

## Syllabus

Name of the course: Freedom and Responsibility

Instructor: Ferenc Huoranszki

Number of credits: 4

Semester: 2016, Fall, Monday 13.30–15.10; 15.30–17.10.

Course level: MA, elective course

Teaching format: Seminar

Course description: The purpose of this course is to introduce students into some basic problems concerning the perennial issue of free will and responsibility. The course is organized around the discussion of the following questions: does freedom and responsibility require alternative possibilities? Are there agents able to do otherwise if determinism is true? Is indeterminism compatible with the sort of control necessary for freedom? What are rational capacities and how are they connected to agent's freedom and responsibility?

Goal of the course: Students attending this course are expected to familiarize themselves with the most important issues concerning some current philosophical theories about freedom and responsibility such as the compatibility of free will and determinism; the nature of rational control; the connection between causation and freedom; and the relevance of alternative possibilities to freedom and responsibility.

Learning outcomes: Students are expected to acquire the ability to reconstruct and analyze philosophical arguments or positions. These involve the understanding of validity and soundness of the arguments, the ability to identify background principles and assumptions as well as the ability to draw out the consequences of certain philosophical commitments. They are also expected to acquire certain oral communication skills such as the ability to formulate arguments concisely and accessibly in words, and to give short critical comments. They should also learn how to identify and execute an appropriate writing project. Finally, they should be familiarized with the main contemporary debates about philosophy of action. Learning outcomes shall be measured by term papers and oral presentations on the relevant topics.

Assessment: Students' performance shall be evaluated on the following grounds. First, students are required to attend classes regularly and to participate actively in seminar discussions. 30 % of their final grade shall be given on the basis of this in-class activity. Second, students are required to give one or two short presentations of some chosen topic(s). The choice of topic is optional, but overlap should be avoided. This will make up another 30 % of their final grade. Thirdly, students are required to submit a max. 4 000 word long term-paper. The chosen topic should be approved by the instructor and presented in the last class of the course. The term paper's contribution to the final assessment of students' performance is 40 %.

Deadline for submitting term-papers: January 2, 2017.

Grading criteria: Students should be able to make comments on the texts they have read, and respond to the presentations of other student. Their presentation must include the logical reconstruction of the main arguments of the relevant article/chapter and, possibly, critical remarks or questions for discussion. Students are also expected to prepare and distribute a maximum two page long hand-out that they distribute before their presentation. The topic of the paper can be either a careful critical reconstruction of a particular and important argument for some position discussed in the course; or a comparison between competing arguments about alternative solutions to a problem; or a defense of some particular position/argument against some relevant criticism. References can, but need not, go beyond the material included into the compulsory readings.

Topics and readings:

Week 1	Freedom and causal determinism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J. Ayer 'Freedom and Necessity';</li> <li>• R. Chisholm, 'Human Freedom and the Self' in G. Watson (ed.) <i>Free Will</i> (OUP, 1982) 15–35.</li> </ul>
Week 2	The consequence argument for incompatibilism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P. van Inwagen 'The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism' in Watson (ed.) <i>op. cit.</i> 46–58.</li> <li>• Slote, M. 'Selective Necessity and the Free Will Problem', <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> 1982: 5–24.</li> <li>• Lewis, D. 'Are We Free to Break the Laws?' in his <i>Philosophical Papers. Vol. II</i> (OUP, 1986) 291–298;</li> </ul>
Week 3	Non-causal libertarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C. Ginet 'Reasons Explanation of Action: An Incompatibilist Account' <i>Philosophical Perspectives</i> 3 (1989) 17–46;</li> <li>• R. Kane 'Responsibility, Luck, and Chance: Reflections on Free Will and Indeterminism' <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> 96 (1999). 217–240.</li> </ul>
Week 4	Agent-causal libertarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R. Clarke, 'An Integrated Agent-Causal Account'; 'Agent Causation and Control' from his <i>Libertarian Accounts of Free Will</i> (OUP, 2003) 133–170.</li> </ul>
Week 5	Agents, actions and choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowe, E. J. 'Event Causation and Agency Causation', 'Personal Agency', in his <i>Personal Agency</i> (OUP, 2009): 119–157.</li> </ul>
Week 6	The relevance of alternative possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H. Frankfurt, 'Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility' <i>JP</i> 66 (1969) 829–839;</li> <li>• C. Ginet, 'In Defense of the Principle of Alternative Possibilities' <i>Philosophical Perspectives</i> 10 (1996) 403–417;</li> <li>• A. Mele - D. Robb 'Rescuing Frankfurt-Type Cases' <i>Philosophical Review</i> 107, 1998: 97–112.</li> </ul>
Week 7	Responsibility and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H. G. Frankfurt 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person';</li> <li>• G. Watson 'Free Agency' in G. Watson (ed.) <i>Free Will</i> (OUP, 1982) 81–110.</li> </ul>
Week 8	Asymmetric freedom and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S. Wolf 'The Reason View' in <i>Freedom within Reason</i> (OUP, 1990) 67–93.</li> <li>• <b>D. Nelkin</b> <i>Making Sense of Freedom and Responsibility</i>. Oxford University Press, (2011) 64–84.</li> </ul>
Week 9	Freedom, beliefs, desires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pettit, P. – M. Smith 'Freedom in Belief and Desires', <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> 93, (1996) 429–449.</li> <li>• M. Smith 'A Theory of Freedom and Responsibility' in G. Cullity and B. Gaut (eds.) <i>Ethics and Practical Reason</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 293–319.</li> </ul>
Week 10	Responsibility and rational control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M. Fischer – M. Ravizza <i>Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility</i> (CUP, 1998) 63–91;</li> </ul>
Week 11	Manipulation and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D. Pereboom, 'Determinism <i>al Dente</i>' <i>Nous</i> 29 (1995) 21–45;</li> <li>• <b>A. R. Mele</b> (2008). <b>Manipulation, Compatibilism, and Moral Responsibility</b>. <i>Journal of Ethics</i> 12 (3/4): 263 - 286.</li> </ul>
Week 12	Free will, abilities, and dispositions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K. Vihvelin 'Free Will Demystified: A Dispositional Account' <i>Philosophical Topics</i> 32 (2004) 427–450.</li> </ul>