



PHL 382

Agency and the Self

S1 External 2014

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Paul Formosa

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Contact via paul.formosa@mq.edu.au

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores some of the central issues in contemporary philosophical moral psychology. The first section focuses on freedom of the will, the nature and value of autonomy and debates about whether autonomy is compatible with socialisation. In the second section we discuss a range of issues concerning moral responsibility, including the implications of luck and causal determination for responsibility, whether moral responsibility requires an ability to do otherwise, and the conditions under which persons should be exempted from responsibility for their actions. The third section focuses on contemporary theories of personal identity, exploring the differences between metaphysical, practical and narrative theories of identity.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.

An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.

An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.

The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis

of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

An ability to undertake independent research.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Participation and Attendance</u>	10%	On-going
<u>Take home exam 1</u>	15%	10/4/2014
<u>Take home exam 2</u>	15%	15/5/2014
<u>Take home exam 3</u>	15%	12/6/2014
<u>Essay</u>	45%	30/5/2014

Participation and Attendance

Due: **On-going**

Weighting: **10%**

An important part of philosophy is engaging in an active dialogue with others. In order to demonstrate this skill you **MUST** attend and participate in tutorials. You should also attend and participate in all lectures. This mark is allocated on the basis of your attendance and the quality of your participation in tutorial discussions and lectures throughout the semester.

Internal students must attend at least 60% of tutorials to be eligible for the participation mark. If you do not attend at least 6 tutorials you will receive 0 marks for attendance and participation. If you meet this minimum requirement, then your mark will be awarded on the basis of your overall attendance and the quality of your participation throughout the semester in both tutorials (primarily) and lectures (secondarily). It is your responsibility to ensure that your work and/or study commitments do not clash with your tutorial and lecture commitments for this unit of study. If you cannot attend tutorials you need to contact the unit convenor to make alternative arrangements.

External students must participate in at least six different weekly online discussion forums to be eligible for the participation mark. If you do not participate in at least six different weekly online discussion forums then you will receive 0 marks for attendance and participation. If you meet this minimum requirement, then your mark will be awarded on the basis of your overall quality and timeliness of your participation throughout the semester in online forums.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Take home exam 1

Due: **10/4/2014**

Weighting: **15%**

Take-home tests are short answer tests which are designed to test your comprehension of the essential readings and arguments in the unit, and your ability to present your understanding of the readings clearly and succinctly. You are not expected to undertake research beyond the essential readings. Handed out: Monday 31 March.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Take home exam 2

Due: **15/5/2014**

Weighting: **15%**

Take-home tests are short answer tests which are designed to test your comprehension of the essential readings and arguments in the unit, and your ability to present your understanding of the readings clearly and succinctly. You are not expected to undertake research beyond the essential readings. Handed out: Monday 5 May.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in

contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Take home exam 3

Due: **12/6/2014**

Weighting: **15%**

Take-home tests are short answer tests which are designed to test your comprehension of the essential readings and arguments in the unit, and your ability to present your understanding of the readings clearly and succinctly. You are not expected to undertake research beyond the essential readings. Handed out: Monday 2 June.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Essay

Due: **30/5/2014**

Weighting: **45%**

The essay (2500 words) is designed to extend your understanding of a specific topic and to test your ability to engage with that topic in depth. Essay writing tests your ability to synthesise material from a range of readings and to express, analyse and structure key ideas and arguments clearly, logically and systematically. It also tests your ability to develop your own view, and to argue for that view in a cogent and sustained way. You will be expected to read and incorporate into your paper a minimum of four secondary sources for this assessment (but you can use more) as well as material presented in the unit reader. The questions will be handed out on April 7.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in

contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.
- An ability to undertake independent research.

Delivery and Resources

Technology Used and Required

This unit has an online presence in iLearn. Students will need to be able to access this site.

Required Readings

All required readings are in the unit reader. You are responsible for obtaining access to these readings.

Further Readings

A list of further readings is available on the unit's iLearn site.

What has changed since the last offering of this unit

The assessment requirements have been slightly modified, the reading list updated, and the topic of the final lecture changed.

Unit Schedule

Week 1 (3 March).

Lecture 1: Unit outline & brief introduction

No readings this week.

No tutorials this week.

Week 2 (10 March).

Lecture 2: Background on Agency and Identity: Locke, Hume and Kant

Essential reading:

1. Selections from Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*:

Book II. Chapter 27 'Of Identity and Diversity'. Sections. 1-11, 14-18, 25-26.

2. Selection from Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*:

Book I, Part IV, Sect VI on 'Of personal identity'.

Book II, Part III, Sec III on 'Of the influencing motives of the will'.

3. Selections from Kant's *Groundwork* III:

On autonomy: 4:446-4:463.

No tutorials this week.

TOPIC 1: AUTONOMY AND CRITICAL REFLECTION

Week 3 (17 March).

Lecture 3 & Tutorial 1: Frankfurt on freedom of the will, Watson on motives and values

Essential reading:

4. Harry Frankfurt: 'Freedom of the will and the concept of a person'; *Journal of Philosophy*, 68(1), 1971.

5. Gary Watson: 'Free Agency', *Journal of Philosophy*, 72, 1975.

Week 4 (24 March).

Lecture 4 & Tutorial 2: 'Deep Self' and integration theories

Essential reading:

6. Marilyn Friedman: 'Autonomy and the Split-Level Self', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1986, pp. 19-35.

7. Susan Wolf: 'Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility' in Schoeman (ed.): *Responsibility, Character and the Emotions* (1987), pp. 46-62.

Week 5 (31 March).

Lecture 5 & Tutorial 3: Competence and relational theories of autonomy

Essential reading:

8. Catriona Mackenzie & Natalie Stoljar: 'Autonomy Refigured', in Mackenzie & Stoljar (eds.) *Relational Autonomy* (2000): pp. 3-22.

