

Freedom, Friendship, and Morality
Philosophy 285
Winter 2015
Syllabus

Dana Kay Nelkin

Office: HSS 8004

Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11 and 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

Phone: (858) 822-0472

E-mail: dnelkin@ucsd.edu

Web site: <http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/dnelkin>

Seminar Description: In the debate between consequentialists and non-consequentialists, there has been much discussion of whether and, if so, how to account for special obligations that friends (and others standing in special relationships) have to each other. If we do have such special obligations, what grounds them? (This is also a question discussed in the literature on political obligation.) If we do not have such obligations, how can the appearance of such obligations be explained away? In the free will debate, there has been much discussion, especially recently, over whether genuine friendship and other special relationships would be undermined if we are not free agents. Is friendship at stake in the free will debate, alongside moral responsibility and justified moral attitudes and emotions? If so, what is it about the nature and value of friendship that depends on free agency? In this seminar, we will investigate both of these debates, and explore ways in which, despite appearances, they might come together.

Specific course topics and readings

All readings are available through the course web site. You simply need access to the UCSD library, which you have automatically on campus, and which you can also receive from anywhere by changing your computer settings. For instructions on how to do this, see <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/resources/course-reserves/course-reserves-from-off-campus.html>.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Friendship and Freedom

Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (excerpt)

Susan Wolf, "The Importance of Free Will"

Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"

Week 3: Friendship and Freedom

Derk Pereboom, "Free Will, Love, and Anger"
Seth Shabo, "Where Love and Resentment Meet"
Derk Pereboom, *Agency, Free Will, and Meaning in Life* (excerpt)

Week 4: Relationships, Responsibility, Demands, and Obligations

Gary Watson, "Two Faces of Responsibility"
Dana Kay Nelkin, "Moral Responsibility, The Reactive Attitudes, and The Significance of (Libertarian) Free Will"
Derk Pereboom, "The Dialectic of Selfhood and the Significance of Free Will"

Week 5: Friendship and Special Obligations

Recommended Background Reading: Diane Jeske, "Special Obligations" and Bennett Helm, "Friendship"

David Annis, "The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship"
Diane Jeske, "*Families, Friends, and Special Obligations*"
Diane Jeske, *Rationality and Moral Theory* (excerpt)

Week 6: Friendship and Special Obligations

David Brink, "Impartiality and Associative Duties"
David Brink, "Eudaimonism and Cosmopolitan Concern"
David Brink, "Eudaimonism, Love and Friendship"

Week 7: Friendship and Special Obligations

Samuel Scheffler, "Relationships and Responsibilities"
R. Jay Wallace, "Duties of Love"
T.M. Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions: Permissibility, Meaning, Blame* (excerpt)

Week 8: Friendship and Special Obligations

Richard Arneson, "Consequentialism vs. Special-Ties Partiality"
Elinor Mason, "Can An Indirect Consequentialist Be a Real Friend?"
Mark Bernstien, "Friends Without Favoritism"

Recommended Further Reading: Alastair Norcross, "Consequentialism and Friendship" and Neera Kapur Badhwar, "Why It Is Wrong to Be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship"

Week 9: Obligations, Freedom, and Blameworthiness

Julia Driver, "The Suberagotory"

Dana Kay Nelkin, *Making Sense of Freedom and Responsibility*

Justin Capes, "Blameworthiness Without Wrongdoing"

Recommended Further Reading: Michael McKenna, *Responsibility and Conversation* (excerpt)

Week 10: Freedom, Obligation, and Putting It All Together

Ish Haji, "Moral Anchors"

Dana Kay Nelkin, "Friendship, Freedom, and Special Obligations"

Derk Pereboom, TBA

Recommended Further Reading: Ish Haji, *Deontic Morality and Control* and *Reason's Debt to Freedom*

Requirements:

- One short (2-3 page) paper per week, starting in the second week and ending in the eighth. Each paper must be sent as an e-mail attachment to Dana by 8 pm on the day before the seminar in which the relevant issues will be discussed. Your paper should, if at all possible, do one of the following: (i) provide a careful reconstruction of a difficult argument to be found in a relevant text, (ii) evaluate the validity or soundness of an argument in a relevant text, (iii) provide a counter-example to a central claim made in a relevant text, or (iv) articulate and defend an interpretation or philosophical position that competes with those found in the relevant texts. Your grade will be calculated based on the grades of your five best papers. (This means that you can turn in all seven and drop the lowest two grades, or you can simply turn in five).
- One long (15-20 page) term paper sent by email attachment, due Friday, March 20 preceded by a prospectus (also emailed) due March 6.
 - The long paper must address positions and/or arguments to be found in the course readings or in readings previously approved on the basis of the prospectus.
 - The prospectus (2-3 pages) will include an articulation of your paper's main thesis, the paper's rough structure, along with a summary of some of the arguments you will be planning to use in support of the main thesis, and a bibliography.
- One 15 minute in-class presentation. The purpose of the presentation is to introduce the main issues/problems/arguments to be discussed in seminar that day, raising some of your own questions/comments/criticisms along the way or at

the end. The presentation may be related to the short paper, though the short paper (given its length) should be less introductory and more focused. You should not simply read your presentation, though you may speak your way through a handout. A handout is recommended, though not mandatory.

- Attendance is required at every meeting, unless a valid excuse is communicated in a timely manner (if possible, ahead of time).
- Your grade will be based on the quality of your papers (70% for the term paper, 15% for the short papers), your presentation (10%), and your participation in seminar (5%).