

University of New Hampshire Durham (Postdoctoral Instructor and Researcher).  
2015-present

## Education

Ph.D. Philosophy, UMass Amherst (2015)  
M.A. Philosophy and Religion, Yale University (2007)  
B.A. Philosophy, Luther College, *summa cum laude* (2004)

## Areas of Specialization and Competence

AOS: Ethics (esp. normative and applied)  
AOC: Philosophy of Religion, Action Theory, Epistemology

## Publications

“Ross and the Particularism/Generalism Divide,” 2014, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 44: 56-75.

Abstract: I argue against the widespread assumption that Ross is a particularist about absolute moral duty. I show that Ross is no more a particularist about absolute duty than a utilitarian or a Kantian is.

## Work in Progress

A paper on subjective rightness (under review)  
A paper on the Coincident Reasons Thesis (under review)  
A paper on the impossibility of praiseworthy wrongdoing (under review)  
“Motivating and Defending the Objective/Subjective Rightness Distinction” (in progress)

## Dissertation

Title: “Variations on Some Rossian Themes”

Committee: Fred Feldman (chair), Peter Graham, Ernesto Garcia, Lyn Frazier  
(Linguistics)

Abstract: In my dissertation, I develop and defend the moral theory of W. D. Ross (an influential early-20<sup>th</sup> century British moral philosopher). In the first part of my dissertation, I explain what Ross’s theory of rightness is and correct various misunderstandings about it. Then, I defend Ross’s theory from its most important objections. I end the dissertation with a discussion of Ross’s theory of

moral worth, which I argue is also plausible, more plausible in fact than many other theories on the market.

## **Presentations**

- October 2015 / “An Examination of the Coincident Reasons Thesis” / UMass Conference in Honor of Fred Feldman  
September 2015 / “The Impossibility of Praiseworthy Wrongdoing and Blameworthy Right-Doing” / Northern New England Philosophical Association Conference  
April 2015 / “Huck and Nepotism” / Colgate University  
March 2015 / “Ross and Genetic Enhancement” / Indiana State University  
February 2013 / “Blameworthiness and Dr. Jill” / Princeton-Rutgers Graduate Student Conference  
April 2013 / “Trains, ‘57 Chevys, and our Obligation to Those in Desperate Need” / UMass Amherst Faculty Chat Series

## **Teaching Experience**

### At UNH

*Ethics and Society*: Fall 2015, Spring 2016

*Business Ethics*: Fall 2015, Spring 2016

### At UMass

*Medical Ethics*: Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2012

*Intro to Ethics*: Summer 2011 (online), Fall 2011, Spring 2012 (Honors), Summer 2013 (online), Spring 2014 (Honors)

*Philosophy of Religion*: Spring 2013, Fall 2013

*Intro to Logic*: Summer 2012 (online), Winter 2014 (online)

*Valid and Invalid Reasoning*: Fall 2014 (co-taught with Jim Henle and Sam Ruhmkorff)

## **Service**

Ethics Bowl coach at Oyster River High School (2015-2016)

Member of the Ethics Service at Baystate Franklin Medical Center (2010-2015) The Ethics Service meets bi-monthly to discuss ethical issues that have arisen, or could arise, in the hospital. The Ethics Service is also used to help resolve disputes when formal ethics consultations are requested.

Referee for *The Journal of Value Inquiry*

## **Awards**

Robison Teaching Prize, UMass Amherst, Department of Philosophy, 2011

Awarded once each year to the graduate student who has made the most valuable contribution to the department’s undergraduate teaching mission.

Heidelberg Paper Prize, UMass Amherst, Department of Philosophy, 2010

Awarded once each year to the graduate student who has written the best research paper.

## References

Timm Triplett. University of New Hampshire. Email: [timm.triplett@unh.edu](mailto:timm.triplett@unh.edu)  
Fred Feldman. UMass Amherst. Email: [ffeldman@philos.umass.edu](mailto:ffeldman@philos.umass.edu)  
Peter Graham. UMass Amherst. Email: [pgraham@philos.umass.edu](mailto:pgraham@philos.umass.edu)  
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