Philosophy 274
Action
Spring 2003

Instructor:

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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-4:00

Readings From:

Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton, 1984
Harry G. Frankfurt, *The Importance of What We Care About*. Cambridge, 1988 (*Importance*)
Harry G. Frankfurt, *Necessity, Volition, and Love*. Cambridge, 1999 (*NVL*)
Margaret Gilbert, *Living Together*. Rowman and Littlefield, 1996 (*LT*)
Margaret Gilbert, *Sociality and Responsbility*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2000 (*S&R*)
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Edited by Edwin Curley. Hackett, 1994
Christine M. Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution: Action, Identity, and Integrity*. The Locke Lectures, 2002
J. David Velleman, *The Possibility of Practical Reason*. Oxford, 2000

Most of these works have been ordered at the Coop. The Locke Lectures are posted on the course web site.

Written Assignments:

i) *Seminar Presentation*. Every enrolled student is required to present at least one paper to the seminar. Depending on class size, enrolled students may be invited to present more than one paper, or auditors may be invited to do presentations. The paper should be 20-30 minutes in presentation time. The text of the paper must be turned in to me by 5:00 on the Monday before the seminar at which it is to be presented, and an outline or handout must be prepared for distribution to all participants at the seminar at which at which it will be presented. Your paper should present and discuss some of the readings for that week and initiate discussion.

ii) *Weekly two-page papers*. Every enrolled student is required to hand in two double-spaced pages of writing (*absolutely no more*) each week except the weeks in which you do a presentation. These short papers will be due by 5:00 each Monday, and must deal with the readings for the forthcoming Wednesday. Apart from that requirement, the topic is entirely up to you: you may summarize the material, give a reading of a difficult passage, criticize one of the arguments, or defend the author against a possible criticism - anything as long as it concerns the reading for the week in question. These papers will not be graded, but you must turn all of them in order to pass the course.

iii) *Seminar Paper*. A seminar paper of about 15 pages is due on Friday, May 16. It may be, but does not have to be, an expanded version of your seminar presentation.

Schedule of Readings

Part I: Moral Psychology and the Nature of Action

2/5: Aristotle on Choice and the Voluntary

Nicomachean Ethics III.1-5, pp. 1752-1760
Nicomachean Ethics VI, pp. 1797-1808
Eudemian Ethics II.6-11, pp. 1936-1945
Korsgaard. Locke Lecture 1, "The Metaphysical Foundations of Normativity"
§§1.2.1-1.2.6, pp. 7-14
§1.4.1, pp. 19-21
§1.4.3, pp. 25-28

2/12: Aristotle on Pleasure and *Akrasia*

Should have included on the soul I.1 for what a passion is, both physical and mental

Nicomachean Ethics VII, pp. 1808-1825
Nicomachean Ethics X.1-5, pp. 1852-1859
On the Soul II.1-3, pp 656-660
On the Soul III, pp. 675-692
On the Movement of Animals, pp. 1087-1096

2/19: Frankfurt's Theory of Action

"Freedom Of The Will And The Concept Of A Person," *Importance*, pp. 11-25
"Three Concepts Of Free Action," *Importance*, pp.47-57
"Identification And Externality," *Importance*, pp. 58-68

2/26: Frankfurt's Theory of Action, continued

"The Problem Of Action," *Importance*, pp. 69-79
"Identification And Wholeheartedness," *Importance*, pp. 159-176
"The Faintest Passion," *NVL*, pp. 95-107

3/5: Frankfurt on Necessity

"Autonomy, Necessity, and Love," *NVL*, pp. 129-141
"On Caring," *NVL*, pp. 155-180

3/12: Velleman on Action

"Introduction," pp. 1-31
"What Happens When Someone Acts?" pp. 123-143

3/19: Velleman on Moral Psychology

"The Guise of the Good," pp. 99-122
"The Possibility of Practical Reason," pp. 170-199

Spring Recess

4/2: Velleman and Korsgaard on Autonomy and Action

Velleman, "Deciding How to Decide," pp. 221-243
Korsgaard, Locke Lecture 3, "Autonomy, Efficacy, and Agency"

Part II: Acting Together

4/9: Hobbes on Action and Collective Action

From *Leviathan*
- Introduction, 3-5
- From Part I
  - Chapter vi "Of…Voluntary Motion…" pp. 27-35
  - Chapter x, "Of Power, Worth, Dignity…" pp. 50-57
  - Chapter xi, "Of the Difference of Manners" pp. 57-63
  - Chapter xiii, "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind…" pp. 74-78
  - Chapter xiv, "Of the First and Second Natural Laws and of Contracts…" pp. 79-88
  - Chapter xvi, "Of Persons, Authors, and Things Personated…" pp. 101-105
- From Part II
  - Chapter xvii, "Of the Causes, Generation, and Definition …" pp. 106-110
  - Chapter xviii, "Of The Rights Of Sovereigns, " pp. 110-118
- Chapter xxi, "Of the Liberty of Subjects" pp. 136-145
  - Chapter xxv, "Of Counsel" pp. 165-172

4/16: Gilbert on Acting Together

"Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon," *LT*, pp. 177-194
"What is it for *Us* to Intend?" *S&R*, pp. 14-36

4/23: Gilbert on Acting Together and Obligation

"Agreements, Coercion, and Obligation," *LT*, pp. 281-312
"Obligation and Joint Commitment," *S&R*, pp. 50-70

4/30: Velleman and Korsgaard on Acting Together

Velleman, "How to Share an Intention," pp. 200-220
Korsgaard, Locke Lecture 6, "Integrity and Interaction"