

Philosophy 320: Emotions, Character, & Moral Responsibility

Syllabus (Spring 2017)

Class Days / Times: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm on Tuesday & Thursday in NQ 293

Professor: Dr. Rachel Fredericks

I prefer to be called Rachel, but you may call me Professor (or Doctor) Fredericks if that makes you more comfortable.

Email Address: rlfredericks@bsu.edu

I prefer communicating by email, not telephone, and I can usually respond to emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. noon–1:00 pm, Tues. 12:15-1:15 pm, & by appointment

Office Location: North Quad (NQ) 230

Office Phone: 765-285-1261

Office hours are a chance to have a conversation about course material, whether you are struggling or you are curious to go beyond what we discussed in class. They can be incredibly helpful, and I enjoy getting to know you better one on one.

Course Description

What are emotions? What do different emotions have in common? How are they different from other psychological phenomena? Are they the sorts of things for which we are morally responsible? Is it ever morally appropriate to praise and blame people for their emotions? What makes us morally responsible for anything, anyway? These are some of the questions that we will be investigating together by engaging with (mostly) very new philosophical texts, including some chosen by you, the students.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to work independently and / or collaboratively to:

1. Read and analyze complex philosophical texts,
2. Develop an understanding of contemporary philosophical views as related to prior scholarship in philosophy and relevant scientific subfields,
3. Gain an appreciation for philosophical differences between various contemporary scholars, each other, and themselves,
4. Critically evaluate arguments advanced by philosophical professionals and peers,
5. Identify the practical and theoretical implications of competing philosophical views about emotions, character, and moral responsibility, and
6. Conduct self-directed research in philosophy.

Required Text

Deonna, Julien and Fabrice Teroni. 2012. *The Emotions: A Philosophical Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.

That book is the only one that you need to buy / rent / borrow for this class. All other required (and recommended) readings will be distributed via Blackboard.

- Always do the required reading *before* class on the day listed.

- Always bring a copy (paper or electronic) of the reading with you to class.

Schedule

All groups of students have different interests, needs, and talents, so I might make changes to this schedule (though I do that as little as possible & give as much warning as possible if / when I do).

EMOTIONS

Week 1

1/10: Syllabus and Deonna & Teroni, Preface, pp. x-xiii

1/12: Deonna & Teroni, pp. 1-13

Week 2

1/17: Deonna & Teroni, pp. 14-27

1/19: Deonna & Teroni, pp. 28-39

Week 3

1/24: Deonna & Teroni, pp. 40-51

1/26: Deonna & Teroni, pp. 52-62

Week 4

1/31: Deonna & Teroni, pp. 63-75

2/2: Deonna & Teroni, pp. 76-90

Week 5

2/7: Workshop: Details TBD

2/9: Students' Choice: Specific Emotions TBD

Week 6

2/14: Students' Choice: Specific Emotions TBD

2/16: Students' Choice: Specific Emotions TBD

PAPER 1 DUE on Saturday, February 18th, at noon

Week 7

2/21: Students' Choice TBD

2/23: Students' Choice TBD

Week 8

2/28: Students' Choice TBD

3/2: Students' Choice TBD

SPRING BREAK - NO CLASSES - HAVE FUN!

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Week 9

3/14: P.F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," pp. 45-56

3/16: P.F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," pp. 56-66

Week 10

3/21: Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," pp. 5-14

3/23: Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," pp. 14-20

Week 11

3/28: Angela Smith, "Responsibility for Attitudes," pp. 236-253

3/30: Angela Smith, "Responsibility for Attitudes," pp. 254-271

Week 12

4/4: Tom Roberts, "Emotional Regulation and Responsibility," pp. 487-494

4/6: Tom Roberts, "Emotional Regulation and Responsibility," pp. 494-500

Week 12

4/11: Workshop: Details TBD

4/13: Michelle Ciurria, "Moral Responsibility Ain't Just in the Head," pp. 601-610

Week 14

4/18: Michelle Ciurria, "Moral Responsibility Ain't Just in the Head," pp. 610-616

4/20: Workshop: Details TBD

Week 15

4/25: Students' Choice TBD

4/27: Students' Choice TBD

PAPER 2 DUE on Saturday, April 29th, at noon

Final Exam

Tuesday, May 2, from 9:45 am to 11:45 am, in our regular location, NQ 293

Assignments & Assessment

Your final grade will be based on:

- Participation: 25 points
- In-class assignments and homework: 75 points
- First paper: 50 points
- Second paper: 50 points
- Final exam: 50 points
- Total: 250 points

All assignments:

- (Other than small assignments completed during class) need to be typed (double-spaced) and submitted (as attachments) electronically via Blackboard
- Will be processed using SafeAssign, a plagiarism-detecting technology, so every assignment must include appropriate citations for all quotations *and paraphrases*, plus a complete list of bibliographic references at the end.
 - Please use the MLA style guide to format your citations and references.
 - You do not need to put the Works Cited section on a separate page.
 - Please do provide the URL for any sources found on the Internet.
- Will be graded anonymously, so please don't write your name on them.

