

Freedom

Spring 2018
James Blair Hall 221

Section 03: MWF 9-9:50am
Section 04: MWF 10-10:50am

Syllabus

Instructor

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Office Hours: MW 1pm-2:30pm
(and by appointment)
James Blair Hall, room 124

What Is This Class About?

We all value our freedom. We value the freedom to do what we want, pursue what we want, be whomever we want, and so on. By 'freedom', philosophers mean one of two things: (1) The internal ability to control our actions, direct our own lives, decide what to do, and how to be, etc., or (2) The state of a society in which our choices are (as much as possible) *protected* rather than *constrained* by our government. We will spend one half of the semester on each of these:

Unit One: Freedom of the Will: Do you have free will? That is, are you in control of your own actions? Or, rather, are your actions governed by the laws of nature just like everything else? Is there any sense in which we could have free will even if our actions WERE law-governed in this way? What are the implications of experiments in neuroscience and psychology for human free will? What is the relationship between moral responsibility and free will? Would there be any room left for praise, blame, guilt, punishment, meaning, or love in a world without free will?

Unit Two: Political Liberty: What is the proper role of government? What sorts of freedoms ought the government protect or promote? Can its restriction of any of our freedoms ever be justified? If so, how? And which ones? (For example, are restrictions on drugs, guns, voting, speech, or taxation justified?) Does poverty reduce freedom? How about oppression? Is it always better to have more choices? Stay tuned!

Throughout our investigation of these questions, my ultimate goal more broadly will be to help you to (i) be able to think more carefully and critically, (ii) be able to identify and supply good *reasons* for your beliefs, and (iii) acquire the necessary tools to continue exploring these issues on your own.

Required Text

There is no textbook for this course. Assigned readings will be provided as pdf files, accessible under "Assigned Readings" on our course website, here:

<http://rintintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil100/phil100.html>

Course Requirements

1. Exams (40%). You will take a mid-term exam (15%) and a final exam (25%).
2. Papers (30%). You will write two papers. The first (10%) will be a short diagnostic paper, 600-900 words (i.e., 2 - 3 pages), and the second (20%) will be a longer paper, 1200-1800 words in length (i.e., 4 - 6 pages). *Topics and more info: TBA.*
3. Debate (10%). You will participate in a small group, in-class debate. *More info: TBA.*
4. Quizzes (10%). You will take a total of 11 short reading quizzes. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped; i.e., your 10 best scores will constitute your quiz grade (1% each).
5. Participation (10%). A portion of your grade will depend on your ability to come to class (on time and prepared), participate in class discussion, and refrain from being disruptive, falling asleep, sending text messages, or surfing the internet.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

All students of the College of William & Mary are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity honor code policy of this institution. Violations of this policy include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, and stealing. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Council. More information about the honor code can be found at:

wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/honorcodeandstudentconduct/honorcode/index.php

NOTE: *Students who are found to be in violation of the honor code will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member (i.e., you will automatically receive an F for the course) as well as non-academic sanctions (which include academic probation, suspension, or expulsion).*

Student Conduct

Students and faculty each have a responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to the code of conduct may be subject to discipline. More information at:

wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/studenthandbook/student_code_of_conduct/index.php

Disability Services

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. More information at: Campus Center (room 109), 757-221-2510, or wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/disabilityservices/.

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please let me know by the end of the drop/add period about any such conflicts, so that we can resolve them. More information at:

wm.edu/about/administration/provost/forfacstaff/holidays/religiousguidelines/index.php.

Discrimination and Harassment

The College of William & Mary policies on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment and/or discrimination based upon race, sex, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, political belief, disability, veteran status, age, or any other category protected by the Commonwealth or by federal law should contact the Office of Compliance and Policy on the first floor of James Blair Hall. More information about discrimination and harassment can be found at:

http://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/topics/discrimination_overview/index.php#policies

http://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/policies/sexual_harass/index.php

Course Schedule

Below is a schedule of the topics that we will cover, along with list of the reading(s) which you should complete before each class meeting. Please note the **paper due dates** and **exam dates** in bold.

