

**LBAR 289.524: First Year Seminar:  
Why Be Rational? Stoicism, Nietzsche, and Communitarianism**

Fall 2008: Wednesday, 4:30-5:20, Bolton 208

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Why should we care about being reasonable? How can we think that people who disagree with us are rational? Why respect people who are cannot give good reasons for their beliefs? The seminar will examine answers to these questions given by two Stoic thinkers (Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius), the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and recent communitarians (Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and Michael Sandel).

Readings:

Epictetus, *The Enchiridion* [Manual]  
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (selections)  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*  
Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (selections)  
Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (selections)  
Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (selections)

Students need to get a copy of Nietzsche's *Gay Science*. All other readings will be made available to students by the instructor, either online at the [course website](#) or through the [Evans Library electronic course reserves](#). To get the online readings, click on the titles below.

For each meeting, half of the members of the seminar will write a one-page summary of the assigned reading, identifying (a) the basic points made in the reading and (b) the arguments given to support those points. Summaries will be discussed in the seminar meeting, along with objections and replies to those objections.

Aug 27	Overview	Oct 15	Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i>
Sept 3	Epictetus, <a href="#">Enchiridion</a>	Oct 22	MacIntyre, <i>After Virtue</i>
Sept 10	Marcus Aurelius, <a href="#">Meditations</a>	Oct 29	MacIntyre, <i>Whose Justice? Which Rationality?</i>
Sept 17	Marcus Aurelius, <a href="#">Meditations</a>	Nov 5	Sandel, <i>Liberalism &amp; the Limits of Justice</i>
Sept 24	Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i>	Nov 12	Taylor, <i>Sources of the Self</i>
Oct 1	Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i>	Nov 19	Taylor, <i>Sources of the Self</i>
Oct 8	Nietzsche, <i>The Gay Science</i>		

The course will be graded pass/fail.

**Office (Bolton 302-B): Mon 4:15-6:15; Wed 5:30-6:30**  
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