

**The Ohio State University  
Colleges of the Arts and Sciences New Course Request**

**Philosophy Department**

Academic Unit

**Philosophy**

Book 3 Listing (e.g., Portuguese)

**465 Philosophy of Action**

Number	Title	UG	Level	Credit Hours
<b>465</b>	<b>Philosophy of Action</b>			<b>5</b>

18-Character Title Abbreviation \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed effective date, choose one quarter and put an "X" after it; and fill in the year. See the OAA curriculum manual for deadlines.

**A. Course Offerings Bulletin Information**

Follow the instructions in the OAA curriculum manual. If this is a course with decimal subdivisions, then use one New Course Request form for the generic information that will apply to all subdivisions; and use separate forms for each new decimal subdivision, including on each form the information that is unique to that subdivision. If the course offered is less than a quarter or a term, please complete the Flexibly Scheduled/Off Campus/Workshop Request form.

Description (not to exceed 25 words): **Philosophical examination of the nature of human action. Topics include the nature of intention, practical rationality, issues in moral psychology, the metaphysics of free will.**

Quarter offered: **W** Distribution of class time/contact hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter and contact/class time hours information should be omitted from Book 3 publication (yes or no): \_\_\_\_\_

Prerequisite(s): **Phil major, or 15 cr hours of philos course work exclusive of 150, or permission of instructor**

Exclusion or limiting clause: \_\_\_\_\_

Repeatable to a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ credit hours.

Cross-listed with: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Option (Please check): Letter  S/U  Progress  What course is last in the series? \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Statement: Yes  No  GEC: Yes  No  Admission Condition  
 Off-Campus: Yes  No  EM: Yes  No  Course: Yes  No   
 Embedded Honors Statement: Yes  No

Other General Course Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e.g. "Taught in English." "Credit does not count toward BSBA degree.")

**B. General Information**

Subject Code \_\_\_\_\_ Subsidy Level (V, G, T, B, M, D, or P) \_\_\_\_\_  
 If you have questions, please email Jed Dickhaut at [dickhaut.1@osu.edu](mailto:dickhaut.1@osu.edu).

1. Provide the rationale for proposing this course:  
**The philosophy of action is currently an area of research strength within the Philosophy Department—especially given our new hires—and an area of research concentration within the wider profession. A course in the philosophy of action would be useful to many advanced undergraduates in philosophy with interests in metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, practical**

**rationality, ethics, etc., and should be of interest to students in other disciplines as well, e.g. those in psychology and political science.**

2. Please list Majors/Minors affected by the creation of this new course. Attach revisions of all affected programs. This course is (check one):  Required on major(s)/minor(s)  A choice on major(s)/minors(s)  
 An elective within major(s)/minor(s)  A general elective:

3. Indicate the nature of the program adjustments, new funding, and/or withdrawals that make possible the implementation of this new course.

**The Philosophy Department recently hired 6 new faculty, several of whom have research interest in and/or special qualifications to teach in this area. While issues central to the philosophy of action are of arise in a number of different areas in philosophy, we are pleased now to be able to offer a course in which it is the central focus.**

4. Is the approval of this request contingent upon the approval of other course requests or curricular requests?

Yes  No  List:

5. If this course is part of a sequence, list the number of the other course(s) in the sequence: \_\_\_\_\_


6. Expected section size: **35-45** Proposed number of sections per year: **1**

7. Do you want prerequisites enforced electronically (see OAA manual for what can be enforced)? Yes  No


8. This course has been discussed with and has the concurrence of the following academic units needing this course or with academic units having directly related interests (*List units and attach letters and/or forms*):  
Not Applicable

9. **Attach a course syllabus that includes a topical outline of the course, student learning outcomes and/or course objectives, off-campus field experience, methods of evaluation, and other items as stated in the OAA curriculum manual and e-mail to [ascurofc@osu.edu](mailto:ascurofc@osu.edu).**

**Approval Process** The signatures on the lines in ALL CAPS ( e.g. ACADEMIC UNIT) are required.

  
1. Academic Unit Undergraduate Studies Committee Chair Printed Name Tamar Rudavsky Date 8/06/07

2. Academic Unit Graduate Studies Committee Chair Printed Name Justin D'Arms Date

  
3. ACADEMIC UNIT CHAIR/DIRECTOR Printed Name Donald Hubin Date 8/2/07

4. **After the Academic Unit Chair/Director signs the request, forward the form to the ASC Curriculum Office, 105 Brown Hall, 190 West 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. or fax it to 688-5678. Attach the syllabus and any supporting documentation in an e-mail to [ascurofc@osu.edu](mailto:ascurofc@osu.edu). The ASC Curriculum Office will forward the request to the appropriate committee.**

5. COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE Printed Name Date

6. ARTS AND SCIENCES EXECUTIVE DEAN Printed Name Date

7. Graduate School (if appropriate) Printed Name Date

8. University Honors Center (if appropriate) Printed Name Date

9. Office of International Education (if appropriate)

Printed Name

Date

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10. **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

