

Philosophy 100: Philosophical Methods

Wednesday, 2-4 PM, McCone 141

UC Berkeley, Spring 2017

This course is restricted to Philosophy majors. It is intended to improve the student's ability to read and write philosophy. Special emphasis will be placed on developing analytic skills. There will be short written assignments each week, which will focus on the essays we are reading. In addition to two hours of lecture, students will meet in tutorials with a Graduate Student Instructor in order to discuss the reading, the past week's writing assignment, and how to improve their reading and writing more generally.

Instructor: Professor Lara Buchak (buchak@berkeley.edu)

Office Hours: Friday 2-4 (drop in), or by appointment.

Office: 307 Moses Hall

GSIs: Russell Buehler (b.r@berkeley.edu), Sophie Dandelet (sdandelet@gmail.com), Jim Hutchinson (jim.hutchinson@berkeley.edu), Ethan Jerzak (jerzak@berkeley.edu), Julian Jonker (julianjonker@berkeley.edu)

Topic: Free Will

Readings will focus on problems related to free will. The course is divided into four primary topics: how free will relates to action, whether the truth of determinism would undermine free will and/or moral responsibility, what sorts of practices infringe on autonomy and why, and what the role of the will is in forming beliefs.

Readings: course reader will be available at Copy Central on Bancroft—first reading available on bCourses

Section 1. Free Will and Action

Harry G. Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"

Gary Watson, "Free Agency"

Peter van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism"

Section 2. Free Will and Responsibility

Augustine of Hippo, "On Free Choice of the Will," Ch. 3.

Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"

Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck"

Section 3. Free Will and Autonomy

Robert L. Arrington, "Advertising and Behavioral Control" & Roger Crisp, "Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire"

Suzy Killminster, "Autonomy and the Problem of Socialisation"

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Bad Faith"

Section 4. Free Will and Belief

G.A. Cohen, "Beliefs and Roles"

Bernard Williams, "Deciding to Believe"

William James, "The Will to Believe"

Assignments

There will be a weekly 2-3 pg. paper, plus two rewrites, explained below. Weekly papers will be due to your GSI by 5PM on the Monday after the topic is assigned in lecture, by email. In addition, you must come to lecture prepared by reading that week's essay and writing a short one-paragraph answer to a question about it that you will get in lecture the week before.

So, for example, if we are discussing Watson's "Free Agency" in Wednesday lecture, you will come to lecture having read the essay and having answered a question about it. During lecture, you will be assigned a topic for a short paper on "Free Agency," which you will hand in the following Monday. You will then write next week's paragraph for class on that Wednesday, and so forth.

There are 12 weekly papers assigned. You may skip two weekly paper assignments, but you may not skip either of the first two.

In addition, you *must* rewrite two of your papers in light of your GSI's comments. These must be handed in within two weeks of receiving your GSI's comments. These will not erase your previous grade; instead, they will be graded with respect to how well you improved the paper in response to comments. (There are no special restrictions on when you should do these—you can do a rewrite and a new essay in the same week, or do a rewrite during a "skip" week.)

In other words, you will write 12 short papers total, including 10 normal papers and 2 that are rewrites of other papers.

Grading Breakdown

70% - 10 short 2-3 pg. papers (includes tutorial meeting participation)

20% - two rewrites

10% - class participation and weekly paragraphs

Late Work Policy

NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Electronics Policy

Please do not use laptops, cell phones, text messaging, smartphones, or any other electronic device during class.

Conflict Policy

If you have a conflict that will keep you from attending a class, you must let your GSI know in the first two weeks of class, so that you can make arrangements to make up the class time and hand in the assignment for the day.

Schedule

January 18 – Introduction

January 25 – Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”
January 30 – paper on Frankfurt due; TUTORIALS BEGIN

February 1 – Watson, “Free Agency”
Feb 6 – paper on Watson due

February 8 – Peter van Inwagen, “The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism”
Feb 13 – paper on van Inwagen due

February 15 – No regular class. Optional workshop to revise previous papers.

February 22 – Augustine of Hippo, "On Free Choice of the Will," Ch. 3.
Feb 27 – paper on Augustine due

March 1 – Peter Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment”
Mar 6 – paper on Strawson due

March 8 – Thomas Nagel, “Moral Luck”
Mar 13 – paper on Nagel due

March 15 – Robert L. Arrington, “Advertising and Behavioral Control” & Roger Crisp, “Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire”
Mar 20 – paper on Arrington & Crisp due

March 22 – Suzy Killminster, “Autonomy and the Problem of Socialisation”
Apr 3 – paper on Killmister due

April 5 – Jean-Paul Sartre, “Bad Faith”
Apr 10 – paper on Sartre due

April 12 – G.A. Cohen, “Beliefs and Roles”
Apr 17 – paper on Cohen due

April 19 – Bernard Williams, “Deciding to Believe”
Apr 24 – paper on Williams due

April 26 – William James, “The Will to Believe”
May 1 – paper on Williams due