

**Moral Psychology
Philosophy 137
Fall 2013
Syllabus**

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3 at Café Roma, Thursday 11-12 in HSS 8004, and by appointment

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Course Description: In this course, we will explore a set of related issues with direct implications both for ethics and for our self-conception. We will start with a challenge: contrary to our everyday assumptions, our actions can never be truly free. We will then examine a variety of attempts to show that (and how) we can act freely, and test them against a set of new challenges to free and responsible agency from experimental results in social psychology and neuroscience, as well from the study of those with emotional deficits such as psychopaths. In the process, we will consider the relationship between free action and responsible action, the relationship between our emotional capacities and the possibility of responsible agency, what implications new research in neuroscience and social psychology has for the question of whether we are free and responsible agents, and whether there is such a thing as “moral luck.”

Specific course topics and readings

All readings are available through the course web site. You simply need access to the UCSD library, which you have automatically on campus, and which you can also receive from anywhere by changing your computer settings. For instructions on how to do this, see <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/resources/course-reserves/course-reserves-from-off-campus.html>. Some readings can also be found in the excellent anthology, *Oxford Readings in Free Will* edited by Gary Watson, that has been ordered through the bookstore.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
9/26	INTRODUCTION	
10/1	FREE AND RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DEBATE	Thomas Nagel, "Freedom" Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"
10/3		Susan Wolf, <i>Freedom Within Reason</i> (excerpt)
10/8		Robert Kane, "Free Will Luck and Chance"
10/10		Derk Pereboom, "Optimistic Skepticism About Free Will"
10/15	EMOTIONAL CAPACITIES, PSYCHOPATHS, AND KINDS OF RESPONSIBILITY (<i>Short paper due</i>)	James Blair, Mitchell, Karina Blair <i>The Psychopath: Emotion and the Brain</i> (excerpt) Matthew Talbert, "Blame and Responsiveness to Moral Reasons: Are Psychopaths Blameworthy?"
10/17		T.M. Scanlon, <i>Moral Dimensions</i> (excerpt), Gary Watson, "The Trouble With Psychopaths"
10/22		Angela Smith, "Attributability, Answerability, and Accountability: In Defense of a Unified Account"
10/24		Jeanette Kennett, "Autism, Empathy, and Moral Agency"
10/29	MIDTERM EXAM	
10/31	CHALLENGES FROM NEUROSCIENCE	Benjamin Libet, "Unconscious Cerebral Initiative..." Al Mele, <i>Effective Intentions: The Power of Conscious Will</i> (excerpt)
11/5		Chun Siong Soon et al, "Unconscious Determinants of Free Decisions in the Brain"
11/7	THE CHALLENGE OF SITUATIONISM	John Doris, <i>Lack of Character</i> (excerpts)
11/12	(<i>medium paper due</i>)	Dana Nelkin, "Freedom, Responsibility and the Challenge of Situationism"
11/14	MORAL LUCK	Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck" Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Morality and Bad Luck"
11/19		Susan Wolf, "The Moral of 'Moral Luck'", Robert Adams, "Involuntary Sins"
11/21		Michael Zimmerman, "Taking Luck Seriously"
11/26		Michael Moore, <i>Placing Blame</i> (excerpt)
11/28	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
12/3	MORAL LUCK AND SITUATIONISM: TWO CASE STUDIES	John Doris and Dominic Murphy, "War Crimes," Matthew Talbert, "Situationism, Normative Competence, and Responsibility for Wartime Behavior"
12/5		In class film

Requirements:

- (1) 1 Short paper (about 1000 words) (15%) Due 10/15
- (2) 1 Midterm exam (25%) 10/29
- (3) 1 Medium paper (about 2000 words) (25%) Due 11/12
- (4) 1 Take-home Final (35%) Due 12/13 2:30

- You may earn up to 5% extra credit for strong participation in class assignments and discussion.
- The papers and take-home final must be uploaded to turnitin.com. I will provide easy instructions for doing so.
- All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Notes

- If accommodations are needed for a disability or for religious reasons, please notify me during the first class period or as soon as possible.
- The **Academic Honor Code** must be observed in this course. Violations will be reported, and an “F” on the assignment and possibly the course will result.
- **Electronic devices may not be used in class except with special permission of the instructor.**
- Please note that the policies and readings described above are subject to minor change.