Printed Name

Date

Colleges of the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Office. 10/02/06

# PHILOSOPHY 465

## PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION

### INSTRUCTOR:

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide students with a rigorous, though introductory, overview of some of the core issues currently at play in the philosophy of action. The issues covered, while interesting and important in their own right, will also serve as a useful background to how concerns about the nature of human action figure in other areas of philosophy—e.g., the philosophy of mind and psychology, ethics, and metaphysics. We will discuss general questions concerning the nature of human action as well as topics including practical rationality, moral psychology, the metaphysics of free will, and relevant work in empirical psychology. Specific issues that may be explored include how to understand the nature of reasons for action, the explanation of action, weakness of the will, self-knowledge in action, intentions, shared agency, motivation, and the status of principles of practical reason.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with a variety of philosophical issues that arise in the philosophy of action. Students will be expected to acquire an analytical understanding of these issues and the principal arguments in favor of the various theses held in connection with them. Students will also be expected to learn how to critically analyze and assess differing opinions, develop arguments in favor of their own views on them, and to learn how to express these views clearly and incisively in discussion and in writing.

### COURSE TEXTS:

The readings for this course will be made available in a course pack.

### COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS:

#### Reasons, Causes, and the Explanation of Action

Anscombe, "Intention", selections.  
Davidson, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes"  
G. Wilson, *Intentionality of Human Action*, selections.  
Hornsby, "Agency and Causal Explanation"  
Searle, *Intentionality*, Chp. 4.

#### Reasons and Irrationality

Davidson, "Paradoxes of Irrationality"  
Baier, "Rhyme and Reason: Reflections on Davidson's Version of Having Reasons"

#### Free Will, Compatibilism, and Hierarchical Conceptions of Self and Agency

Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self"

Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity"  
Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"  
Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"

Agency

Davidson, "Agency"  
Frankfurt, "The Problem of Action"  
Velleman, "What Happens When Someone Acts?"

Self-knowledge and Intention

S. Hampshire & H.L.A. Hart: "Decision, Intention and Certainty"  
G.E.M. Anscombe: selections from *Intention*  
H. P. Grice: "Intention and Uncertainty"  
G. Harman: "Willing and Intending"  
D. Velleman: "Practical Reflection"

Intentions & Plans

Bratman, "Intention and Means-End Reasoning"  
Harman, "Practical Reasoning" (or something from *Change in View*)  
(Kavka, "The Toxin Puzzle")

Attention, Perception, Self-Awareness

Milner and Goodale, *The Visual Brain in Action*, selections.  
Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness*, selections.  
Roessler, "Intentional Action and Self-Awareness"  
O'Brien, "On Knowing One's Action"

Shared Agency

Gilbert, "Walking Together"  
Bratman, "Shared Intention"  
Velleman, "How to Share and Intention"  
Searle, "Collective Intentionality"  
Roth, "Shared Agency and Contralateral Commitments"

Motivation and Reasons

Williams, "Internal and External Reasons"  
Smith, "The Humean Theory of Motivation"  
Dancy, *Practical Reality*, selections.  
Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Chapter 1.

The Status of Instrumental Reasoning

Korsgaard, "Skepticism About Practical Reason"  
Velleman, "Deciding How to Decide"  
Railton, "On the Hypothetical and Non-Hypothetical in Reasoning about  
Belief and Action"  
Broome, "Reasons"  
Bratman, "Intention, Belief, Practical, Theoretical"  
Setiya, "Cognitivism about Instrumental Reason"

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT:**

This course will be run as a discussion course, peppered with appropriate lectures. I expect all participants to take an active role in discussion. The expectation is that you will read each paper carefully, come to some initial thoughts on the issues, and be ready to present your thoughts and defend them the next day.

Ideally, we'll cover a paper each meeting. For every paper, I will present you with a detailed study guide (available on the course website), which includes some summary, exposition, and sets of questions to think about. We shall then meet to discuss the paper and the questions raised in the guides, with the hope that we might come to some consensus and settled opinions.

(1) **Questions:** For every meeting (when a new paper is discussed) you should write down (please type) *at least* one question. This question can be clarificatory or philosophical (or whatever you think is relevant). You should leave a space in your response, for hopefully, as class goes on, you'll be able to write down the answer to those questions.

(2) **Exercises:** With nearly every study guide, there is a question or suggestion entitled 'Exercise' which you will need to complete before our meeting on the paper in question. You should type up your responses. NOTE: I will allow you to take your Exercise home that evening, after our discussion on the paper in question, if you feel that it needs to be revised given our class presentations. You must then turn it in by the next class period.

(3) **Two Papers:** You'll be asked to write a five page paper and a 10 page paper.

The papers constitute 50% of the final grade, the exercises 25%, class participation 15%, and questions 10%.

## **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)).

## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.