

# PRACTICAL REASONING

FALL 2008

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Office Hours: M, T, Th 2.45-3.45 & by appointment

T & Th 1.15-2.30pm

Room: Papazian 319

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this course we will explore the relationship between action, deliberation, reasons, and rationality. Some of the questions we will be looking at are: What are our reasons for acting? Must reasons be capable of motivating us? What constitutes our rationality? What is the relationship between rationality and reasons? What is the status of rationality? What is the impact of psychology on questions of rationality?

**READING:** All the reading for this course will be posted on Blackboard.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Every week, generally at the start of class on Tuesday, you will turn in an assignment for this course. Most weeks you will be completing short writing assignments (1 page or less) with the aim of helping you understand the methods of philosophical analysis by carefully reconstructing central arguments from the reading. These 'reading outlines' will count for a significant portion of your course grade. In addition, you will be writing three papers of increasing length to allow you to develop your own arguments. I also expect you to actively participate in class by being ready to ask and answer questions.

Reading Outlines	20%
Paper #1 (3-4 pages)	10%
Paper #2 (6-7 Pages)	20%
Paper #3 (9-10 Pages)	35%
Participation	15%

**LATE POLICY:** The purpose of the reading outline is to help you prepare to **participate** in class. A late reading outline will not serve this goal and, therefore, will **not** be accepted after it is due. If due to some unfortunate circumstance you must turn in a paper late, you must discuss your reasons for doing so and a suitable new timeline with me a full 24 hours in advance.

<b>SCHEDULE</b>			
	DAY	READING ASSIGNMENT	WRITING ASSIGNMENT
09/02	T	Introduction * <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/practical-reason/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/practical-reason/</a>	
<b>REASONS</b>			
09/04	Th	Davidson, Action, Reasons, and Causes	
09/09	T	Williams, Internal and External Reasons	Reading Outline
09/11	Th	Hooker, Williams Argument Against External Reasons	
09/16	T	McDowell, Might There be External Reasons?	Reading Outline
<b>REASONS &amp; RATIONALITY</b>			
09/18	Th	Railton, On the Hypothetical and Non-Hypothetical in Reasoning about Belief and Action	
09/23	T	Korsgaard, The Normativity of Instrumental Reason	Reading Outline
09/25	Th	Broome, Normative Requirements	
09/30	T	Raz, The Myth of Instrumental Rationality	Reading Outline
<b>KORSGAARD'S THEORY OF PRACTICAL REASON</b>			
10/02	Th	Korsgaard, Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant	
10/07	T	Korsgaard, Lecture 1 of the Locke Lectures	Paper #1 Due
10/09	Th	Korsgaard, Lecture 2 of the Locke Lectures	
Fall Break			
<b>THEORETICAL &amp; PRACTICAL RATIONALITY</b>			
10/21	T	Williams, Deciding to Believe	Reading Outline
10/23	Th	Hieronymi, Controlling Attitudes	
10/28	T	Shah, How Truth Governs Belief	Reading Outline
10/30	Th	Harman, Practical Reasoning in Reasoning, Meaning, and Mind (pp. 46-74)	
11/04	T	Bratman, Practical Reasoning and Acceptance in a Context	Reading Outline
<b>VELLEMAN'S THEORY OF PRACTICAL REASON</b>			
11/06	Th	Velleman, Introduction to The Possibility of Practical Reason	
11/11	T	Velleman, What Happens When Someone Acts	Reading Outline
11/13	Th	Velleman, The Possibility of Practical Reason	
11/18	T	Bratman, Cognitivism about Practical Reason	Paper #2 Due
<b>RATIONALITY, ECONOMICS, &amp; PSYCHOLOGY</b>			
11/20	Th	Simon, Rationality in Psychology and Economics	
11/25	T	Kahneman and Tversky, The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice Gigerenzer, How to Make Cognitive Illusions Disappear	Reading Outline
Thanksgiving			
12/02	T	Stich, Rationality and Psychology	Reading Outline
12/04	Th	Cohen, Can Human Irrationality be Experimentally Demonstrated?	
12/09	T	Thaler & Sunstein, Libertarian Paternalism is not an Oxymoron Cassidy, Economics: Which Way for Obama? (Recommended)	Reading Outline
Paper #3 Due on December 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2008			