This is the syllabus from Phil. 442 when it was offered in the Fall of 2008. The course will be very similar during the spring of 2011, although the readings and the topics will vary somewhat. A more accurate syllabus will be posted when decisions have been made about readings. Do not purchase any book until the syllabus for 2011 has been posted!

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Philosophy 442– Fall 2008

Ruth Adams Building 207 – M, Thurs 12:35 – 1:55
Professor Holly Smith

SYLLABUS
10-29-08

You are responsible for all the information in this syllabus. Read it carefully!

1. Office Hours and Contact Information

Office: 101B Davison Hall, Douglass Campus
E-mail: hsmith@philosophy.rutgers.edu (The best way to contact Prof. Smith is via email. She does not check her voice mail every day.)
Office phone: 732-932-9861 ext. 101

Office Hours: Mondays 2:10 - 3:10
    Thursdays 10:45 - 11:45
    and by appointment

2. General Course Information

A. Course goals

This course will introduce you to questions about people’s moral responsibility for their activities: what are the conditions under which one is culpable (or praiseworthy) for an action or an outcome of one’s action; what is the difference between being justified versus having an excuse for what one does; how do we determine how much moral credit or discredit an action deserves; is one responsible only for actions or for thoughts and emotions as well; what counts as an excusing condition; whether responsibility requires
freedom of will and whether we have such freedom; what – if anything – justifies punishment; and similar questions. These are core and fascinating questions in moral philosophy, but also important ones for anyone considering a career in the law or in criminal justice.

B. Course website

Materials relevant for the course are available on Sakai@Rutgers, the electronic course platform offered by Rutgers. To access these materials, go to http://sakai.rutgers.edu/ and find the course website for 01:730:442:01 F08. Please note that you will need a Rutgers NetID to access Sakai. If you normally use a non-Rutgers email program (e.g., gmail or hotmail), you should arrange to have your Rutgers email forwarded to your other email address so that you will automatically receive announcements from the course. But you must use your NetID to access the course website, for example to retrieve another copy of this syllabus, or to view course assignments.

Once you’re at the Sakai website, log in using your NetID. When you are logged in, you will go to “My Workspace.” This is your start page as well as your personal workspace that no one else can see. Across the top of “My Workspace” you will see a series of tabs. These tabs will help you navigate between different class and project worksites on Sakai. The tab for this course is labeled 01:730:442:01 F08. Click on the tab to enter the class worksite. All students in the course should have been automatically joined to the site. If you cannot find the tab for the class, contact me. (Note that if you registered late or are paying tuition late, it will take about 24 hours after you register for a course to get access to Sakai.)

On the class website, the “Announcements” button will open a page containing messages to all class members about such events as class cancellations or changes in assignments. These messages will also have been sent out as emails to each class member. Make sure your set your options so that you receive all high-priority course announcements.

The “Resources” button will open a page containing a folder labeled “Syllabus and Reading Lists” which contains a copy of the course syllabus (and any future revisions of this) and a shorter list only of the required assignments. The folder “Required readings” contains, in alphabetical order by author’s last name, all the required readings that are available through Sakai (marked (SAK) on the syllabus below). The folder "Assignments" will contain copies of the paper assignments. The folder "Grading Information" contains information on the grading scale used in the course, and an explanation how grades on your paper will be determined. The folder "Writing Tips" contains several pieces of advice on how to write a philosophy paper, how to improve your writing skills, and how to deal with common puzzlements about apostrophes, gender-neutral pronouns, etc. The folder "Optional News Reports" contains the full-text optional news reports (in
alphabetical order by author’s last name) mentioned in the Syllabus. "Optional Other Readings" contains other optional readings which expand on the philosophical discussions of the topics we cover – you may wish to consult these while writing your papers. "Useful Websites" contains links to several of the websites mentioned in this syllabus as well as others that may prove useful. “In-Class Hand-Outs” will contain any hand-outs that are distributed in class. To view the contents of a folder, click on its name, e.g., "Optional News Reports." To return to the "Resources" page from within that folder, click on the small return arrow button near the top of the Sakai page.

