PHIL 4484   FREEDOM & RESPONSIBILITY

COURSE INFORMATION

Richard Rorty famously – or infamously – opined that “if you take care of freedom, truth takes care of itself”. Despite the popularity of Rorty’s slogan, many philosophers seem to still care quite a lot about the truth about freedom.

In this course, we will grapple with two very general questions:

What do we talk about when we talk about freedom?

Why do we care about freedom in that sense?

These questions are deceptive: they seem simple, but even in a small seminar we may wind up individually answering these questions in radically different ways. The different ways of answering these questions are, in part, what the course is about.

Along the way, we will think about the metaphysical nature of freedom, about agency and responsibility, and about standards of moral praise and blame.

Our engagement will move through three phases.

1. We begin with a historical orientation in the area, covering classic selections from Aristotle, Hume, d'Holbach, and Kant.

2. We then move into 20th century philosophy and beyond, considering the ways in which discussions of freedom and responsibility sit within contemporary worldviews.

3. Finally, we close the course with connections to areas of student interest to be determined, which could include related topics in law, education, medicine, or other areas.

Instructor       Dr. Diana Heney
dheney@fordham.edu
Collins Hall 114

Lecture          Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
1:00 – 4:00

Office Hours     Monday & Wednesday 4:00 – 5:00
or by appointment

Email policy     Emails will be answered within two business days. Please limit email contact to administrative issues or very brief questions; philosophical questions are best dealt with during office hours. Any email inquiring after information available on the syllabus, or on Blackboard, will be disregarded. Use your institutional email for course correspondence.
Blackboard The course site will be used regularly and for a variety of purposes; check it often.


All other readings will be posted on Blackboard

COURSE OBJECTIVES & EXPECTATIONS

Through your efforts in the course, you will:
- Come to understand the overlap of philosophical questions around the locus of freedom
- Build on your background in Philosophical Ethics through revisiting questions of moral responsibility
- Engage in metaphilosophical discourse about how to approach questions concerning freedom
- Continue your training in philosophy by further developing the ability to critically engage with philosophical texts/debates
- Practice delivering material orally through a presentation on one of our readings
- Hone the skills necessary to write a philosophy paper, by working on a research paper over the course of the term and learning to edit and incorporate feedback
- Develop the ability to engage in philosophical discussion with peers, including the ability to be a responsible interlocutor

As instructor, I expect you to:
- Read the relevant material before class meetings
- Attend class meetings
- Be on time and prepared to engage, as class sessions will always include substantial discussion
- Complete all work on time, per instructions, with appropriate consultation where necessary
- Treat myself and your peers with respect
- Seek help with the material by asking questions or seeing me in office hours
- Be aware of the University policy on academic integrity and conduct yourself accordingly

As senior students, you are entitled to expect that I will:
- Provide a constructive learning environment
- Come prepared to class
- Support your efforts to achieve the course objectives
- Provide clear instructions for course assignments
- Give you timely and useful feedback on your work
- Be available to help you during regularly held office hours
- Be responsive to accessibility needs
- Be ready to discuss your work with you with an eye to your own future goals

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One's own</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History+ paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First draft</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>30%</td>
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NB: EP4 courses are required to have one formal oral presentation as well as 15 pages of ‘final draft’ essay writing which has been through a revision process. The course assignments are designed to respect these standards.

Further explanation of items for evaluation:

**Participation (15%)**:
Philosophy involves not only reading and writing, but also respectful discussion and debate. Because this class will be run seminar-style, it will be as instructive as we are prepared. Each member of the class is expected to contribute consistently: such contributions may take the form of asking questions, raising objections, or offering reasoned responses. Each member of the class is also expected to develop and demonstrate her/his abilities as an interlocutor, abilities which should be exhibited by attentive listening, charitable interpretation, and offering constructive feedback.

You must attend class in order to participate. Each student gets one free-pass, no-questions asked absence (which obviously cannot be used on a day when you are required to attend for an evaluative component, such as your own presentation or a peer-review workshop). Beyond that, missing class without a Dean-approved excuse will negatively impact your participation grade.
Late arrival is distracting and annoying to everyone. Repeated instances of lateness will negatively impact your participation grade.

*Presentation (10% + 5% = 15%):*
Each student will give a presentation on one of the course readings. We will determine presentation assignments during our first week of class. Once your reading selection and presentation date has been confirmed, only a Dean-approved excuse for absence on the date of your scheduled presentation will be regarded as a reason to switch reading or date. Your own presentation will be worth 10% of your final grade. A more detailed description of presentation requirements will be posted on Blackboard.

After each presentation, the other members of the seminar will provide *constructive* written feedback. In order to do this well, those not presenting will have to pay close attention to the presentations and think judiciously about what useful feedback looks like. Your written feedback on your peers' presentations will be assessed by Professor Heney before it is given to the author of the presentation, and will be worth 5% of your final grade.

*History Paper (10%):*
History of philosophy is philosophy! This is titled ‘History Paper’ because you will focus on the argument(s) of someone who has been dead for quite some time, whose work on freedom & responsibility continues to be interesting and important. A more detailed assignment will be posted on Blackboard. *(strict word limit of 1000 words)*

*History+ Paper (10%):*
You will receive comments on your paper, which you will then revise and resubmit, and may elect to expand by considering connections with a more recent primary source on the syllabus. *(strict limit of 1500 words)*

*Research Paper (5% + 5% + 10% + 30% = 50%):*
This is titled ‘Research Paper’ because it will require you to do the kind of planning, reading, thinking, writing, and revising of a sustained research project. You might well continue to build on your History Paper, but that is not required. *(strict limit of 3000 words for each draft, though the first may be shorter)*

Here are the components that will lead to your final product:

*Proposal (5%)*
You will submit a written proposal outlining your project, including key questions/arguments/hypotheses you will address and sources that you will use. You will meet with Professor Heney to discuss your proposal in person.
Peer Review (5%)
You will read and comment on the first draft of a colleague’s paper during our peer review workshop, and submit your comments to Professor Heney, who will assess them before passing them on the paper’s author. Peer review will be done anonymously.