9. Diana Meyers: 'Personal Autonomy and the Paradox of Feminine Socialization' *Journal of Philosophy*, 84(11), 1987, pp. 619-28.

10. Paul Benson: 'Autonomy and Oppressive Socialisation', *Social Theory and Practice*, XVII (3), 1991: pp. 385-408.

Take home exam 1 handed out Monday 31 March.

TOPIC 2: MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM

Week 6 (7 April).

Lecture 6 & Tutorial 4: Moral Luck.

Essential reading:

11. Thomas Nagel: 'Moral Luck' in *Mortal Questions*, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1979).

12. Bernard Williams: 'Moral Luck' in *Moral Luck*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981).

Research essay handed out 7 April.

Take home exam 1 due Thursday 10 April.

Week 7 (28 April).

Lecture 7 & Tutorial 5: Moral responsibility and 'reactive attitudes'

Essential reading:

13. Peter Strawson: 'Freedom and Resentment' in P.F. Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays*, (London: Methuen, 1974).

14. Gary Watson: 'Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme', in Schoeman (ed.) *Responsibility, Character and the Emotions* (1987).

Week 8: (5 May).

Lecture 8 & Tutorial 6: 'Could have done otherwise' and Moral Responsibility

Essential Reading:

15. A.J. Ayer: 'Freedom and Necessity', in *Philosophical Essays*, (Macmillan, London, 1954).

16. Harry Frankfurt: 'Alternate possibilities and moral responsibility', *Journal of Philosophy*, 66, no. 23, 1969.

17. Susan Wolf: 'Asymmetrical Freedom', *Journal of Philosophy*, 77, 1980, pp. 151-60.

Take home exam 2 handed out Monday 5 May.

TOPIC 3: PERSONAL, PRACTICAL AND NARRATIVE IDENTITY

Week 9 (12 May).

Lecture 9 & Tutorial 7: Parfit: Persons, Bodies, and Survival

Essential reading:

18. Derek Parfit: 'What we believe ourselves to be' [Ch 10], 'How we are not what we believe' [Ch. 11] in *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

Take home exam 2 due Thursday 15 May.

Week 10 (19 May).

Lecture 10 & Tutorial 8: Practical Identity: Responses to Parfit

Essential reading:

19. Susan Wolf: 'Self-interest and Interest in Selves', *Ethics* 96 (1986).

20. Christine Korsgaard: 'Personal Identity and the Unity of Agency: A Kantian Response to Parfit', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10 (2), 1989.

Week 11 (26 May).

Lecture 11 & Tutorial 9: Narrative Self-Constitution

Essential reading:

21. Catriona Mackenzie: 'Practical Identity and Narrative Agency' in Catriona Mackenzie & Kim Atkins (eds.) *Practical Identity and Narrative Agency*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1-17.

22. Marya Schechtman: 'The Narrative Self-Constitution View', Ch. 5 of *The Constitution of Selves*, (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

Research essay due Friday 30 May.

Week 12 (June 2).

Lecture 12 & Tutorial 10: The Self and Meaningfulness

Essential reading:

23. Susan Wolf, 'Meaning in Life' in *Meaning in Life and Why it Matters*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 1-33.

24. Cheshire Calhoun, 'Losing one's self', in Catriona Mackenzie & Kim Atkins (eds.) *Practical Identity and Narrative Agency*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 193-211.

Take home exam 3 handed out Monday 2 June.

Week 13 (June 9).

No lecture or tutorial this week.

Take home exam 3 due Thursday 12 June.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Submission

All assessment pieces are to be submitted via the unit's iLearn site. Written assessment pieces will be through the **Turn It In** software which detects unoriginal work.
No hard copy submissions.

Extensions and Penalties

All work must be submitted on time unless an extension has been granted. **Requests for extensions must be made in writing BEFORE the due date and will only be considered on serious grounds.** Extensions will not be given unless good reasons and appropriate evidence (e.g., medical certificates, counsellor letters) are presented at the earliest opportunity. Please note that work due concurrently in other units is NOT an exceptional circumstance and does not constitute a legitimate reason for an extension. If the assessment is submitted after the due date and an extension has not been granted then the assessment will have 5% deducted from the grade for each day the assessment is late.

For example, if work was graded as 70/100 and was handed in 2 days late, the work would receive a mark of 60/100. Weekends, but not public holidays, count in the calculation of late penalties.

To obtain an extension of less than 3 days, you should email the unit convenor. **To obtain an extension of 3 days or more**, you must submit a special consideration application. See below for details.

Special Consideration Policy

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html

Students applying for Special Consideration circumstances of three (3) consecutive days duration, within a study period, and/or prevent completion of a formal examination must submit an on-line application with the Faculty of Arts. For an application to be valid, it must include a completed Application for Special Consideration form and all supporting documentation. Applying for Special Consideration:

1. Log in at [ask.mq](http://ask.mq.edu.au)
2. Click 'Special Consideration' from the 'Submit' menu on the left
3. Fill in the required fields as prompted. Once you have completed filling out the information, please click on 'Submit'.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance
- Essay

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment task

- Essay

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance
- Take home exam 1
- Take home exam 2
- Take home exam 3
- Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to

have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance
- Take home exam 1
- Take home exam 2
- Take home exam 3
- Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance

- Essay

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance
- Take home exam 1
- Take home exam 2
- Take home exam 3
- Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance
- Take home exam 1
- Take home exam 2
- Take home exam 3

- Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary philosophical accounts of autonomy, moral responsibility and personal identity.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance
- Essay

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.

Assessment tasks

- Participation and Attendance
- Essay