

# SEMINAR FOR MAJORS: FREEDOM

## SPRING 2014

TIME AND LOCATION: TR 3:25-4:40 pm, Meliora Hall 219

INSTRUCTOR: Alison Peterman  
CONTACT: alison.peterman@rochester.edu  
OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 9:00-11:00, Lattimore 521

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This seminar will consider the concept of freedom from a number of angles. Our approach will stress development of this philosophical theme across historical periods and philosophical traditions. In the first half of the course, we will start with the question of the compatibility of free will with fate and determinism and move on to discuss the relationship between free will and moral responsibility. In the second half of the course, we will discuss the intersection of personal freedom with political freedom, as well as existentialist radical freedom.

## POLICIES

Please let me know right away if you need special accommodations because of a documented condition that interferes with your learning.

Please review the class schedule sometime in the next week and let me know if there are any issues.

Please turn off your cell phones and laptops when you arrive; if you are texting I will ask you to leave.

Student success at the University of Rochester includes more than just academic performance. Please feel comfortable speaking with me about challenges you are experiencing within and outside of the classroom so that I may submit a CARE report on your behalf. A CARE report is submitted when the level of concern for a student necessitates inclusive, multi-layered support from the campus community. The CARE network administrator shares information only with staff who need to know it in order to help you.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. As freshmen, students read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which

our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: [www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty).

## ASSESSMENT

### RESPONSE PAPERS (30%):

There will be three three-page response papers assigned over the course of the semester. Each will be worth 10% of your grade. They must be handed in before the class during which we discuss the reading. Make-ups will be arranged only under \*EXTENUATING\* circumstances.

### READING QUIZZES (10%):

There will be seven unannounced reading quizzes. They will very short and simple, graded as satisfactory or not, designed only to check if you have read. Each will be worth 2%. I will drop two automatically, which means if you attend fairly regularly it should be no problem to get to five. So, I will not allow makeups except under the \*MOST EXTENUATING\* of circumstances.

### PRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION (20%):

Each student will be responsible for co-leading one meeting's discussion with me. We will schedule the presentations during our second meeting. Attending class regularly, asking questions, and contributing to class discussion will also contribute to this part of your grade.

### FINAL PAPER (40%):

A ten-page final paper will be worth 40% of your grade. You'll be required to submit a draft by the deadline indicated on the syllabus.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The readings listed for each day are to be read *before* the lecture on that day.

### Week 1

January 16: Introduction

\* From Aristotle: *De Interpretatione* (in class)

### Week 2

January 21: Fatalism and foreknowledge

\* Augustine: "The Freedom of the Will"

January 23: Fatalism and foreknowledge

- \* Taylor: “Deliberation and Foreknowledge”

Week 3

January 28: Causal determinism, necessity and free will

- \* Ayer: “Free Will and Necessity”

January 30: Generalized determinism and the Principle of Sufficient Reason

- \* Leibniz-Clarke correspondence: selections

Week 4

February 4: Agent causation

- \* Chisholm: “Human Freedom and the Self”
- \* Response paper 1 due

February 6: Incompatibilism

- \* Van Inwagen: “The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism”

Week 5

February 11: Determinism and teleology

- \* Lewis: “Are We Free To Break The Laws?”

February 13: Determinism and teleology

- \* Foot: “Free Will as Involving Determinism”

Week 6

February 18: Doing otherwise

- \* Frankfurt: “Alternate possibilities and moral responsibility”

February 20: Free will and moral responsibility

- \* Frankfurt: “Freedom of the will and the concept of a person”

Week 7

February 25: Free will and moral responsibility

- \* Watson: “Free Agency”

February 27: Free will and moral responsibility

- \* Wolf: “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”

## Week 8

March 4: Free will and moral responsibility

- \* P. Strawson: “Freedom and Resentment”

March 6: Free will and moral responsibility

- \* Nagel: *The View From Nowhere*, selections

## SPRING BREAK

## Week 9

March 18: Kinds of liberty

- \* Berlin: “Two Concepts of Liberty”

March 20: Kinds of liberty

- \* Skinner: “Paradoxes of Political Liberty”

- \* Response paper 3 due

## Week 10

March 25: Liberalism

- \* Mill: *On Liberty*, selections

March 27: Liberalism

- \* Mill, cont.

## Week 11

April 1: Libertarianism

- \* Hayek, selections

April 3: Anarchism

- \* Nozick: *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, selections

## Week 12

April 8: Against liberalism

- \* G. A. Cohen: selections

April 10: Relationship between political and personal freedom

- \* Arendt: “What is Freedom?”

- \* Final paper proposal due

## Week 13

April 15: Existentialism

- \* Dostoyevsky: “The Grand Inquisitor”, from *The Brothers Karamazov*

April 17: Existentialism

- \* Nietzsche: selections

Week 14

April 22: Existentialism

- \* Nietzsche: selections

April 24: Existentialism

- \* Sartre: “Existentialism is a Humanism”
- \* Final paper drafts due

Week 15

April 29: Power and Freedom

- \* Foucault: selections

May 8: Final paper due