

Methods Seminar: Freedom, Friendship, and Morality
Philosophy 115
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: A major aim of this course is for students to learn how to understand, construct, evaluate, present, and discuss philosophical arguments and to write about them in a clear and rigorous way. The small seminar setting will provide lots of practice in all of the above, or, in other words, lots of opportunity to hone your skills as a philosopher. The format of each class will be discussion of the views and arguments expressed in the readings assigned for that day, and everyone will be expected to come to class prepared to contribute to class discussion. We will use a rich set of readings that connect questions about free agency and the most important personal relationships as our starting point.

While much of the philosophical discussion about free will has centered on the questions of whether we have it, and whether it is compatible with determinism, recently there has been more attention to the question of what would we lose (or gain) if we aren't really free agents. For example, some have argued that if we are not free, then we are not the sorts of agents for whom it is appropriate to direct certain attitudes such as gratitude, resentment, indignation, forgiveness, and love. But if such attitudes are not appropriate, then we cannot have the kinds of valuable interpersonal relationships we think we have. Or, to take another example, others have argued that friendship and loving relationships that are not freely chosen are less valuable than ones that are freely chosen. In this class, we will examine and assess a variety of arguments like these, and in the process try to figure out what is at stake and how valuable it is in the debate over whether we have free will.

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>.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
9/26	INTRODUCTION	
10/1	FREEDOM AND FRIENDSHIP	Robert Kane, <i>The Significance of Free Will</i> , excerpt
10/3	FREEDOM, REACTIVE ATTITUDES, AND RELATIONSHIPS	Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"
10/8		Susan Wolf, "The Importance of Free Will"
10/10	THE CURRENT DEBATE	Derk Pereboom, <i>Living Without Free Will</i> (excerpt), "Free Will, Love and Anger"
10/15		Tamler Sommers, "The Objective Attitude"
10/17		Seth Shabo, "Where Love and Resentment Meet"
10/22		Dana Nelkin, "Moral Responsibility, the Reactive Attitudes and the Significance of (Libertarian) Free Will"
10/24		Derk Pereboom, "The Dialectic of Selfhood and the Significance of Free Will"
10/29	RELATIONSHIPS, DEMANDS, AND OBLIGATIONS	Gary Watson, "Two Faces of Responsibility"
10/31		T. M. Scanlon, <i>What We Owe To Each Other</i> (excerpt), <i>Moral Dimensions</i> (excerpt)
11/5	FRIENDSHIP AND SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS	David Annis, "The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship"
11/7		Diane Jeske, "Special Obligations"
11/12		Diane Jeske, "Families, Friends, and Special Obligations"
11/14		Samuel Scheffler, "Relationships and Responsibilities"
11/19		Michael Sandel, <i>Liberalism and the Limits of Justice</i> (excerpt)
11/21		Jennifer Whiting, "Impersonal Friends"
11/26		David Brink, "Impartiality and Associative Duties" (Prospectus Due)
11/28	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
12/3	FREEDOM AND OBLIGATION	Julia Driver, "The Suberogatory", Michael McKenna, <i>Responsibility and Conversation</i> (excerpt)
12/5		Dana Nelkin, <i>Making Sense of Freedom and Responsibility</i> (excerpt)

Requirements:

- (1) 7 short 2-3 page papers responding to the readings. For the first three, you will be given specific prompts to respond to. (35%)
- (2) 1 term paper (about 10-15 pages), preceded by a prospectus that includes the main ideas and a bibliography (1-2 pages). (40%)
Prospectus due: November 26, start of class; Term paper due: December 12, 5 pm (hard copy and an electronic copy uploaded to Turnitin.com).
- (3) Attendance and participation. (15%)
- (4) 2 presentations. (10%)

Note: 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.