

**Advanced Topics in Moral, Political & Legal Philosophy**  
**FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY:**  
**CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL**

**Winter 2017**  
**Michael Forster and Brian Leiter**  
**Room VI, Law School**  
**Thursdays, 4-6 pm**

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**Description:**

The seminar aims to introduce students to the major contemporary positions in the debate about free will and moral responsibility, and then to examine these in light of the historical discussions of these problems. Students may write on either a systematic topic or problem, or produce an exegetical piece on one of the historical figures—or a combination of both.

**Required Text:**

Gary Watson (ed.), *Free Will*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Oxford Readings, 2003)  
Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought* (University of California Press, 2012)  
Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*  
Hegel, *Reason in History*

Excerpts or shorter essays from Hume, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Sartre—as well as some contemporary authors--will either be distributed in class or made available via the class website.

**Requirements:**

- (1) Attendance at *all* classes.
- (2) One 10-15 page paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor(s) (longer for JD students seeking writing credit—please consult Leiter).

**Tentative list of reading assignments (we have 9 sessions):**

**1. January 5: Introduction, Incompatibilism, Alternate Possibilities**

Required: Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility,” and Widerker, “Libertarianism and Frankfurt’s Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities,” both in Watson. Optional: van Inwagen, “An Argument for Incompatibilism,” in Watson.

**2. January 12: Compatibilism**

Required: Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity," from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (handout); Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" and Watson, "Free Agency," both in Watson.

**3. January 19: Agent-Causal Libertarianism (and Compatibilism continued)**

Required: Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self," in Watson; Velleman, "What Happens When Someone Acts?" (handout).

**4. January 26: Strawsonian Compatibilism and a Response**

Required: P. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," in Watson; Pereboom, *Living without Free Will*, Chapter 7 (handout).

**5. February 2: No class on this day. This session will be re-scheduled, for the week of February 6, when Prof. Forster arrives.** Required: Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, in its entirety.

**6. February 9:** Required: Kant, "A New Exposition of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge," Propositions VIII and IX (pp. 17-31 of the Cambridge edition) (handout), and *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, "The Cosmological Ideas" (pp. 79-88 of the Hackett edition).

**7. February 16:** Required: Hegel, *Reason in History*, Part III, "The Idea of History and Its Realization" (pp. 20-67 in the Hartmann translation) and "Introduction" to Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (pp. 14-36 in Knox translation).

**8. February 23:** Required: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, sections 16-21; *Twilight of the Idols*, "The Four Great Errors" (Norman or Kaufmann translations); Leiter, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will," *Philosophers' Imprint* 2007: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/p/pod/dod-idx/nietzsche-s-theory-of-the-will.pdf?c=phimp;idno=3521354.0007.007>. Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, section 109; *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Essay I, section 13; Galen Strawson, "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility," in Watson

**9. March 2:** Required: Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, part 4, chapter 1.