

## Advanced Seminar in Philosophy

**Course code:** PHI 401

**Semester and year:** Fall 2022

**Day and time:** Monday 18:30-21:15

**Instructor:** Jiří Kašný

**Instructor contact:** jiri.kasny@aauni.edu

**Consultation hours:** Tuesday 17:30-18:30 in the Faculty Lounge

<b>Credits US/ECTS</b>	3/6	<b>Level</b>	Advanced
<b>Length</b>	15 weeks	<b>Pre-requisite</b>	TOEFL iBT 71
<b>Contact hours</b>	42 hours	<b>Course type</b>	Master Required/Elective

### 1. Course Description

This seminar concerns a central feature of human life in modern society that we as humans pursue and enjoy: freedom. The course is dedicated to the questions that are related to the meaning and nature of the freedom of the individual in society. It examines philosophically freedom in the context of necessity and fate; it analyzes the modern concept of freedom as it is protected by constitutional rights; it reflects on freedom as it stems from the autonomy of the individual and, finally, it analyzes the postmodern concept of freedom as authenticity. The class introductions, research-reading and discussions include historical and systematic aspects of the issue. We will examine the nature of freedom in society as it was appreciated by ancient Athenian thinkers, medieval scholars and especially by modern and postmodern humans not so much to study the history of freedom but to critically understand freedom as freedom remains the central feature of human life in postmodern global society.

### 2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Critically discuss the nature of freedom in the context of necessity, rights, autonomy, and authenticity
- Understand how philosophers reflected freedom in the societies that they are part of
- Compare the main arguments of the contemporary philosophers
- Reflect on relations of the individuals and a society and the role of freedom in social structures, e.g., in political, legal, economic as well as family and religious structures

### 3. Reading Material

#### **Required Materials**

Selected chapters (Available online, in the AAU Library or on NEO)

- Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone* (online)
- Plato, *The Republic* (any edition – selected chapters online)
- Aristotle, *The Politics* (any edition – selected chapters online)
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa* (any edition – selected chapters online)
- John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (any edition – on reserve)
- Hume, David, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (any edition – selected chapters online)
- Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* and *The Critique of Practical Reason* (any edition – selected chapters on NEO)

- Ricoeur, Paul, *Oneself as Another*, translated by Kathleen Blamey, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. (Selected chapters on NEO)
- Derrida, Jacques, *The Gift of Death*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. (Selected chapters on NEO)
- Habermas, Jürgen, *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996. (Selected chapters on NEO)
- Taylor, Charles, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992. (Selected chapters on NEO)

### **Recommended Materials**

selected chapters (Available in the Library or via Interlibrary Loan or on web)

- Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*, 1859.
- Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1996. (Selected chapters in AAU Library)
- Popper, Karl R. *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (2 Volumes), London: Routledge, 1945. (AAU Library)
- Habermas, Jürgen, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. I-II. (Selected chapters on NEO)
- Jonas, Hans, *The Imperative of Responsibility. In search of an ethics for the technological age*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984. (Selected chapters on NEO)

### **4. Teaching methodology**

The format of this seminar is primarily introduction – research – reading – discussion. Students are expected to read and study the suggested materials and to do their own research-reading and to present and discuss their reading in class.

The module will be taught over the period of one semester. The module runs for three hours a week for 15 weeks in a semester. Of these 15 weeks, 14 are teaching, discussion and feedback, and one is mid-term break.

### **5. Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Agenda</b>
1. Sept 5, 2022	<p><b>Topic:</b> About Freedom – Philosophically. An Introduction</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will discuss the concept of freedom in social contexts of mutual responsibility, rights, community, society, history.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> online – get acquainted and research the discussed issues; no particular reading assigned</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> none</p>
2. Sept 12	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Destiny</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will discuss the interplay of freedom and destiny in the dramas Oedipus the King and Antigone by Sophocles and in Gorgias by Plato in the context of ancient Greek cosmology.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i> and <i>Antigone</i> (online); Plato, <i>The Republic</i> and Aristotle, <i>The Politics</i> – selected chapters online; individual research, Leo Strauss, <i>The City and Man</i>, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> none</p>
3. Sept 19	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom in the Created World</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will discuss the medieval understanding of the role of freedom and responsibility of the individual in their life and in the created world with Thomas Aquinas.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Thomas Aquinas. <i>Summa</i> – selected questions on NEO.</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 1 – instructions</p>

4. Sept 26	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Rights in the Modern World</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will discuss an early modern turn to the subject and an appreciation of freedom with René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes and Jean Jacques Rousseau.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> René Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> and <i>On Method</i> (selected chapters online); Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (selected chapters online); Jean Jacques Rousseau, <i>Emil</i> and <i>On Education</i> (selected chapters on NEO)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 1 – discussion of the draft</p>
5. Oct 3	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Religious Tolerance in the Modern World</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will discuss the early modern move to religious toleration and freedom with John Locke.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> John Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i>, 1689 (any edition – on reserve)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 1 due</p>
6. Oct 10	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and the Rights</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Presentations of Home Essay 1, discussion, feedback and evaluation. We will discuss early modern understanding of freedom and rights.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> John Locke, <i>Two Treatises of Government</i> (any edition – on reserve)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 1 – feedback and evaluation</p>
7. Oct 17	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Autonomy</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will examine the freedom and autonomy of individual subjects in the context of practical philosophy.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Immanuel Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (online)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 2 – instructions</p>
8. Oct 24	<p><b>Midterm Break</b></p>
9. Oct 31	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Autonomy</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will examine categorical imperative that make the subject free and autonomous with Immanuel Kant</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Immanuel Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (online)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 2 – discussion of the draft</p>
10. Nov 7	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Autonomy in Modern Society</p> <p><b>Description:</b> What does “person” say about us – humans and citizens in society as <i>cosmos</i> and <i>taxis</i>?</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> August F. Hayek, <i>The Road to Serfdom</i> (online) Selected chapters from Karl Popper, <i>The Open Society and Its Enemies</i> (2 Volumes), London: Routledge, 1945 (AAU Library)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 2 – due</p>
11. Nov 14	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Authenticity</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Presentations of home essay 2, discussion, feedback and evaluation. Then, we will introduce the issue of freedom in postmodern society.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Charles Taylor, <i>The Ethics of Authenticity</i>. Harvard University Press, 1992 (selected chapters on NEO)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 2 – evaluation and feedback</p>
12. Nov 21	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Authenticity in the Post-modern World</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will discuss the role of freedom in the context of strategic and communicative action with Jürgen Habermas in post-modern society.</p>

