

## **Seminar in Philosophy of Law: Freedom and Responsibility**

Prof. Edmundson

Spring 2004; Fridays 10:30-12:10 (2-3 hours)

Room 325A ULB

[last revised: March 26, 2004]

This seminar will investigate the relation between freedom and responsibility. In particular, it will consider the implications of recent developments in the scientific understanding of behavior. We will start with an overview of the ways that “folk” ideas of freedom and responsibility permeate the law. We will then engage in a careful chapter-by-chapter critical reading of Daniel Dennett’s recent book, *Freedom Evolves*, and we will conclude the semester by returning to the questions whether and how legal doctrine could and should be reformed or recast to reflect our evolving scientific understanding of human action. Open to J.D. and M.A. candidates by permission of the instructor; contact [wedmundson@gsu.edu](mailto:wedmundson@gsu.edu). An undergraduate background in philosophy or psychology would be advantageous, but there are no prerequisites. E-mail the instructor if you have questions.

### First assignment

Read chapters 2-5 of Fletcher.

### Reading

George P. Fletcher. 1998. *Basic Concepts of Criminal Law*. Oxford University Press.

Daniel C. Dennett. 2003. *Freedom Evolves*. Viking.

Other materials as assigned.

### E-mail Discussion List

There is an e-mail discussion list for the seminar. You are already subscribed, but you may change the e-mail address to which postings are directed by going to:

<http://gsulaw.gsu.edu/cgi-bin/emailupdater>

The WWWeBBB Forum address is:

<http://gsulaw.gsu.edu/wedmundson/forums/law7296wae/>

There, you can view prior discussion threads and compose and post messages as well.

### The Grading System Explained

There will not be a final examination. Each participant will be responsible for leading at least one class discussion, and a final paper of 12-20 (typed, double-spaced) pages will be required. Your grade will be based upon class participation and your paper. A first draft of the paper will be due in class on Day April 2; and the final paper will be due at 5 pm, on the last day of the exam period, at the 4th Floor Reception Desk.

### Attendance policy

Roll will be taken at each class meeting. Two or more unexcused absences will be grounds for the assignment of a failing grade. Please also note that class nonparticipation may influence your final grade. Because absences due to illness or conflicting family, legal, military or business duties are routinely excused, you need not telephone me to ask that such an absence be excused.

### Office Hours

I have an "open door" policy on meeting outside class, or, if you like, call me to make an appointment. My number is 404-651-2136, and I can be found in office 458, all day, Monday through Friday. E-mail is the most efficient means of communicating with me when I am not available in person: [wedmundson@gsu.edu](mailto:wedmundson@gsu.edu) .

### Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Discussion leader</u>
1/16	Fletcher, chapters 2-5	Instructor
1/23	Dennett, ch. 1	Instructor
1/30	Dennett, ch. 2	
2/6	Dennett, ch. 3	Demedeiros
2/13	Dennett, ch. 4	Rhoades
2/20	Dennett, ch. 8	
2/27	Hart selections	Instructor
3/5	Fischer selection	Dillon
3/12	<i>Spring break: no meeting</i>	
3/19	Kadish & Schulhofer selections	Finch
3/26	Dennett, ch. 9	Toran
4/2	No class	
4/9	Pereboom, Smilansky reading	
4/16	No class	
4/23	Dennett, ch. 10	Campbell

Deviations from this schedule are bound to occur.