WHEN USING SAKAI, NOTE THAT YOU SHOULD NOT USE YOUR COMPUTER’S “BACK” BUTTON TO RETURN TO A PREVIOUS PAGE IN SAKAI. THIS WILL CAUSE TROUBLE. INSTEAD, CLICK ON THE RELEVANT SAKAI BUTTON (e.g., if you want to return to “Announcements” from “Resources” click on “Announcements,” or if you are inside a sub-folder within “Resources,” click on the little return arrow at the top of the Sakai page to return to the higher-level folder).

WARNING: Sometimes the Sakai site is under repair and so unavailable, and sometimes you may have no access to email (for example, if there are issues about your financial aid). For this reason you should print off anything in Sakai that you may need access to even if the electronic version is unavailable. For example, lack of access to the electronic version of the paper assignments will not be an acceptable excuse for late submission of your paper.

The Sakai website for this class will be taken down shortly after the final examination. If there are materials on it you wish to preserve (e.g., the writing tips), please print them off during the semester.

C. Course texts

(1) The required readings are listed under “REQ” on the syllabus below, and are drawn from the following sources, which should be purchased:

– Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), available in the Douglass Co-Op Bookstore (and possibly other Rutgers bookstores). This book is still on order and should arrive in the bookstore by mid-September. I will place a few copies of this on reserve at the Douglass library in case you lose your copy. Readings from this book are noted as (KANE) in the syllabus.

Course pack Volume I: additional required readings, marked “(CP-I),” are available in a course pack prepared by Pequod Communications. This course pack is available at the Douglass Co-Op Bookstore, located at 57 Lipman Drive.
on the Douglass Campus (732-932-9017). You will need to fill out a request slip in order to obtain these materials. These may be picked up and filled out at the Bookstore. I will place a copy of the course pack on reserve at the Douglass library in case you lose your copy.

Sakai – Many of the required readings (those that are available to you through the Rutgers Libraries licenses) are available on the Sakai website, in the “Required Readings” subfolder in the “Resources” folder. These are marked (SAK) in the list of readings.

Course Pack Volume II: Some, but not all, of the required readings available on Sakai are also available through a second course pack – Volume II. These readings are marked (SAK/CP-II) in the syllabus. It is not necessary to purchase this course pack, since you will have access to all these readings through Sakai. However, if you don’t want to print them off individually, you may opt to purchase the Volume II course pack, also available at the Douglass Co-Op Bookstore.

(2) In addition, I have provided optional readings on Sakai that are relevant to some of our topics. Some of these are marked “OPTIONAL FURTHER READINGS” and are available through Sakai on the course website in the “Resources” folder. These are philosophical treatments of our topics that may be of interest if you want more discussion, or want to consult them when you work on your papers. In addition, the syllabus contains some “OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS” that are available in a folder in “Resources” labeled “Optional News Reports.” You are not required to read these news reports, but may find them interesting as updates on recent events related to the controversies we will be discussing. If you discover an additional news report that you believe your classmates would find interesting and relevant to our topics, please bring it to my attention and I will try to make it available.

(3) A number of texts that contain optional readings, or further readings that may be useful to you (for example, in writing your papers) will be placed on reserve in the Douglass Library. A list of these will be available on the course website.

D. Assignments

The course includes three assignments in addition to the readings:

(A) Mid-term examination. The mid-term examination, which will cover all the materials covered in the course up to that date, will be given during class on October 13. It will consist of essay questions.

(B) Paper. There is one term paper assignment. The paper should be a minimum of 15 pages long (printed, not hand-written). Topics and more details will be available later. The paper will be due Monday, December 1 (right after
Thanksgiving break). **It should be submitted as an attachment to me electronically by 7:00 P.M. on December 1, and also delivered in hard copy during class.** If you submit the paper in Word, I may be able to provide comments electronically. It should also be submitted to Turnitin.com by 7:00 P.M. December 1.

