

## **Phil 397: *Practical Reasoning***

**Fall 2003**

**Class meeting time: T R 2:30pm-3:45pm**  
**Class location: Welles 132**  
**E-mail: Liu@geneseo.edu**  
**Telephone: 245-5231 (O)**

**Instructor: JeeLoo Liu**  
**Office hours: M W 10 - noon**  
**or by appointment**  
**Office: Welles 103**

### **Texts:**

- 1. Jean-Pierre Dupuy (ed.) *Self-deception and Paradoxes of Rationality*. [Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.] 1998**
- 2. Alfred Mele. *Self-deception Unmasked*. [Princeton U. Press] 2001**
- 3. Robert Audi. *The Architecture of Reason*. [Oxford] 2001**
- 4. Simon Blackburn. *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning*. [Clarendon Press] 1998**

### **Course Description:**

According to Edna Ullmann-Margalit's Introduction to *Reasoning Practically*, "Taken broadly, reasoning practically is an enquiry into the nature of reason, reasoning, and reasons – as well as rational, rationalization, and rationality. It is meant to ponder how we think about what to do, how we move from thinking to doing, and what may come between our thinking and our doing." In this course we will begin with Donald Davidson's theory of practical reasoning, and examine what he takes to be the "paradoxes of irrationality." We will then move on to Alfred Mele's investigation of one major problem in practical reasoning: self-deception. After we have examined all these so-called "paradoxes of irrationality," we will study two leading philosophers' ambitious attempt to delineate our practical rationality. Simon Blackburn defends a theory of rationality based on human emotions, while Robert Audi defends the view that practical reasoning is no different from theoretical reasoning.

This course will be conducted in lecture/discussion format. Students are expected to have completed the reading assignment prior to each class and be ready to offer oral summary and evaluation of the reading materials.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Students will demonstrate general understanding of the issue of practical reasoning in contemporary analytic philosophy. Students are also expected to come up with their own view on whether humans are thinking rationally and what the best definition of "practical reason" is.
2. Students will master the skills to write a philosophy paper that includes critical reasoning, sustained argumentation, and insight. Students will also learn the basics of doing research in philosophy.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to do a paper presentation in class.

**Grading:**

<b>Mid-term exam</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>Final exam</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>Active class participation</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>1 final paper (10-12 pages)</b>	<b>30 %</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>10 %</b>

**General Policies:**

1. To succeed in this course, you should keep pace with the syllabus. Your regular attendance is strongly emphasized, and you are also expected to finish the reading assignments prior to each class.
2. A main goal of this course is for you to develop your own view philosophically. Feel free to come discuss your ideas with me. Your paper should be the culmination of your learning and thinking in this course about various topics of practical rationality or irrationality. You will be asked to give a paper presentation during the last weeks of the semester. We will simulate a formal paper presentation in philosophy conferences – with your reading the paper, a short commentator’s response, reply and open forum for questioning. The preparation for this paper presentation should begin shortly after Fall break.
3. To receive a final grade for the course, all assignments must be completed.

**The College’s Attendance Policy:****The Classroom Policies section of the Undergraduate Bulletin**

Students are expected to attend all classes. Furthermore, the College recognizes that students hold primary and ultimate responsibility for their academic performance and accomplishment. While attendance in itself is not a factor in the final grade for a course, students are expected to recognize the importance of regular class attendance and to complete satisfactorily all requirements of all courses in which they are registered.

Class Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Content of discussion</u>	<u>Assignments for this class</u>
T 8/26	Introduction	None
R 8/28	Stephen Stich: Could Man Be An Irrational Animal?	[handouts]
T 9/2	Donald Davidson: Who Is Fooled?	[Dupuy] pp. 1-18
R 9/4	Donald Davidson: Incoherence and Irrationality	[handouts]
T 9/9	Donald Davidson: Paradoxes of Irrationality	[handouts]
R 9/11	Donald Davidson: Deception and Division	[handouts]
T 9/16	Donald Davidson: How Is Weakness of Will Possible	[handouts]
R 9/18	Ariela Lazar: Division and Deception: Davison on Being Self-Deceived	[Dupuy] pp. 19-36
T 9/23	Jean-Pierre Dupuy Rationality and Self-Deception	[Dupuy] pp. 113-150
R 9/25	Kent Bach: (Apparent) Paradoxes of Self-Deception and Decision	[Dupuy] pp. 163-189
T 9/30	Alfred Mele: <i>Self-Deception Unmasked</i>	[Mele] Chapters 1-3
R 10/2	Alfred Mele: <i>Self-Deception Unmasked</i>	[Mele] Chapters 4-6
T 10/7	<b>Review</b>	<b>Bring all lecture notes</b>
R 10/9	<b>Mid-term Exam</b>	
T 10/14	<b>Fall Break</b>	

<b>R</b>	<b>10/16</b>	Simon Blackburn: <i>Ruling Passions</i>	[Blackburn] Chapters 1-2
<b>T</b>	<b>10/21</b>	Simon Blackburn: <i>Ruling Passions</i>	[Blackburn] Chapter 3
<b>R</b>	<b>10/23</b>	Simon Blackburn: <i>Ruling Passions</i>	[Blackburn] Chapter 4
<b>T</b>	<b>10/28</b>	Simon Blackburn: <i>Ruling Passions</i>	[Blackburn] Chapters 5-6
<b>R</b>	<b>10/30</b>	Simon Blackburn: <i>Ruling Passions</i>	[Blackburn] Chapters 7-8
<b>T</b>	<b>11/4</b>	Simon Blackburn: <i>Ruling Passions</i>	[Blackburn] Chapter 9
<b>R</b>	<b>11/6</b>	Robert Audi: <i>The Architecture of Reason</i>	[Audi] Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-57)
<b>T</b>	<b>11/11</b>	Robert Audi: <i>The Architecture of Reason</i>	[Audi] Chapters 3-4 (pp. 61-107)
<b>R</b>	<b>11/13</b>	Robert Audi: <i>The Architecture of Reason</i>	[Audi] Chapters 5-6 (pp.108-168)
<b>T</b>	<b>11/18</b>	Robert Audi: <i>The Architecture of Reason</i>	[Audi] Chapters 7-8 (pp.171-233)
<b>R</b>	<b>11/20</b>	<b>Paper Presentation</b>	
<b>T</b>	<b>11/25</b>	<b>Paper Presentation</b>	
<b>R</b>	<b>11/27</b>	<b>[Thanksgiving Vacation]</b>	
<b>T</b>	<b>12/2</b>	<b>Review</b>	
<b>R</b>	<b>12/4</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	

**FINAL EXAM: December 16 (Tuesday) 12:00 - 3:00 PM**