

PHIL 380 RESPONSIBILITY, BLAME, AND ATONEMENT

Dr. Christopher E. Franklin

T/R 2:30pm, HAL 215

Fall 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: HAL 300J

Office Hours: M 12:50-1:50; T (by appt.) 10-12, 4-5; W&F 12:50-1:50, 4-5; R (by appt.) 11-12, 4-5

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Humans are endowed with a myriad of tools for responding to wrongdoing. At the most basic level, we respond by judging the agent's conduct to be wrong. But often such judgments give rise to a range of emotional reactions, such as anger, resentment, contempt, shame, and guilt. Although these harsher responses may be the first to come to our minds, there are other common emotional responses—for example sadness and compassion. These emotional reactions to wrongdoing find expression in interpersonal relationships in the form of rebuke, alienation, and forgiveness. The first part of this course aims to assess the ethics of these responses to wrongdoing. Which ones are permissible and which ones are best? The second part of this course aims to apply our findings to understanding Christ's atonement.

TEXTS

Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Eleonore Stump, *At-onement*. Manuscript.

Some course readings will be available electronically through hyperlinks on the syllabus or on my.gcc.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through the course, students will:

1. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of Murphy and Hampton's rival accounts of the ethics of forgiveness (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; exam)
2. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the major theories and justifications of blame and punishment (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; exam)
3. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the major theories of Christ's atonement (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; exams, student presentations)

4. Demonstrate detailed knowledge Stump's theory of the atonement. (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; exam, student presentations; student critical responses)
5. Develop critical analysis and reasoning skills (Department objectives 4, 6, 8, 9; paper, student presentations, student critical responses)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY: LEARNING GOALS

1. Demonstrate the ability to understand and evaluate philosophical questions from a Christian theistic framework. This will require the student to see the relationship between faith and learning and how such a perspective applies to the critical and analytical questions posed by humans in the great search for wisdom.
2. Demonstrate ability to read, comprehend, and evaluate the thought of great philosophers of the past and present in terms of the presuppositions and historical contexts of their claims about the philosophical task as well as the implications of such thought in terms of ethical and social practice. This will require observation of and interaction with primary source texts that approach the great questions and concerns that philosophers have been asking for many millennia.
3. Demonstrate ability to comprehend the major issues in philosophy from the aforementioned Christian theistic perspective as well as the ability to interact with the concerns and perspectives of other philosophies, religions, and worldviews in order to develop the skills necessary to think through what one believes and why. This will require the development of skills necessary to evaluate an argument or a belief critically in terms of strengths and weaknesses.
4. Demonstrate basic and maturing research skills. This will include the ability to state theses, show those theses through analysis of primary texts, discuss the possible weaknesses of one's own analysis, and test those theses against the best scholarship.
5. Articulate a worldview that integrates knowledge of philosophy with other disciplines in order to see the consequences of a consistent Christian theistic worldview. Students will recognize the tensions in this integration process rather than accepting simplistic answers and thus will be helped to grow into mature and thoughtful persons.
6. Demonstrate basic research and writing skills. This ability will be assessed through the evaluation of the assigned paper, both in draft and completed versions.
7. Demonstrate basic knowledge of philosophical concepts.
8. Demonstrate ability to research, write, and speak in the content area of Philosophy.
9. Be competitive and prepared for graduate school and seminary opportunities, as assessed by placement data and alumni surveys.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Each student will be allowed 2 unexcused absences. Beyond this, each unexcused absence will result in a 2% loss of the student's total course grade. Excessive or frequent tardiness will count as an unexcused absence. If the student arrives late, it is his responsibility to make sure he is marked 'present.' Excused absences are restricted to authorized college activities, loss of immediate family member, and illness/injury. See the Academic Policies Section of the *College Bulletin* for more information.

Participation—10%

For each class meeting, students are expected to have carefully read all the assigned reading and to be prepared for class discussion. You really will be evaluated for your participation. If you never say anything in class, then you will receive a 0 for participation.

