Instructor:  
Chris Korsgaard  
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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-4:00

Course Assistant:  
Paul Schofield  
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Description:  
A study of some important recent work in the philosophy of action by Gary Watson, Jennifer Hornsby, Michael Bratman, Brian O'Shaughnessy, and John McDowell, all of whom will visit the seminar.

Course Admissions Policies:  
Participation in this course is by permission of the instructor. The course is not open to undergraduates, either as enrolled students or auditors. Permission to enroll will be extended to philosophy graduate students; in other cases the decision will depend on the size of the course and the student’s background in philosophy. Graduate students who wish to audit the course must commit to attending regularly, participating in discussions, and asking questions of the visitors.

Required and Readings from:

Bratman, Michael, “Intention, Practical Rationality, and Self-Governance.” In manuscript.
Bratman, Michael, “Shared Valuing and Shared Policies of Acceptance.” In manuscript.
Hornsby, Jennifer, “Anscombe vs. Davidson on Actions and Causality.” (in manuscript)


McDowell, John “I do what happens.” In manuscript.

McDowell, John, “Some Remarks on Intention in Action.” In manuscript.


O'Shaughnessy, Brian, “Trying and Acting.” In manuscript.


Watson, Gary, “The Trouble with Psychopaths.” In manuscript.

I have not ordered the books at the bookstore. Readings will be posted on or available through the course website and on reserve in Robbins Library. If you are auditing the course and wish to access the readings through the web site, you must supply us with your Harvard e-mail address so that we can add you to the class list. If you are auditing and are not a Harvard student, you can get an “XID” and with it a Harvard e-mail address for this purpose. Please contact Paul Schofield to be added to the class list.

**Written Assignments:**

i) *Questions for the speakers.* All students, both auditors and enrolled students, are required to post questions for the speakers to the “Questions for Visiting Speakers” section of the course website, no later than 8:00 p.m. on the Wednesday before the speaker’s visit.

ii) *Weekly 2-3 page papers.* Every enrolled student is required to hand in 2-3 double-spaced pages of writing (*absolutely no more*) each week. These short papers will be due by 5:00 p.m. each Wednesday, and must deal with the readings for the forthcoming Friday. You should hand them in by sending them to me as e-mail attachments; please be sure that your name is on both the paper itself and in the title of the file. Apart from that requirement, the topic is entirely up to you: you may summarize the material, give a reading of a difficult passage, criticize one of the arguments, or defend the author against a possible criticism - anything as long as it concerns the reading for the week in question. These papers will not be graded, but you must turn all of them in order to pass the course.

iii) *Seminar Paper.* A seminar paper of 15-20 pages is due on Monday, May 11, by 5:00 p.m.

Students seeking an extension on any of the papers should ask me *before* the date on which the paper is due.
Schedule:

January 30  Organizational Meeting

February 6  John McDowell  
“Some Remarks on Intention and Action”  
Brian O’Shaughnessy  
“Searle’s Theory of Action”

February 13 John McDowell Visit  
“I do what happens”  
Elizabeth Anscombe, *Intention*: §§8-9, 28-32, 45-46, 48  
Recommended Reading: Richard Moran, “Anscombe on ‘Practical Knowledge’”  
Richard Moran and Martin Stone, “Anscombe on Expression of Intention”

February 20 Jennifer Hornsby  
“Bodily Movement, Actions, and Epistemology”  
“Physicalist Thinking and Conceptions of Behavior”  
“Agency and Causal Explanation”  
(All from *Simple Mindedness*)  
Recommended Reading: An Interview with Jennifer Hornsby

February 27 Jennifer Hornsby Visit  
“Agency and Actions”  
“A Disjunctive Conception of Acting for Reasons”  
“Anscombe vs. Davidson on Actions and Causality”

March 6  Michael Bratman  
“Three Theories of Self-Governance”  
“Intention, Belief, Practical, Theoretical”  
"Modest Sociality and the Distinctiveness of Intention.”  
Recommended Reading: “Reflections on the Philosophy of Action”

March 13 Michael Bratman Visit  
“Intention, Practical Rationality, and Self-Governance”  
“Shared Valuing and Shared Policies of Acceptance”

March 20  Brian O’Shaughnessy  
Recommended Reading: “Trying and Acting”
The topics covered in these readings are:

1. The theory that, while trying may be omnipresent in bodily actions, it consists in the present intention. Alternatively, the theory that the intention does all the main mental work. (pp. 314—316, 379—383, and especially 390—393).

2. The theory that acts of the bodily will, and/or bodily actions themselves, are interior phenomena. (385—448, and especially 423—424).

3. Making out a case for the theory that double aspect theory is true of bodily actions. (385—448)

4. A simple summary and diagrammatic rendition of that double aspect theory, as expressed in the last two pages of the book 606—8.

March 21-29 Spring Recess

April 3 Brian O’Shaughnessy Visit
Reading: The Same Continued

Same as above

April 10 Gary Watson
“Free Agency”
“Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme”
“Two Faces of Responsibility”
(All from Agency and Answerability)

April 17 Gary Watson Visit
“The Trouble with Psychopaths”
“Psychopathic Agency”

April 24 & May 1 No Meetings

Final Paper due Monday May 11