

Philosophy 318

Metaphysics of the Human Person

Spring 2007

TTh 3:30pm-4:45pm, Buckman 330
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Required Texts:

Kane, Robert. ed. Free Will. Blackwell, 2002.
Another Book, TBA
Reserve readings at Burrow Library.

Course Description and Goals:

As its name indicates, this is a course about human persons. We will be concerned with one central aspect of personhood, namely, free will. In doing so, we will be addressing the following questions:

1. Are human beings free? Do human beings sometimes act freely? If so, what conditions need to be met in order for an agent to act freely?
2. Are there different kinds of freedom? If so, what are they?
3. Is human freedom compatible with physical determinism? Why or why not?
4. Is human freedom compatible with physical indeterminism? Why or why not?

The specific goal of this course is to familiarize you with these issues and some of the ways that philosophers have addressed them. In addition, the course aims to improve your ability to read difficult material and to think critically, as well as write intelligently, about that material. I see the two goals as mutually supportive.

Course Requirements:

Preparation and Participation	15%	
Oral Presentation	10%	
1 4 pg. Paper:	20%	T, Feb. 13
1 5 pg. Paper:	25%	Th, March 22
1 5-7 pg. Paper	30%	M, April 30

****The deadlines for the papers are subject to change.****

Oral Presentation

After the first few readings, students will be selected to present the assigned readings. I will provide a detailed hand-out that offers guidelines. Your presentations will be graded on how clearly and accurately you present the readings, and how well you do suggesting issues for discussion.

Preparation and Participation

Philosophy is difficult. It requires active reading and discussion. I expect you to have done the reading before coming to class and I expect that you will be able to discuss the readings intelligently. For example, were I to ask you, "What is Sellars' conception of the manifest image?", I expect that you will be able to answer.

Here is a simple test to check if you have understood the reading sufficiently for class. Write down on a 3 x 5 note card the basic conclusion of the essay and a very short statement of the main reason(s) advanced in its support. If you can't do that, then you haven't understood the reading.

Initially you may have trouble reading the essays with understanding. If you stay with it, I assure you that it gets easier (but never quite easy). You can always come talk with me if you are encountering difficulties.

Regarding absences: I strongly discourage missing, for any reason, more than 2 classes. Excessive absences will deleteriously affect your grade. Too many absences will result in an F for the course.

Unannounced reading quizzes: Throughout the semester, I will administer 5 to 10 unannounced reading quizzes. The reason for the quizzes is both to encourage you to keep up to date with the reading and to provide you some sense of your ongoing development of your reading abilities. The quiz grades will be folded into the preparation and participation grade.

Late Penalty and Extensions

I am extremely reluctant to grant extensions, and will normally do so only under circumstances so serious that they require the attention of the Dean of Students (e.g., medical or family emergency). For unauthorized late work, I will deduct 1/3 of a letter grade each day (e.g., A- to B+, or B+ to B-). Each calendar day counts, as you can always submit a paper via e-mail. I will not accept any assignment that is more than 7 days (inclusive) late.

Successful Classroom:

Please treat each other with courtesy and respect. Listen when your classmates offer their insights. Offer your own criticisms constructively. Take your

classmates criticisms equanimously. Keep in mind that what is under consideration is an issue, not you.

Impediments to a successful classroom include tardiness, cell phones, disruptive talking, lethargy, excessive absences, and leaving the classroom before the end of the hour. Please show your respect both to your fellow classmates and to the material by avoiding these impediments.

If you have a learning or physical disability that requires accommodation, you will need to visit the Office of Student Disability Services well before an assignment is due in order to receive the appropriate forms. I will not be able to honor a request that is made without these forms or at the last minute.

Honor Code:

You are expected to observe the Honor Code at all times. All work on midterms and papers should be your own. I encourage you, however, to prepare for the midterm together and in general to discuss class material with each other and with me.

Reading List

****This reading list is tentative. We may not read all of what is listed, we may read some articles that are not listed, and we may not read the articles in the order listed. Please be attentive at the beginning of each class for announcements concerning your reading assignment.****

FW: Free Will. Kane (ed).

R: On Reserve in Burrow Library.

Introduction

1. NY Times Article: "Free Will: Now You Have It, Now You Don't."
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/02/science/02free.html?ex=1168664400&en=825b97e210752e96&ei=5070&emc=eta1>
2. Kane, "Introduction" [FW]

The Free Will Problem: Standard Positions

3. Skinner, "Walden Two: Freedom and the Behavioral Sciences" [FW]
4. Nielson, "The Compatibility of Freedom and Determinism" [FW]
5. Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self" [FW]
6. Edwards, "Hard and Soft Determinism" [FW]

The Compatibility/Incompatibility Question

7. van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism" [FW]

8. Dennett, "I Could Not Have Done Otherwise—So What?" [FW]
9. Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" [R]
10. Fischer, "Frankfurt-Style Examples, Responsibility and Semi-Compatibilism" [FW]
11. Pereboom, "The Explanatory Irrelevance of Alternative Possibilities" [FW]

New Compatibilist Theories

12. Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" [FW]
13. Wolf, "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility" [FW]
14. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" [R]
15. Watson, "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil" [FW]

The Intelligibility Question

16. van Inwagen, "The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom" [FW]
17. O'Connor, "The Agent as Cause" [FW]
18. Ginet, "Freedom, Responsibility and Agency" [FW]
19. Kane, "Free Will: New Directions" [FW]

Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom

20. Augustine, "Divine Foreknowledge, Evil, and the Free Choice of the Will" [FW]
21. Hasker, "God, Time, Knowledge and Freedom" [FW]