Team Presentations—30%

Each student will be paired with another student and will be responsible for leading the class through a discussion of one of the chapters of Stump's manuscript. Each student will do this twice and for each presentation will be paired with a different student. Each presentation will range over two class sessions. The team should prepare and distribute a physical handout (i.e., no power-point or Prezi) to each class member on the first day of the presentation. The team should walk us through their handout, which must (i) clearly identify the author's thesis (or theses), (ii) clearly identify any of the author's major assumptions, (iii) clearly present the author's main argument(s), and (iv) surface some interpretative questions/issues and worries about the author's main line of argument. In addition to being responsible for presenting on the assigned reading, the team will also be responsible for *leading* the class discussion. The aim is not to lecture but lead us into a discussion. This will require them to pause at times and see if there are any questions/objections to either their interpretation of the author or the author's main claims, and will require them to use their judgment on when to end a discussion in order to move the class discussion forward. While the team should surface some critical questions/objections concerning the relevant reading, the team should, for the most part, adopt the author's voice and do their best to explain and defend her.

I will soon post a document listing teams and their assigned readings. If you know of any class periods you will miss, it is crucial that you inform me by 9/5.

Student Critical Responses—15%

Each student will be responsible for three critical responses to the assigned reading. Each critical response should raise a total of two issues concerning the assigned reading. The student might raise some difficulties of interpretation, objections to the author, further application of the author's ideas, etc. to the assigned chapter. There is an oral and written component to this task. The student must present each critical response during the discussion of the assigned reading (which will (usually) occur over two class periods) and turn in a hard-copy to me after discussion of the reading is complete. The hard-copy should be typed, double spaced, and between 500-600 words with word-count appear at the top.

I will soon post a document listing the assigned readings for which each student is responsible. If you know of any class periods you will miss, it is crucial that you inform me by 9/5.

Paper—25%

The student is to select an idea, argument, or puzzle covered in any part of the course reading that he or she so chooses. *The topic must come from the reading.* The first part of the paper should set out to explain the central argument or puzzle that the student is engaging. The second, and most important, part of the paper should, in the case of an idea or argument, seek to defend or critique the idea or argument or, in the case of a puzzle, offer a solution or explain why you think there is no solution. This part of the paper is not to be a summary of someone else's thought/argument, but is to be something of *your own creation*. This is difficult and success requires time. Thus, you should select your topic as soon as possible and consider and cultivate your response over a couple of weeks. If you wait to the last minute it will be impossible for you to articulate any *well-developed* thought of your own. You are welcome and encouraged to discuss all parts of this paper with me in office hours.

The paper is due at the beginning of lecture on 12/12 and must be submitted in hard-copy form. Minimum requirement of 10 scholarly sources. The assignment should be typed, double-spaced, and between 3000-4000 words (excluding notes and bibliography). The word count should appear at the top of the paper, under the student's name. Any of the major forms of citation (e.g. APA, MLA, CMS, etc.) are permitted, but the student must be consistent in formatting.

For further details about formatting requirements see my **minimal standards handout** posted on my.gcc. Any work that fails to meet *any* of the minimal standards will automatically receive a third of a letter grade penalty and will receive an additional third of a letter grade penalty for each 24 hour period until the student turns in a properly formatted paper.

See [this](#) for a helpful bibliography of work on the general issues of blame and forgiveness.

You are welcome and encouraged to discuss your paper topic, thesis, and argument in office hours. My rough draft policy is as follows: any student interested in receiving feedback on a rough draft should come to office hours with two copies of the rough draft. We will work through the paper as time permits.

Final—20%

A cumulative essay exam will be given during finals week. Prior to the exam I will post the exam on my.gcc. The exam will consist of 10 numbered (1-10) essay questions. On the day of the final exam, I will roll a six-sided die twice: whatever numbers the die lands on will be the essay questions the students write on. If I roll the same number twice, there will be a surprise.

