PHIL 112
Ethics and Society
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We will begin this course by reflecting on the nature of ethical claims. For instance, if a person says, “Murder is wrong,” is the person expressing a belief about the world or a personal feeling? Is that type of claim true or false or neither? After discussing these kinds of questions, we will read about and discuss various theories about what is morally right and why. Most people agree that murder is wrong, but why is it wrong? Is wrong because it is a violation of the victim’s rights, or because it fails to maximize happiness in society, or for some other reason? After studying key moral theories from Aristotle through Nussbaum, we will read selections from Friedrich Nietzsche and discuss his critiques of traditional morality. Throughout this course we will practice the methods of philosophy, including logical argumentation, analysis of language, Socratic dialogue, and thought-experiments.