

## **Seminar: Free Will in Modern Philosophy**

**Dale Tuggy**

Much of recent philosophical discussion about the nature of human freedom is prefigured, in a less technical way, in the early modern period (roughly, 1630-1790). A close reading of these earlier discussions is an excellent way to form one's own views on the current debates about free will. Because it saw the rise of a mechanistic conception of the natural world, the early modern era also saw the rise of a clear form of compatibilism, the claim that humans have the kind of freedom required for moral responsibility even if determinism is true. In reaction to this claim, believers in a more radical kind of free will began to sharpen their views about what freedom requires. What resulted was the original sort of "agent causation" theory of free will, an interestingly different sort of theory than the one widely discussed in the 1960's. Besides the issue of freedom and determinism, this early work also pioneered options on the nature of willing/volitions, the alleged values of different sorts of freedom, implications for our account of freedom for philosophy of religion, the alleged incompatibility of freedom with materialism, the influence of motives on action, moral responsibility, and the alleged incoherence of agent causation and other incompatibilist theories of freedom.

In this course we give a close and critical reading to several famous exchanges on the nature of free will, as well as a number of philosophically deep individual treatments of free will by philosophers such as Hume, Reid, and Edwards. We may also dip into recent work on free will by writers such as Robert Kane, John Bishop, and Daniel Dennett to further illuminate the topics at hand.

### **Texts:**

Cudworth, Ralph. *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality, With a Treatise of Free Will*. ed. Sarah Hutton.  
Rowe, William. *Thomas Reid on Freedom and Morality*  
Edwards, Jonathan. *Freedom of the Will*.

### Course Packet:

Bramhall, John. *A Defense of True Liberty, etc.* (excerpts)  
Collins, Anthony. *A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*  
Clarke, Samuel. *Remarks upon a Book Entitled A Philosophical Enquiry Concerning Human Liberty*  
Descartes, *Meditations of First Philosophy, Principles of Philosophy* (excerpts)  
Hobbes, Thomas. *A Treatise of Liberty and Necessity* (excerpts)  
Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* VIII "Of Liberty and Necessity"  
Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Third Antimony  
*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (excerpts)  
Leibniz, G.W. *New Essays* II.21 (excerpts)  
Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* II.21  
Price, Richard. & Priestly, Joseph. *A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity* (excerpts)  
Reid, Thomas. *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* I.1-II.1, IV

<b>Class, subject</b>	<b>Reading</b>
1. Introduction 2. Cartesian freedom	Descartes in packet
<b>I. The Hobbes/Bramhall debate</b> 3. Hobbesian compatibilism 4. Bramhall's attacks on Hobbes 5. the coherence and value of Hobbesian freedom	Hobbes in packet Bramhall in packet
<b>II. Ralph Cudworth's early agent causation theory</b> 6. Cudworth's <i>A Treatise of Free Will</i> : a case for agent causation 7. replies to arguments against libertarianism	Cudworth 155-97  Cudworth 197-209
<b>III. Locke and Leibniz on freedom and power</b> 7. Locke: our ideas of power and freedom 8. cont. 9. Leibniz's objection to libertarian freedom, necessity and the influence of reasons	Locke in packet Rowe ch. 1 Leibniz in packet
<b>IV. The Collins/Clarke exchange</b> 10. Collins' six arguments for necessity 11. defense of necessity 12. Clarke's attack on the necessary agency 13. cont.	Collins i-62 Collins 63-80, Rowe ch. 3 Clark 721-35 Rowe ch. 2
<b>V. Price/Priestly debate on necessity</b> 14. action, volition, control, self-motion 15. necessity, responsibility, theism 16. cont.	Price in Packet 127-55 Price in Packet 156-78
<b>VI. Edwards' <i>Freedom of the Will</i></b> 17. accounts of the will, freedom 18. vs. the possibility of libertarian freedom  19. freedom and moral responsibility	Edwards Part I Edwards Part II.1-10, 13; IV.1-6 Edwards Part III
<b>VII. Hume: compatibilism defended</b> 20. causation, motivation and manipulation 21. cont.	Hume in packet part I Hume in packet part II
<b>VIII. Reid's Libertarianism</b> 22. our notions of power, agent causation elucidated  23. cont.; arguments for libertarian freedom  24. cont.; the case for necessity rebutted; objections to libertarianism 25. cont.	Reid in packet I.1-II.1 Rowe ch. 4-5 Reid IV.1-8 Rowe ch. 6 Reid IV.9-10 Rowe ch. 8 Rowe ch. 9
<b>IX. Kant on Free Will</b> 26. The Third Antimony: free will & determinism 27. <i>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>	Kant in packet Kant in packet

## Requirements and Grading

There are 400 possible points for the course, which break down as follows:

Reading Reports (2-3 pgs)	
@ 50 points X 6	300
<u>Final Paper (10-15 pgs)</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	400

At six points during the semester, roughly every other week, you must present to the seminar and hand in brief reading reports, in which you summarize and briefly react to parts of that day's reading. These will be used as a basis for discussion, and may be used to develop your final paper. A draft of the final paper will be read to the class 2-3 weeks before the end of the course, to then be revised and handed in at the end of the semester.