Consult the exam schedule now, and make appropriate travel preparations in light of the exam schedule published by the Registrar's office. College policy is that final exams may only be administered during finals week, in accordance with the times scheduled by the Registrar's office, and may not be changed or eliminated to suit the convenience of either the instructor or the students. Students who have 3 exams on a particular calendar day during the final exam period may request permission to change the exam time, but I cannot guarantee that there will be a time that will work for the student.

Policy on late assignments:

Once I have collected the assignment at the beginning of lecture, any assignment turned in after that is late. I only accept late work in cases of serious illness/injury or loss of immediate family member.

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Honesty

College policies with regard to honesty in taking quizzes and tests will be strictly followed. The college administration and faculty are very concerned about cheating and take active steps to prevent it. See the college's policy on Academic Integrity in the 2017-2018 college *Bulletin*. The use (or possession) of former examinations from this course in preparing for tests is considered a violation of the GCC honesty in learning policy as stated in the college *Bulletin*.

Any student caught cheating on *any* element of this course will receive an automatic F for the *entire* course. Sound harsh? Good.

Disability

Accessibility & Accommodations: It is Grove City College's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please let me know immediately so that we may discuss options. You are also welcome to contact the disability services office to begin this conversation or to establish accommodations. The Disability Services Coordinator may be reached at 724-264-4673 or DisabilityServices@gcc.edu

Counseling

If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time during the semester or need to talk to someone who can help, you should contact the Counseling Center at 724-458-3788 or email Mrs. Hummel, staff assistant, at mhummel@gcc.edu.

TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS (schedule subject to change)

Introduction

8/29 Course Overview and Basic Concepts

Reading: Murphy and Hampton, Preface and Introduction

I. General Reflections on Responsibility, Blame, and Forgiveness

8/31 Resentment and Forgiveness

Reading: Bishop Joseph Butler 'Sermon VIII: Upon Resentment' ([my.gcc](#)) and 'Sermon IX: Upon Forgiveness of Injuries' ([my.gcc](#)); Murphy and Hampton, Chapter 1

9/5 Hatred and Forgiveness

Reading: Murphy and Hampton, Chapters 2&3

9/7 Retributivism

Reading: Murphy and Hampton, Chapter 4

II. Survey of Theories of the Atonement

9/12 Theories of the Atonement I

Reading: Richard Swinburne 'The Christian Scheme of Salvation' (my.gcc); Richard Swinburne selections from *Responsibility and Atonement* (my.gcc); Steve Porter 'Swinburnian Atonement and the Doctrine of Penal Substitution' (my.gcc); Leviticus 16; Isaiah 53; Matthew 18-21-35; Matthew 20:20-26; Luke 15:11-32; Luke 24:26; John 11:45-55; Romans 3:21-30; Romans 5; Galatians 3:10-14; Colossians 2:1-15; I Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 2:14-18; Hebrews 9-10; I Peter 2:24-25; I Peter 18-22; I John 3:8

9/14 Theories of the Atonement II

Reading: Philip Quinn 'Abelard on the Atonement' (my.gcc); Gregory Boyd 'Christus Victor' (my.gcc)

III. Stump's manuscript *At-onement*

9/19-9/21 Chapter 1

9/26-9/28 Chapter 2

10/3-10/5 Chapter 3

10/10-10/12 Chapter 4

10/17-10/24 Chapter 5

10/19 **Fall Break**

10/26-10/31 Chapter 6

11/2-11/7 Chapter 7

11/9-11/14 Chapter 8

11/16-11/28 Chapter 9

11/20-11/24 **Thanksgiving Break**

11/30-12/5 Chapter 10

12/7 **No Class: I will be away at Moral Responsibility Workshop at the University of Arizona**

12/12 Final Reflections

Paper Due

12/14 Study Day

Final Exam Tuesday December 19, 7pm