First draft (10%)
You will submit 2 copies of a first draft of your research paper during our Peer Review workshop – one will be given to a colleague by Professor Heney, one is for Professor Heney. Professor Heney will review your colleague’s comments and return both sets of comments to you.

Final draft (30%)
You will submit the final draft of your research paper to Professor Heney via email on its due date (i.e. by 11:59pm that day).

Lateness Policy:
The term goes by quickly. It is important to submit work on time. Late work will be penalized at a rate of a partial letter grade per day (e.g. a B paper that is one day late receives a B-; a B paper that is two days late receives a C+; &tc). Each weekend day counts as a day.

Word Limit Policy:
The word limit for all written assignments will be strictly enforced. This is because allowing some students to write longer papers than others creates issues of fairness. Work that exceeds the stated word limit by more than 10% will be penalized at a rate of a partial letter grade (e.g. a B paper that is more then 10% over the stated work limit receives a B-; &tc). Part of the challenge of the written work is to say everything that needs to be said concisely.

Electronic Essay Submission:
With the exception only of the first draft of your research paper (of which you will bring 2 paper copies to class on its due date), all essays shall be submitted electronically, and are due by 11:59pm on their due dates. Papers received from midnight on are late. Computer malfunction, slow email connection, or lost files are not acceptable reasons for submitting late. You may submit only one version of your paper; do not email multiple versions. Please use your institutional email for submission (e.g. bleeblooblah@fordham.edu, not explodingcheetah@gmail.com).
Grading Scale
Per the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin, we will use the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
<th>Grade Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00 (93-100%)</td>
<td>Excellent. Honors-level work, outstanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67 (90-93%)</td>
<td>Still excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33 (87-90%)</td>
<td>Very Good. High level of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00 (83-87%)</td>
<td>Good. Solid and above average level of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67 (80-83%)</td>
<td>Good. Above average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.33 (77-80%)</td>
<td>Better than satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00 (73-77%)</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Acceptable level of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.67 (70-73%)</td>
<td>Minimally Acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00 (60-70%)</td>
<td>Passing but unsatisfactory. Below the average level expected. The lowest passing grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00 (0-60%)</td>
<td>Failure. Inferior performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Because this is a senior seminar class, I expect you to take the literal description of the grade ranges seriously: an A, for instance, will be awarded to work that truly is ‘outstanding’. If at any point in the course, you find that you are not meeting the evaluative standard that you have set for yourself, I encourage you to see me to talk about strategies for improvement.

Academic Integrity
From the Fordham University Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity:

"As a student of Fordham University, I recognize that I am part of a community dedicated to the disciplined and rigorous pursuit of knowledge and communication of truth. I therefore commit myself to the University Code of Conduct and upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Any work that I claim to be my own will be my own; I will give appropriate credit where credit is due; I will be fair and honest in all of my interactions with members of the Fordham community."

In any case of misconduct in this course, the offending student will at a minimum receive a grade of F (0%) on that assignment.
## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

(FW = in the Watson *Free Will* anthology; BB = find the reading on Blackboard)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Material</th>
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</table>
| 1    | Tu May 30 | Course Introduction: What we talk about when we talk about freedom  
Watson, ‘Introduction’ (FW) |
Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section VIII – Of Liberty and Necessity (BB) |
|      | Th June 1 | d’Holbach, *A System of Nature*, vol.1: selections (BB)  
Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason*: selections (BB) |
| 2    | M June 5  | Writing & Peer Review Workshop  
➢ bring your History Paper (which you will be able to revise and submit by the end of the day, 11:59pm) |
|      | *History Paper due* |  |
|      | Tu June 6 | Rorty & Stanczyk, ‘There Is A Crisis Coming’ (BB)  
Chisholm, ‘Human Freedom and the Self’ (FW) |
|      | W June 7 | van Inwagen, ‘An Argument for Incompatibilism’ (FW)  
P. Strawson, ‘Freedom and Resentment’ (FW) |
|      | Th June 8 | Wiggins, ‘Towards a Reasonable Libertarianism’ (FW)  
G. Strawson, ‘The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility’ (FW) |
| 3    | M June 12 | Nagel, ‘Freedom’ (FW)  
Kane, ‘Responsibility, Luck, and Chance: Reflections on Free Will and Indeterminism’ (FW) |
|      | *History Paper due* |  |
|      | Tu June 13 | Scanlon, ‘The Significance of Choice’ (FW)  
Arpaly, ‘Varieties of Autonomy’ (BB) |
|      | W June 14 | Frankfurt, ‘Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person’ (FW)  
Wolf, ‘Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility’ (FW) |
|      | Th June 15 | Mandatory Proposal Meetings During Classtime  
➢ bring your completed Proposal to your meeting with Dr. Heney |
|      | *Proposal due* |  |
| 4    | M June 19 | Readings TBD by class consultation |
|      | Tu June 20 | Readings TBD by class consultation |
|      | W June 21 | Readings TBD by class consultation |
|      | Th June 22 | Writing & Peer Review Workshop  
➢ bring two copies of your first draft |
| 5    | M June 26 | Beyond the Text: Freedom in Art & Song  
Course Closing: What we talk about when we talk about freedom, and why it matters |
|      | Tu June 27 | Final Writing Workshop  
➢ bring two copies of your paper |
|      | W June 28 | Summer session I exam day - no class |
|      | Th June 29 | Summer session I exam day – no class  
*Research Paper Final Draft due* |