

**Course Information:**

Title: PHIL 494—Free Will and Character Formation  
Time: MW 2:30-3:50  
Location: CH 112  
Prerequisites: None (though previous study of philosophy will certainly be helpful and is *strongly* recommended)

**Instructor Information:**

Dr. Kevin Timpe  
ktimpe@sandiego.edu  
www.sandiego.edu/~ktimpe

Office: Founders 165A  
Office Hours: 8:00-9:00 MWF and 11:15-1:15 F  
Office Phone: 260.7768

**Course Description:**

The course will explore issues at the intersection of metaphysics, action theory and ethics. Some of the questions we will explore are the following: What is free will? Can I be free if I'm determined? Can I be free if someone already knows what I'm going to do? Can I be morally responsible for actions I don't do freely? Can I choose to do something that I know is not good for me to do? What's the connection between free will and moral character?

**Texts:**

Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Additional readings will also be distributed via E-reserve (ER) in the library. The ER password for this course is 'freedom'.

This course will also make use of WebCT. Students are responsible for regularly checking WebCT to keep current with the course schedule.

**Assignments:**

One-fifth of your course grade is based on class participation. Students are to keep up with the reading and come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Students who are not willing to read or discuss what is assigned should *not* take the class. Everyone benefits from robust classroom discussion.

Three question sets will be given throughout the semester. Typed answers to these question sets will be turned in for evaluation.

Students will write one argumentative paper of approximately eight to ten pages. The topic can be any issue related to the course material, but *must be approved beforehand* by the instructor. Further details will be forthcoming.

Students will write one philosophical character analysis on a character of their choosing from a literary work of fiction. Students must obtain approval from the instructor on the chosen character/literary work. Further details will be forthcoming (and a sample will be given).

All assignments will be docked 1 full letter grade for *each* 24 hour period late (or part thereof), excluding official University holidays.

**Course Grade:**

Class Participation	20%
Question Set I	10%
Question Set II	15%
Question Set III	15%
Character Analysis	10%
Argumentative Paper	30%
<hr/> TOTAL	<hr/> 100%

**Grading Scale:**

A	> 93%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C+	78-79%
C	73-77%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	< 60%

**Academic honesty:**

This is, after all, a course concerned with truth. Academic dishonesty in any form (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) will *not* be tolerated. The University of San Diego's policy on academic honest reads, in part, as follows:

Academic dishonesty, and allegations of academic dishonesty, are matters of University-wide concern in the same way that academic integrity is a matter of University-wide concern. Students bear the responsibility not only for their own academic integrity but also for bringing instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the attention of the proper authorities.... Penalties imposed by the instructor or supervisor with respect to a course or academic exercise may include: reduction in grade of the affected person in the course or exercise; the requirement that the affected person withdraw from the course or exercise; the requirement that all or part of the course or exercise be retaken; the requirement that the person engage in additional work in connection with the course or exercise.

Cheating on an assignment, such as inappropriate collaboration on question sets or plagiarizing a paper, is grounds for failure of the course. I will not hesitate to fail you if you cheat.

**Miscellaneous Information:**

Students are expected to treat all others in the class with the respect that is due.

Students will turn off all cell-phones during this course. Any phone that rings or vibrates, the instructor gets to answer.

You should become familiar with my web-page, as it has links to E-Reserve and WebCT. Also note that email is probably the best way to get a hold of me.

***Rough Course Schedule (Subject to Change):***

The current class schedule of readings and assignments can be found on the course WebCT site. Make sure you check this regularly!

Week: Topic(s)

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The Basics
  - Kane, chapter 1
  - Fischer, "The Issues" (ER)
  - McKenna, "Compatibilism" §1 (Internet)
  - Arguments and Burdens
    - van Inwagen, "Philosophical Failure" (ER)
    - Lycan, "Free Will and the Burden of Proof" (ER)
- 3 Ontology and Persistence
  - van Inwagen, "Moral Responsibility and Ontology" (ER)
  - Moral Character
    - Kupperman, selections from *Character* (ER)
- 4 Moral Character (cont.)
  - Jacobs, "Voluntariness and Habits" (ER)
  - Doris, selections from *Lack of Character* (ER)
- 5 Evil Character
  - Calder, "Evil Character" (ER)
  - Haybron, "Consistency of Character and the Character of Evil" (ER)
  - \*Question Set #1 due\***
  - Moral Psychology
    - Stump, "Freedom: Action, Intellect and Will"
- 6 Weakness of Will
  - Davidson, "How is Weakness of Will Possible?" (ER)
  - Mele, "Akratic Action" (ER)
- 7 Moral Luck
  - Nagel, "Moral Luck" (ER)
  - Compatibilism
    - Kane, chapter 2
    - Neilson, "The Compatibility of Freedom and Determinism" (ER)
- 8 Incompatibilism
  - Kane, chapter 3
  - van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism" (ER)
  - Kane, chapters 4 and 5
  - \*Character Analysis Paper due\***
- 9 Skepticism
  - Kane, chapter 7
  - G. Strawson, "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" (ER)
  - Alternative Possibilities
    - Kane, chapter 8
    - Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" (ER)
  - \*Argumentative Paper Topics due\***
- 10 Alternative Possibilities (cont.)
  - Dennett, "I Could Not Have Done Otherwise—So What?" (ER)
  - Fischer, "The Flicker of Freedom Strategy" (ER)
  - Timpe, "A Critique of Frankfurt-Libertarianism" (Internet)
- 11 Hierarchical Theories of Will

- Kane, chapter 9  
 Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" (ER)  
**\*Question Set #2 due\***
- Reactive Attitudes  
 Kane, chapter 10  
 P. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"
- 12 Ultimate Responsibility  
 Kane, chapter 11  
 Timpe, "Source Incompatibilism and its Alternatives" (Internet)
- 13 Free Will and Foreknowledge  
 Kane, chapter 13  
 Hasker, "God, Time, Knowledge and Freedom" (ER)  
**\*Argumentative Paper due\***
- 14 Free Will and Time Travel  
 Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel"  
 Vihvelin, "What Time Travelers Cannot Do" (ER)
- 15 Moral Education  
 Aristotle, selections from *Nicomachean Ethics* (ER)  
 Kupperman, appendix from *Character* (ER)
- Finals **\*Question Set #3 due\***