**Writing Assignment—Analytical Paper (50 pts.)**

**DIGI300: Legal and Ethical Perspectives**

**Fall 2015**

**Due Date: Friday, Oct. 9 Submit via Canvas dropbox**

For this first writing assignment, I am challenging you to locate a current event or issue in which the First Amendment and ethics can or do collide. Your goals are twofold: 1) **analyze** the tension between the law and ethics and 2) **offer an argument** for how we, as a society or community, should respond to this issue.

In the analysis component of the assignment I am looking for a clear answer to *how* the issue connects to First Amendment law AND *how* there is a tension or conflict with an ethical read of it. You will need to demonstrate both your understanding of what the First Amendment guarantees as well as an ethical theory we have studied.

**EXAMPLE:** Recently, we’ve discussed the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and the question of ‘how far is too far’ in political/social satire. The cartoons the magazine regularly publish are seen widely as edgy and over-the-top. They have offended many. Is it legal to publish material that runs the risk of deep community offense? Yes. Ethical? You be the judge.

There are countless current events/issues or cases that would be appropriate to explore in this paper. Some ideas might include:

* Immigration in America (related specific issues might include: amnesty; granting in-state college tuition to young people whose parents brought them to America illegally, but have received public education in the U.S.; is the path to citizenship too difficult?)
* The Westboro Baptist Church (or any form of potentially controversial forms of protest)
* Gun control and the nature of that public debate—civil discussion and desire for change (incompatible in this situation?)
* Religious freedom issues (building a mosque on Ground Zero from the NYC 9/11 attacks)
* Racism
* Sexism
* Climate change/environmental stewardship
* Euthanasia (state-sanctioned “mercy killing”)
* Death Penalty
* Marijuana use (legalization)
* GLBTQ issues (i.e., gay marriage laws)

You should provide at least two solid, documented examples of your issue or sources for support of your argument. **Two sources** for this assignment is the minimum required for passing. You should document your sources using APA citation style and provide a bibliography.

I will be looking for a strong and clear argument on the case or cases you present. The essay should be no longer than 800 words.

I will evaluate your work on the following criteria:

* Clear, focused thesis (claim) (5 pts)
* Demonstration of legal and ethical issue(s) and tension (10 pts.)
* Documented, thorough examples (10 pts.)
* Clear, logical support for your points (10 pts.)
* Clear, mechanically error-free prose (10 pts.)
* Logical organization (5 pts.)