- Empirical research shows that people have various biases of which they are not aware, even people who are strongly explicitly committed to equality, fairness, and so on. Thankfully, there are some measures that we can take to minimize the effects of implicit bias, and anonymous grading is an easy and effective one, so I appreciate your helping me with my efforts to be as fair as I can.

Attendance and active participation in class discussions are crucial to success in mastering the course material and developing your skills. You are expected to come to class with informed questions and opinions about the relevant readings. I will keep track of attendance, but that is only one factor relevant to your participation grade. The quality and quantity of your contributions to discussion will be the primary basis for your participation grade, but participation in office hours, email exchanges with me, and communication via note cards will also be considered.

A significant part of your grade is determined by how successfully you complete various small homework assignments, which will be due BEFORE class. Homework are due before class for two main reasons: (1) to give you an extra incentive to do the required reading before class and thus come prepared for discussion and (2) to give you practice thinking about philosophical issues independently (that is, to discourage you from just rehashing what someone else says during class).

Late homework will not be accepted unless (a) you and I agree upon an alternate arrangement ahead of time, which requires planning and good reasons on your part, or (b) in case of a documented emergency beyond your control, in which case, you must contact me as soon as possible.

However, I recognize that *occasionally* people have a good reason for not attending class and/or completing an assignment on time. So, I assign 85 points worth of homework, but I calculate grades as though there were only 75 points possible. That way, if you forget or botch an assignment or two, you can still get a high score for your homework total. It also means that it is possible for you to earn more than 100% of the available homework points; if you do an excellent job on all of them, you will effectively get a bonus. I offer this built-in bonus opportunity instead of extra credit.

Late papers will be penalized 5% for the first minute they are late and an additional 5% for each day that passes between the deadline and submission.

The final exam will be comprehensive, closed book, and closed notes. You will have some choice of which questions you answer. A much more detailed explanation of what to expect on the exam will be provided via Blackboard ASAP.

I'll use the schema below to convert your total points into a letter grade. If you want to calculate your grade at any time, take your total points (listed in Blackboard), and divide that by the total points possible on all the assignments so far (not just the assignments that you turned in), then compare the resulting percentage to this schema.

A = 95% = 237 points
A- = 90% = 225 points
B+ = 87% = 217 points
B = 83% = 207 points
B- = 80% = 200 points
C+ = 77% = 192 points

C = 73% = 182 points
C- = 70% = 175 points
D+ = 67% = 167 points
D = 63% = 157 points
D- = 60% = 150 points
F = <60% = ≤149 points

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization
 - a. Is the assignment well organized?
 - b. Does it have a clear thesis statement in the first person?
 - c. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?
2. Exposition and Interpretation
 - a. Do you give a clear, accurate, and charitable interpretation of the view(s) considered?
 - b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) and their implications?
 - c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?
3. Argument and Critical Evaluation
 - a. Do you give rational arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
 - b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
 - c. Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?
4. Writing Style
 - a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
 - b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
 - c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

One key to improving your writing is getting feedback and suggestions for revisions during the writing process. The Writing Center at Ball State offers free writing feedback sessions (online or face-to-face) to all students. They work with students on essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. Students can make an appointment by going to www.bsu.edu/writingcenter, stopping by Robert Bell 295, or by calling 765-285-8370.

Student Conduct

A respectful, civil environment is crucial for learning any subject, but especially so for philosophy, which involves questioning, defending, and criticizing the beliefs and practices that mean the most to us. Conduct that interferes with other students' ability to learn or my ability to teach is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

In particular, students should not interrupt other students or the professor; dominate class discussion; disparage or disrespect the ideas, beliefs, or practices of others (which does not mean that one cannot or should not respectfully provide reasons to disagree); habitually arrive late or leave early; make or receive phone calls; text; surf the internet; or use other technology that is not directly related to course goals.

Academic Dishonesty

Academically honest students do not use others' ideas or words without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought. If I discover that a student has plagiarized, cheated, or otherwise violated the academic dishonesty policy, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question, and if the violation is sufficiently significant, may fail the course as whole, at the professor's discretion.

More detailed resources relating to academic dishonesty and how to avoid it are posted on Blackboard. If, after investigating those resources, you have questions, please contact me as soon as possible. It is much better for everyone involved if a student gets help clearing up any confusion right away, rather than waiting and needing to deal with a bigger problem.

Disability Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Concerns or Problems

If you have a concern or problem relating to the course or your performance in it, please get in touch with me as soon as possible! That is the only way for us to work together to devise the best possible plan for moving forward.