LBAR 289.524: First Year Seminar:
Why Be Rational? Stoicism, Nietzsche, and Communitarianism
Fall 2008: Wednesday, 4:30-5:20, Bolton 208
Stephen H. Daniel, Professor of Philosophy

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 19th 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
Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self (selections)
Michael Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, 2nd 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
Sept 3 Epictetus, Enchiridion
Sept 10 Marcus Aurelius, Meditations
Sept 17 Marcus Aurelius, Meditations
Sept 24 Nietzsche, The Gay Science
Oct 1 Nietzsche, The Gay Science
Oct 8 Nietzsche, The Gay Science
Oct 15 Nietzsche, The Gay Science
Oct 22 MacIntyre, After Virtue
Oct 29 MacIntyre, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?
Nov 5 Sandel, Liberalism & the Limits of Justice
Nov 12 Taylor, Sources of the Self
Nov 19 Taylor, Sources of the Self

The course will be graded pass/fail.

Office (Bolton 302-B): Mon 4:15-6:15; Wed 5:30-6:30
Phone: 845-5619 (office), 846-4649 (home)
E-mail: sdaniel@philosophy.tamu.edu
Web: philosophy.tamu.edu/%7Esdaniel/lbar289sy08c.pdf

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