If you would like to submit a draft of your paper to me for comments and suggestions prior to submitting the final version, the draft must be submitted electronically and by hard copy by **Monday, November 17**. I would also be happy to discuss your ideas with you (either by email or during office hours) as you are working on the paper.

Note that this course meets the School of Arts and Sciences advanced writing requirement.

(C) **Final examination.** The final examination will be held in our classroom (RAB 207) from **12:00 – 2:00 Tuesday, December 16**. It will be cumulative – i.e., cover the material from the whole course – but will emphasize the material after the midterm examination. It, too, will be an essay exam. Note the exam will only be two hours, not the three hours announced in the official final exam schedule.

**E. Grading**

All grading will be done "blind" to avoid any inadvertent biases in assessing your work.

The rubric I will use for evaluating your papers is available in the "Grading information" folder on the Sakai site under "Resources." You should read this before starting to write each paper.

The grading scale (39 – 38 points = A, etc.) is also available in the "Grading information" folder on the Sakai site under "Resources."

In calculating your overall grade, weights ascribed to each of the assignments for the course are as follows:

- Mid-term examination................................. 25 %
- Term paper..................................................... 40 %
- Final examination........................................ 35 %

**In addition, if your overall grade is on a borderline, I will favorably take into account your classroom participation.** In other words, if you have been an active and constructive participant in classroom discussion, this will help your grade if it would otherwise be on the borderline between two grades. Poor participation will not penalize you – so plunge into the discussions!
Your grades will be available through the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) Gradebook. To access your grade, go to the SAS Gradebook website (which is in Sakai “Useful websites”) https://secure.fas.rutgers.edu/apps/gradebook/. It is a good idea to check your grades periodically to ensure that all of your assignments have been logged in.

F. Late submissions and absences

If you have a doctor’s letter or letter from a college dean excusing your late submission of assigned work, you will not be penalized. If you submit work late without such an excuse, your grade will be lowered as follows:

   You may submit a paper one day late without penalty. After the first day, you will lose one-half letter grade for each day it is submitted late. (For example, suppose your paper is due on Monday, and you submit it without excuse on Wednesday. If you would have received a “B+” grade on the paper if it had been submitted on Monday, it will receive a “B” grade.)

If you have a doctor’s or other official excuse for having to miss the mid-term examination or the final examination, I will arrange for you to take a make-up examination at a different time.

G. Cheating

Cheating on tests or plagiarizing materials in your papers deprives you of the educational benefits of preparing these materials appropriately. You and your parents are making a major financial investment so that you acquire those benefits. Moreover, it is personally dishonest to cheat on a test or to hand in a paper based on unacknowledged words or ideas that someone else originated. It is also unfair, since it may give you an undeserved advantage over your fellow students who are graded on the basis of their own work. I take cheating very seriously, although in a course like this one, very little occurs. All suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism will be automatically referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs, and I will recommend penalties appropriate to the gravity of the infraction. To help reassure you, and future students, that others are not unfairly benefiting from plagiarism, I require all papers to be submitted through Turnitin.com.

As advanced students you should already be familiar with the University’s policy on Academic Integrity, but if you are not, I strongly advise you to become acquainted with it. The policy on Academic Integrity is available at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml. Since what counts as plagiarism is not always clear, I quote the definition given in Rutgers’ policy:

“Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or
other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc, need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.”

A SPECIAL NOTE: Students sometimes assume that because information is available on the Web it is public information, does not need to be referenced, and can be used without attribution. This is a mistake. All information and ideas that you derive from other sources, whether written, spoken, or electronic, must be attributed to their original source. Such sources include not just written or electronic materials, but people with whom you may discuss your ideas, such as your roommate, friends, or family members. They deserve credit for their contributions too!