	<p><b>Reading:</b> Charles Taylor, <i>The Ethics of Authenticity</i>, Harvard University Press, 1992 (selected chapters on NEO)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home Essay 3 – instructions</p>
13. Nov 28	<p><b>Topic:</b> Freedom and Authenticity in Various Social Settings</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will discuss how the pluralistic views of the family, community and society allow for freedom and authenticity of the individual and, in fact, keep contemporary society together.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Jacques Derrida, <i>The Gift of Death</i>, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995 (selected chapters on NEO)</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home essay 3 – discussion of the draft</p>
14. Dec 5	<p><b>Topic:</b> About Freedom – A Synthesis Attempt</p> <p><b>Description:</b> We will make an attempt to formulate a synthesis of our semester examination of freedom in the context of necessity, rights, autonomy and authenticity.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> individual research</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Home essay 3 due</p>
15. Dec 12	<p><b>Topic:</b> Final exam</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Presentations of home essay 3, discussion, evaluation and feedback. Reflections and comments on individual research and reading.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> individual research</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> none</p>

### 6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assessment of this course will be based on class participation and discussion (10%), home essays 1, 2 and 3 (30% each). Preparation and writing of the essays (workload) include participation in classes, primary and recommended reading and individual research reading.

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance, Class Presentations and Discussions	42	10 %	Students will participate in class presentations and discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1, 2, 3
Home essay 1	36	30%	Students will discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1, 2 Students will discuss critically and communicate effectively the theme and meet all the requirements effectively and responsibly.
Home essay 2	36	30%	Students will discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in	1, 2 Students will discuss critically and communicate

			accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	effectively the theme and meet all the requirements effectively and responsibly.
Home essay 3	36	30%	Students will discuss meaningfully the topics of the course that have been already covered in accordance with the learning outcomes (see above).	1, 2, 3 Students will discuss critically and communicate effectively the theme and meet all the requirements effectively and responsibly.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>		

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

## 7. Detailed description of the assignments

### **Class participation and presentations:**

Each student will present two short (3-5 minute) presentations in class, the first presentation before the midterm break, the second presentation after the midterm break. The topics and the schedule of the presentations will be distributed and discussed in the first and the following classes. Each presentation is 5% of the final grade.

### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Content	40%
Presentation	40%
Discussion	20%

### **Home essay 1:**

Home essay 1 should be about 6 pages long. The detailed instructions incl. the topics of the home essay and style will be distributed in class on September 19, 2022. Submit the essay via NEO-Turnitin by 18:30 Oct 3, 2022. Assessed areas include content, resources, structure and argument, and style and form of the essay; the result makes 30% of the final grade.

### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Content	30%
Resources	20%
Structure and argument	30%
Style and form	20%

### **Home essay 2:**

Home essay 2 should be about 6 pages long. The detailed instructions incl. the topics of the home essay and style will be distributed in class on Oct 17, 2022. Submit the essay via NEO Turnitin by 18:30 Nov 7, 2022. Assessed areas include content, resources, structure and argument, and style and form of the essay; the result makes 30% of the final grade.

### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Content	30%
Resources	20%
Structure and argument	30%

Style and form	20%
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### **Home essay 3:**

Home essay 3 should be about 6 pages long. The detailed instructions incl. the topics of the home essay and style will be distributed in class on Nov 21, 2022. Submit the essay via NEO-Turnitin by 18:30 Dec 5, 2022. Assessed areas include content, resources, structure and argument, and style and form of the essay; the result makes 40% of the final grade.

### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Content	30%
Resources	20%
Structure and argument	30%
Style and form	20%

## **8. General Requirements and School Policies**

### **General requirements**

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules available in the Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

### **Electronic communication and submission**

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question". All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

### **Attendance**

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, is required. Students who are absent 35 percent of classes or more cannot complete the course. Those with a majority of unexcused absences will be failed; those with a majority of excused absences will be administratively withdrawn from the course. Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

### **Absence excuse and make-up options**

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

**Late work:** No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

### **Electronic devices**

Electronic devices (e.g., phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

**Eating** is not allowed during classes.

### **Cheating and disruptive behavior**

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center**

Plagiarism is "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)  
Turnitin's White Paper 'The Plagiarism Spectrum' (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one's own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The "Aggregator" includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.

At minimum, plagiarism from types 1 through 8 will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more

information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at:  
<http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

### **Course accessibility and inclusion**

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive. Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

### **9. Grading Scale**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage*</b>	<b>Description</b>
A	95 - 100	<b>Excellent performance.</b> The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 - 94	
B+	87 - 89	<b>Good performance.</b> The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 - 86	
B-	80 - 82	
C+	77 - 79	<b>Fair performance.</b> The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 - 76	
C-	70 - 72	
D+	65 - 69	<b>Poor.</b> The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 - 64	
F	0 - 59	<b>Fail.</b> The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

\* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Jiri Kasny

Date: March 9, 2022

Approved by: Gerald Power

Date: March 21, 2022