

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

We think of ourselves as acting freely and making our own choices. But we also think we are part of the order of nature, and governed by its laws. Are these conceptions compatible? Why is freedom important to us? In what sense and to what extent are our actions free, if they are at all? To what extent is it legitimate to think of people as responsible for their actions, and in what ways should we hold ourselves and others responsible? This course will consider central questions about freedom and responsibility through class discussion and close readings of historical and contemporary writings.

Instructor: Eugene Chislenko, chislenko@temple.edu

Office hours: Anderson Hall 750, Tuesdays 3-5pm or by appointment

Course requirements: (1) Up to 80 pages of reading each week, either in Derk Pereboom, ed., *Free Will* (abbreviated *FW* below) or on course website
(2) Four in-class quizzes (15%)
(3) Three 3-page assignments: a short paper, a peer feedback assignment, and a final paper proposal (15% each)
(4) 8-page final paper (40%)

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

I. Free Will

1. Tu 8/29: **The Importance of Free Will**

2. Th 8/31: **Ancient Sources**

Reading: Selections from Aristotle, the Stoics, and Lucretius (*FW* 1-3, pp. 1-18)

3. Tu 9/5: **Medieval Sources, I**

Reading: Augustine, from *On Free Choice of the Will* (*FW* 4, pp. 19-33)

4. Th 9/7: **Medieval Sources, II**

Reading: Aquinas, from *Summa Theologica* (*FW* 5, pp. 34-41 ONLY)

II. Is Freedom Compatible with Being Determined?

5. Tu 9/12: **No**

Reading: Selections from Spinoza, *Ethics* (FW 6, pp. 57-58 and 74 ONLY) and from Derk Pereboom, “Determinism *al Dente*” (FW 22, pp. 307-14 ONLY)

6. Th 9/14: **Yes**

Reading: Hume, from *A Treatise of Human Nature* (FW 7, pp. 76-86)

7. Tu 9/19: **Yes and No**

Reading: Kant, from the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (on course website)

8. Th 9/21: **Determinism Doesn’t Matter**

Reading: Thomas Nagel, “Freedom,” §§1-2 and 5-6 (on course website)

First paper due Friday, 9/22 by noon.

9. Tu 9/26: **Open discussion**

No new reading. **Peer comments due Wednesday, 9/27 by noon.**

10. Th 9/28: **Writing workshop**

No new reading.

First paper rewrite and peer response due Monday, 10/2 by noon.

III. Responsibility

11. Tu 10/3: **What is Responsibility?**

Reading: Angela Smith, “Responsibility as Answerability” (on course website)

12. Th 10/5: **Visit by August Gorman**

Reading: A.G. Gorman, “The Minimal Approval Account of Attributional-Responsibility” (a work in progress; draft on course website a week in advance)

13. Tu 10/10: **What Kinds of Things are We Responsible For? I**

Reading: Angela Smith, “Responsibility for Attitudes” (on course website)

14. Th 10/12: **What Kinds of Things are We Responsible For? II**

Reading: Jules Holroyd, “Responsibility for Implicit Bias” (on course website)

Optional: Take an implicit bias test at implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

15. Tu 10/17: **Taking Responsibility and Holding Responsible**

Reading: Christine Korsgaard, “Creating the Kingdom of Ends: Reciprocity and Responsibility in Personal Relations” (on course website)

16. Th 10/19: **Open discussion**

Reading: No new reading

IV. Freedom and Responsibility

17. Tu 10/24: **Is Freedom Irrelevant to Responsibility?**
Reading: P.F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" (*FW* 13, pp. 148-71)
18. Th 10/26: **What Kind of Freedom is Relevant? I**
Reading: Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" (*FW* 15, pp. 185-95)
19. Tu 10/31: **What Kind of Freedom is Relevant? II**
Reading: Hilary Bok, "Freedom and Practical Reason" (on course website)
20. Th 11/2: **What Kind of Freedom is Relevant? III**
Reading: Bernard Williams, "Moral Incapacity"
21. Tu 11/7: **When and How Should We Hold Responsible? I**
Reading: Susan Wolf, "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility" (on course website)
22. Th 11/9: **When and How Should We Hold Responsible? II**
Reading: Derk Pereboom, "Determinism *al Dente*" (*FW* 22, pp. 325-37 ONLY)
23. Tu 11/14: **When and How Should We Hold Responsible? III**
Reading: T.M. Scanlon, "Forms and Conditions of Responsibility" (on course website)
24. Th 11/16: **Open discussion**
No new reading.

No class Tu 11/21 (Fall Break) or Th 11/23. Happy Thanksgiving!

25. Tu 11/28: **Attitudes toward Freedom, I**
Reading: Jean-Paul Sartre, selections from *Being and Nothingness* (on course website)
26. Th 11/30: **Attitudes toward Freedom, II**
Reading: Reread Sartre.
Paper proposal due Monday, 12/4 by noon.
27. Tu 12/5: **Writing workshop**
No new reading.
28. Th 12/7: **Open discussion**
No new reading.
Final paper due Tuesday, 12/12 by noon.

COURSE POLICIES

Office Hours: I encourage you to come to office hours often; talking one-on-one or in small groups is one of the best ways to get a handle on the material and methods of the course. You'll probably get more out of it if you come with specific questions, but coming to talk about the issues in a more general way is fine too. If you have friends in the class, feel free to come as a small group. If you want to meet but have a schedule conflict, let me know and we can find a different time. I'll also hold extra office hours each time a paper deadline is coming up.

Quizzes: There will be four short reading quizzes, usually at the beginning of class. This is a way of keeping attendance, holding you accountable for doing the readings, and reflecting how you are doing in the course. You won't know in advance which day there will be a quiz. Each quiz will be graded as an A, B, C, D, or F (no plus or minus grades); your three highest grades will be averaged together as 15% of your course grade. There will be no makeup quizzes, but only the best four count, so you can miss one quiz or get one F with no penalty. Your answer does not need to be perfect in every detail to get an A; if you read the assigned reading a few times and take some notes on the main ideas, you should have no trouble.

The instructions on each quiz will be as follows: "Reading quiz: Please answer the following question about the reading for today, summarizing the relevant parts of the reading." The question will be a basic question about the main ideas of the reading for that day.

Plagiarism: *All* written work for this course must be your own. Be sure to cite any works you use, including web sites, books, and articles. Presenting *anyone* else's work as your own is considered plagiarism. Please read Temple University's Policy on Academic Honesty: http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtm

Disabilities: Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability, including accommodations for access to technology resources and electronic instructional materials required for the course, should contact me privately to discuss your situation by the end of the second week of classes, or as soon as you can. If you haven't already, please contact Disability Resources and Services (DRS) in 100 Ritter Annex or 215-204-1280 to learn more about the resources available to you. I will work with DRS to coordinate reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. Temple University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02