Judgments about plagiarism can be subtle. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me.

H. Other

The “Useful websites” folder (in Sakai “Resources”) contains (among other things) the website for the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (http://plato.stanford.edu). The Encyclopedia contains extremely useful summary discussions of many of the topics we will cover, as well as excellent beginning bibliographies that will assist you as you work on your papers.

If you would like to improve your general writing skills, you should avail yourself of the free personal tutoring, or the Online Writing Lab, available through the Plangere Writing Center (for information, check http://plangere.rutgers.edu). Drop-in personal tutoring is not available, so if you would like to use the personal tutoring service held in the lab, sign up starting in September (check their website) for sessions. The Online Writing Lab is available without an appointment.

The Sakai folder "Writing Tips" contains several pieces of advice on how to write a philosophy paper, how to improve your writing skills, and how to deal with common puzzlements about apostrophes, gender-neutral pronouns, etc. It also contains websites for websites for citation guidance.

If you would like to enhance your skills in doing library and on-line research, a good place to begin is to work through the Searchpath modules on the Rutgers Universities webpage at http://searchpath.libraries.rutgers.edu/. Librarians are always available to help as well.
Phil 442 FALL 2008 CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Sept 4 Introduction

Sept 8 Background


Sept 11 Introduction to Action Theory


Sept 15 Justification vs. Excuse


Sept 18 Blame I


Sept 22 Blame II

Sept 25  Moral Worth and Moral Credit


Sept 29  Excuses: Ignorance of Fact


Oct 2  Excuses: Culpable Ignorance of Fact


Oct 6  Excuses: Culpable Ignorance of Fact, continued


Oct 9  Excuses: Ignorance of Morality


Oct 13:  MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Oct 16  Causation


Oct 20  Causation, continued

Oct 23  Omissions


Oct 27 Moral Luck I


Oct 30 Moral Luck II


Nov 3  Shared Responsibility


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Nov 6  Excuses: Compulsion, Coercion, and Mental Disorder


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Nov 10 Free Will I

REQ: (KANE) Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapters 1, 2, and 3, pp. 1 – 31

OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Nov 13 TO BE ANNOUNCED

Nov 17 Free Will II


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:

Nov 20  Free Will III


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Nov 24  Free Will IV


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Nov 25  Punishment I


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Dec 1  Punishment II  TERM PAPER DUE IN CLASS AND ELECTRONICALLY


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Dec 4  Punishment III


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:


Dec 8  Forgiveness


OPTIONAL NEWS REPORTS:

(SAK) Adam Liptak, “Lifers as Teenagers, Now Seeking a Second Chance,” The New York Times, 10-17-07
(SAK) Adam Liptak, “Commutation Doesn’t Equal a Full Pardon,” The New York Times, 7-3-07

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16: FINAL EXAMINATION -- 12:00 to 2:00 PM in Ruth Adams 207.
In philosophy, moral responsibility is the status of morally deserving praise, blame, reward, or punishment for an act or omission performed or neglected in accordance with one's moral obligations. Deciding what (if anything) counts as "morally obligatory" is a principal concern of ethics. Philosophers refer to people who have moral responsibility for an action as moral agents. Agents have the capability to reflect upon their situation, to form intentions about how they will act, and then to carry out Collective moral responsibility refers to arrangements appropriate for addressing widespread harm and wrongdoing associated with the actions of groups. The key components of the basic notion of moral responsibility are deeply rooted in the fabric of every society and are constitutive of social life. Without some conception of moral responsibility no amount of imaginative insight will render a society recognizable as a human society. Making the case for corporate moral responsibility. The first set of speakers we gathered were all proponents of corporate moral agency, but they approach the problem in different ways. Peter French, the Lincoln Chair in Ethics, Professor of Philosophy at Arizona State University and an early proponent writing over thirty years ago, argued that acts of individuals within a corporation become the intended acts of that corporation on the basis of a Corporate Internal Decision (CID) structure.