

PHILOSOPHY 196

CAUSATION, RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE FORCE OF LANGUAGE: AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY THROUGH *The Brothers Karamazov*

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:10–11:30, in Mason Hall 3347

CONTACT INFORMATION

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FOCUS OF THE COURSE

Excerpts from *The Brothers Karamazov* are often discussed in introductory philosophy classes, but reading the novel closely reveals that philosophical questions are raised on every page. For example, Dostoevsky explores judgment and punishment, moral luck, the distinction between doing and allowing, special obligations (especially those to family), the nature of testimony, the relationships between intention, causation, and culpability, and the force of our words and actions on others. We will read Dostoevsky's novel alongside work in contemporary analytic philosophy that refines and tries to address the questions it raises.

COURSE WEB SITE

Available at <http://ctools.umich.edu>.

BOOKS

Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated by Pevear and Volokhonsky
Rowe (ed.), *God and the Problem of Evil*
Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*

GRADING

- Ten 'weeklies': sharply targeted short papers, due on Sunday nights: 40%
- One short paper (5 pages), due March 8: 20%
- Final exam: 30%
- Attendance and in-class participation: 10%

I give credit for late work only if you give a good explanation for its being late. If you think you might need an extension, please ask early. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in a legible font, and emailed to me as a pdf file. I encourage you to discuss the material with your classmates, but all work you turn in must be your own.

SCHEDULE

(Subject to change. Readings not in the required books will be made available via CTools.)

1/13	Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel and Its Treatment in Critical Literature" "From the Author" and Book One of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
1/15	Book Two of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
1/20	Mavrodes, "Religion and the Queerness of Morality"
1/22	No class
1/27	Book Three of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
1/29	Watson, "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil"
2/3	Book Four of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
2/5	Rawls, "Classical Utilitarianism" Williams, "Consequentialism and Integrity"
2/10	Book Five of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
2/12	Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion" (in <i>God and the Problem of Evil</i>)
2/17	Book Six of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
2/19	Pike, "Hume on Evil"; Hick, "Soul Making Theodicy" (in <i>God and the Problem of Evil</i>)
3/3	Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy"; Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories"
3/5	Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality"
3/8	Paper due
3/10	Book Seven of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
3/12	Wolff, "Moral Saints"
3/17	Book Eight of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
3/19	Book Nine of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
3/24	Book Ten of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
3/26	Book Eleven of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
3/31	Book Twelve and Epilogue of <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
4/2	Austin, <i>How to Do Things with Words</i> , Lectures I–VI
4/7	Austin, <i>How to Do Things with Words</i> , Lectures VII–XII
4/9	Lewis, "Causation"
4/14	Sartorio, "Causation and Ethics"
4/16	Leibniz, "Theodicy"; Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" (in <i>God and the Problem of Evil</i>)
4/21	Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence" (in <i>God and the Problem of Evil</i>)
4/28	Final exam