Course Description
Public officials unavoidably confront questions of values and ethics in the process of making policy and exercising power. This course examines the major normative issues surrounding this feature of public authority. First we consider the question of *means*: what are the distinctive ethical dilemmas faced by public officials as they make policy or seek power? What ethical considerations should guide the way they go about making policy? We then turn to the question of *ends*: what values should public officials attempt to realize via public policy? How should we assess the normative legitimacy of particular policies or of government institutions? We will examine these questions by reading a variety of contemporary and classic works in political theory, and using those theoretical frameworks to analyze a series of cases. The aim here is to think through how principles developed in political theory and philosophy may inform our understanding of practical issues and policy questions. Our focus throughout the course will be on interrogating normative questions with careful analysis and argumentation.