

Advanced Honors Seminar: Nudges

Summer 2014

UCLA PHILOSOPHY 189

Instructor: Jonathan Gingerich

Email: jgingerich@humnet.ucla.edu (I am happy to answer any administrative questions by email. If you have substantive questions, please come and see me during office hours.)

Cell: [see course website] (I'm less likely to answer texts and calls after 7 PM)

Office: Dodd 343

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:00-3:00 and by appointment on Tuesdays

Honors Seminar Description

To enroll in this honors seminar, you must also be enrolled in Topics in Political Philosophy: Paternalism. This honors seminar will provide an opportunity to explore contemporary scholarship about paternalism in greater depth by reading and discussing recent philosophical research about “nudges”—roughly, policies that encourage people to make particular choices without limiting their options or their ability to choose. We will consider whether nudges, sometimes described as a form of “libertarian paternalism” avoid some or all of the morally worrisome features of “hard” paternalism or whether they give rise to similar concerns.

Required Texts

For this seminar, you will need to get a copy of Cass R. Sunstein, *Why Nudge?: The Politics of Libertarian Paternalism* (Yale University Press, 2014) and Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy: Justifying Coercive Paternalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). All of the other readings will be posted on the course website.

Coursework

In order for our meetings to be fun and interesting, we all need to carefully do the assigned reading and come prepared to discuss it in our meeting. Beyond preparation and participation.

We will take turns presenting on the reading that we discuss each week. presenters should come to our meetings prepared to clearly explain the views of the author we are discussing and to raise one or two substantive philosophical questions about the reading in order to get our discussion going. Presenters are expected to prepare a handout and email it to me at least one hour before our meeting so that I can print out copies of it for everyone. I will present at our first meeting to provide everyone with a model for organizing presentations. I will also circulate a sign-up sheet at our first meeting for everyone to sign up for a day to present.

Final grades for students enrolled in this seminar will be computed as follows:

50% Seminar participation

30% Presentation

20% Handout

Students enrolled in this seminar are welcome to write their term papers for the associated Paternalism course on a topic that arises from this seminar, although they are not required to do so.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1: Cass R. Sunstein, *Why Nudge?*, introduction and chapter 1

Week 2: Cass R. Sunstein, *Why Nudge?*, chapters 3 and 4

Week 3: Cass R. Sunstein, *Why Nudge?*, chapters 4 and 5.

Week 4: Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy: Justifying Coercive Paternalism*, chapter 1

Week 5: Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy: Justifying Coercive Paternalism*, chapter 2

Week 6: Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy: Justifying Coercive Paternalism*, chapter 3

Week 7: Jeremy Waldron, "It's All For Your Own Good" and Daniel M. Hausman and Brynn Welch, "To Nudge or Not to Nudge?"

Week 8: Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*, ch. 14-17

Week 9: Harry G. Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility."

Week 10: Jonathan Gingerich, "Freedom beyond Choice"

Week 11: Cass R. Sunstein, "Choosing Not to Choose"