

**4620/6620: Topics in Philosophy of Mind**  
Fall 2018, Cornell University

**Specific issue: Free will and moral responsibility**

What must agents be like in order to be morally responsible for their actions? It's generally agreed that they must be able to exercise some type of control in action, and this ability has traditionally been conceived as a kind of freedom of the will. But what sort of free will is required for moral responsibility in the specific sense at issue in the historical debate? Might we really have this kind of free will, given our nature and the way the world is? If we lack this kind of free will, what would the consequences be? In this seminar, we will examine various recent responses to these questions.

**Instructor:** Derk Pereboom; dp346@cornell.edu

**Office Hours:** W. 1.30-2.30 and by appointment

**Office:** Goldwin Smith 323

**Class time:** M 2.30-4.25

**Classroom:** Uris Hall 302

**Course website:** Blackboard: <http://blackboard.cornell.edu/>

**Requirements:**

Attendance

Participation

For 4620 students:

Two 8+ page papers or one 16+ page paper in two drafts

Due dates:

First short paper: October 17

Second short paper: December 9

First draft of long paper: November 14

Final draft of long paper: December 9

A class presentation on assigned reading material for 4620 students is optional.

For 6620 students:

One class presentation on assigned reading material

One term paper in two drafts

First draft of long paper: November 14

Final draft of long paper: December 9

**Topics and readings:** Readings will be available online or on the Blackboard site.

August 27: Introduction.

Timothy O'Connor and Christopher Franklin, "Free Will," in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/freewill/>

September 17: Are alternative possibilities required for moral responsibility?

Carolina Sartorio, "Frankfurt-Style Examples,"  
<http://sartorio.arizona.edu/files/Routledge.pdf>

David Widerker, "Libertarianism and Frankfurt's Attack on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities," *Philosophical Review* 104 (1995), pp. 247-61.

Derk Pereboom, *Free Will Agency, and Meaning in Life*, Chapter 1.

Suggested: Carl Ginet, "In Defense of the Principle of Alternative Possibilities: Why I Don't Find Frankfurt's Arguments Convincing," *Philosophical Perspectives* 10 (1996), pp. 403-17.

September 24: Contemporary Compatibilism and Manipulation Arguments.

Michael McKenna and Derk Pereboom, *Free Will: A Contemporary Introduction*, Chapter 9.

Carolina Sartorio, *Precis of Causation and Free Will*, *Philosophical Studies*, June 2018, Volume 175, [Issue 6](#), pp. 1513–1516.

Derk Pereboom, *Free Will, Agency, and Meaning in Life*, Chapter 4.

Suggested: John Fischer, "How Do Manipulation Arguments Work?" *Journal of Ethics*.

October 1: Event-causal and non-causal libertarianism.

Mark Balaguer, *Free Will as an Open Scientific Problem*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009, Chapter 3.

Carl Ginet. "An Action Can Be Both Uncaused and Up to the Agent" in *Intentionality, Deliberation, and Autonomy*, Lumer, ed., Ashgate, 2007.

Derk Pereboom, "[Responsibility, Agency, and the Disappearing Agent Objection](#)," *Le Libre-Arbitre, approches contemporaines*, Jean-Baptiste Guillon (ed.), Paris, Collège de France, 2017.

Laura Ekstrom, "Towards a Plausible Event-Causal Indeterminist Account of Free Will," *Synthese* 2016, DOI 10.1007/s11229-016-1143-8.

October 15: Agent-causal libertarianism.

Timothy O'Connor. "Agent-Causal Power," in Toby Handfield, ed., *Dispositions and Causes*, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 189-214.

Derk Pereboom, *Free Will Agency, and Meaning in Life*, Chapter 3.

October 22: Compatibilism and Incompatibilism about Rational Deliberation

Dana Nelkin, "Deliberative Alternatives," *Philosophical Topics* 32, 2004, pp. 215-40.

Derk Pereboom, *Free Will Agency, and Meaning in Life*, Chapter 5.

David Widerker, "A Problem with Pereboom's Defense of Deliberation-Compatibilism," *Journal of Ethics*, forthcoming.

October 29: Notions of moral responsibility compatible with skepticism about desert.

Angela Smith, "Moral Blame and Moral Protest," in *Blame: Its Nature and Norms*, N. Tognazzini and D. J. Coates, eds., New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 27-48.

Dana Nelkin, "Friendship, Freedom, and Special Obligations," *Agency, Freedom, and Moral Responsibility*, Andrei Buckareff, Carlos Moya, and Sergi Rosell, eds., Palgrave MacMillan, 2015, pp. 226-250.

Derk Pereboom, "[Responsibility, Regret, and Protest](#)," *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility* 4, David Shoemaker, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 121-40.

Suggested: Matthew Talbert, "Moral Competence, Moral Blame, and Protest," *The Journal of Ethics* 16 (2012): 89-109.

November 5: Different notions of moral responsibility.

David Shoemaker, "Attributability, Answerability, and Accountability: Toward a Wider Theory of Moral Responsibility," *Ethics* 121 (2011), pp. 602-632

Dana Nelkin, "Psychopaths, Incurable Racists, and Faces of Responsibility," *Ethics* (2015): 357-390.

Shaun Nichols and Manuel Vargas, "How to Be Fair to Psychopaths," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology*, 14 (2008), 153-155.

November 12: Free will and personal relationships.

Shaun Nichols, "After Incompatibilism: A Naturalistic Defense of the Reactive Attitudes." *Philosophical Perspectives*, 21 (2007), 405-428.

Seth Shabo, "Where Love and Resentment Meet," *Philosophical Review* 121 (2012), pp. 95-124.

Derk Pereboom, *Free Will Agency, and Meaning in Life*, Chapter 8.

Martha Nussbaum, from *Anger and Forgiveness*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

November 19: Freedom and forgiving.

Per-Erik Milam, 'Forgiveness,' in in *Oxford Handbook of Moral Responsibility*, eds. Dana Nelkin and Derk Pereboom, New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Brandon Warmke and Michael McKenna, "Moral Responsibility, Forgiveness, and Conversation," in *Free Will and Moral Responsibility*, Ishtiyaque Haji and Justin Caouette, eds., Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013, pp. 189-212.

Dana Nelkin, "Freedom and Forgiveness," *Free Will and Moral Responsibility*, Ishtiyaque Haji and Justin Caouette, eds., Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013, pp. 165-188.

November 26. Free will skepticism and criminal behavior.

Gregg D. Caruso, "[Free Will Skepticism and Its Implications: An Argument for Optimism](#)," in *Free Will Skepticism in Law and Society*, (eds.) Elizabeth Shaw, Derk Pereboom, and Gregg D. Caruso, forthcoming.

Derk Pereboom, "[Incapacitation, Reintegration, and Limited General Deterrence](#)," *Neuroethics*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12152-018-9382-7>

Shaun Nichols, "Brute Retributivism." In T. Nadelhoffer (ed.) *The Future of Punishment*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 25-47.

December 3: Situationism and moral responsibility.

John Doris, "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics." *Noûs* 32 (1998): 504-30

Dana Nelkin, "Freedom, Responsibility, and the Challenge of Situationism," *Free Will and Moral Responsibility*, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 29 (2005): 181-206.

Rachana Kamtekar, "Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of Our Character," *Ethics* 114, no. 3, pp. 458-91.

Carolina Sartorio, "Situations and Responsiveness to Reasons" ([pdf](#)), forthcoming in *Noûs*.

December 5 (Wednesday): Discussion of December 3 continued, and:

Joshua Knobe and Shaun Nichols, "Free Will and the Bounds of the Self." In R. Kane (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 530-554.