This course will explore a variety of topics in ethical theory, primarily normative ethics (both the theory of the good and the theory of the right) but also some metaethics (mostly normative concepts). The topics will be more ones that are underdiscussed than ones on which there’s a huge literature. They’ll include:

- the nature of games and the value of playing them
- the intrinsic values of knowledge/understanding and achievement
- thresholds for rights or constraints and thresholds for options, i.e. when are negative duties or permissions outweighed by good consequences?
- gradable normative concepts (ought other things equal/a reason) vs. non-gradable ones (ought simpliciter/most or decisive reason): which are conceptually primary?
- values in a cosmic context, i.e. given the continuation or not of the human race, or in a vast empty universe
- moral desert: non-comparative and comparative
- thick vs. thin normative concepts
- intervening agency: if someone else’s wrong act is also necessary for an act of yours to cause a harm, does that reduce your responsibility for the harm or reduce the tendency of the fact that you caused it to make your act wrong?
- the doctrine of organic unities
- two articles by G.A. Cohen, on conservatism and on the standing to criticize

On some topics the readings will include a paper of mine; other authors to be read include Suits, Kagan, Ross, Brennan, Broome, Dancy, Ross, Scheffler, Kahane, Kagan, Dancy, Vayrynen, Kamm, Moore, Cohen. One book, Bernard Suits’s *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia* (for the games topic) has been ordered and should be in the bookstore; other readings will be available through the course website or on the internet.

Course requirements will be settled in the first week, once I’m more familiar with Princeton norms.