Unit One	Freedom of the Will	
Week 1	Moral Luck	
Wed 1/17	Introduction	No readings
Fri 1/19	Moral Luck	• Nagel, "Moral Luck"
Week 2	Fatalism	
Mon 1/22	Fatalism	• Sider & Conee, "Fatalism" • Taylor, "Fate"
Wed 1/24	Human Freedom vs. Divine Foreknowledge	• Augustine, <i>On Free Choice of the Will</i> (excerpt) • Kane, "Predestination, Divine Foreknowledge, and Free Will"
Fri 1/26	Freedom vs. Foreknowledge	• Plantinga, <i>God, Freedom, and Evil</i> (excerpt)
Week 3	Hard Determinism	
Mon 1/29	Hard Determinism	• Holbach, "The Illusion of Free Will"
Wed 1/31	Free Will and the Brain	• Libet, "Do We Have Free Will?" • Watch: Al Mele, " Does Free Will Exist? " video • Optional: Mele, "Free Will: Action Theory Meets Neuroscience" (His video is a summary of this article) • Listen: Adina Roskies, Philosophy Bites interview ¹
Fri 2/2	Hard Determinism & Moral Responsibility	• Strawson, "Your Move: The Maze of Free Will" • Optional: Strawson, "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" ('Your Move' is a summary of this article)
Week 4	Compatibilism	
Mon 2/5	The Principle of Alternate Possibilities	• Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"
Wed 2/7	Compatibilism	• Frankfurt, "Free Will & the Concept of a Person"
Fri 2/9	Against Compatibilism	• Ekstrom, "Protecting Incompatibilist Freedom" • Beebee, "Pereboom's Four Case Argument"
Week 5	Libertarianism	
Mon 2/12	Mystery	• Van Inwagen, "Freedom of the Will"
Wed 2/14	Quantum Indeterminacy	• Kane, "Responsibility, Luck, and Chance" ²
Fri 2/16	Situationism	• Mele & Shepherd, "Situationism and Agency"
Week 6	Praise, Blame, & Punishment	
Mon 2/19	Sanity and Responsibility	• Wolf, "Sanity & the Metaphysics of Responsibility"
Wed 2/21	Punishment	• Shariff & Vohs, "The World Without Free Will" • Pereboom, "Why We Have No Free Will and Can Live Without It", §5 (read §§6-8 for Friday)
Fri 2/23	Meaning	• Pereboom, §§6-8
Week 7	Existentialism	
Mon 2/26	Existentialism	• Sartre, "Man is Condemned to Be Free"
Wed 2/28	Review: Mid-Term Exam	No new readings
Fri 3/2	MID-TERM EXAM	No new readings
Spring Break		
3/3-3/11	Spring Break	No readings

¹ You may stop at 9:34. The rest is optional.

² Read §§ I-V. The remaining sections on pgs. 234-240 are optional.

Unit Two		Political Liberty
Week 8		Government Authority
Mon 3/12	Freedom vs. Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolff, "The Conflict Between Authority and Autonomy" • Nozick, "The Tale of the Slave"
Wed 3/14	Social Contract Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dupré, "Leviathan" & "The Prisoner's Dilemma" • Hobbes, "Leviathan" • Locke, "Second Treatise"
Fri 3/16	Objections to Contract Theory DUE: PAPER #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hume, "On the Social Contract" • Huemer, "The Social Contract Account"
Week 9		The Limits of Authority
Mon 3/19	Voting Rights	• Brennan, "The Right to a Competent Electorate"
Wed 3/21	The Limits of Authority	• Mill, "On Liberty"
Fri 3/23	No new topics	No new readings
Week 10		Paternalism
Mon 3/26	Paternalism	• Dworkin, "Paternalism"
Wed 3/28	<i>DEBATE: GUN REGULATION</i>	No new readings
Fri 3/30	Distributive Justice: Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dupré, "The Difference Principle" • Rawls, "Justice As Fairness"
Week 11		Justice
Mon 4/2	Distributive Justice: Entitlement	• Nozick, "Distributive Justice"
Wed 4/4	No new topics	No new readings
Fri 4/6	<i>DEBATE: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM</i>	No new readings
Week 12		Liberty, Poverty, & Oppression
Mon 4/9	Oppression	• Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"
Wed 4/11	Positive vs. Negative Freedom	• Berlin, Washington, Goldman, Cohen, Hayek, & Rawls (excerpts)
Fri 4/13	No new topics	No new readings
Week 13		Applied Topics I
Mon 4/16	<i>DEBATE: FREEDOM OF SPEECH</i>	No new readings
Wed 4/18	Parent Licensing	• LaFollette, "Licensing Parents"
Fri 4/20	No new topics DUE: PAPER #2	No new readings
Week 14		Applied Topics II
Mon 4/23	Drug Legalization	• Huemer, "America's Unjust Drug War"
Wed 4/25	The Paradox of Choice	• Schwartz, <i>The Paradox of Choice</i> (excerpt)
Fri 4/27	Review: Final Exam	No new readings
Final Exams		
Mon 5/7	Final Exam: 9am – noon	Section 03 (9am class)
Tue 5/8	Final Exam: 2pm – 5pm	Section 04 (10am class)