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## Law, Self, and Society

### Syllabus and Reading List

#### Part I: Moral Theory and Conceptions of Self

##### 1. Utility and the sentient self

J. Murphy and J. Coleman, *Philosophy of Law* (excerpt)  
J. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (excerpt)  
J.J.C. Smart and B. Williams, *Utilitarianism: For & Against* (excerpt)  
Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine"

##### 2. Autonomy and the choosing self

Robert Johnson, "Kant's Moral Philosophy"  
*People v. Minkowski*

##### 3. Dignity and the constructing self

R. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (excerpt)  
J.P. Sartre, "The Humanism of Existentialism"  
P. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (excerpt)  
D.C. Dennett, "The Origins of Selves"  
– "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity"  
T.E. Hill, Jr., *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant's Moral Theory*, Chapter 2  
M. Dan-Cohen, "Defending Dignity"  
"Constructing Selves"  
*State v. Brown*

(turn over)

## **Part II: Law and the Boundaries of Self**

### **1. The physical dimension**

M. Dan-Cohen, "The Value of Ownership"

M.J. Radin, "Commodification as a Worldview"

"Prostitution and Baby-Selling: Contested Commodification and Women's Capacities"

*Breithaupt v. Abram*

*Lovett v. West Virginia Central Gas Company*

*Moore v. Regents of the University of California*

### **2. The mental dimension**

P.F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment"

M. Dan-Cohen, "Responsibility and the Boundaries of the Self"

Harry Frankfurt, "Taking Ourselves Seriously"

M. Dan-Cohen, "Socializing Harry"

*Regina v. Charlson*

*State v. Snowden*

### **3. The social dimension**

E. Goffman, "Role Distance"

J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (excerpt)

M. Dan-Cohen, "Interpreting Official Speech"

*State v. Parker*

*People v. Kessler*

### **4. The temporal dimension**

Michael Quante, "Precedent Autonomy and Personal Identity"

David Heyd, "From Wrongful Life to Wrongful Identity"

Ernest Partridge, "Posthumous Interests and Posthumous Respect"

M. Dan-Cohen, "Revising the Past: On the Metaphysics of Repentance, Forgiveness, and Pardon"

## **Requirements and Grading**

Grading will be based on class participation in lecture and in section (30%), a midterm in-class exam (30%), and a take-home final. As part of class participation students will be occasionally asked to submit short written reports on the reading material and to make oral presentations in section.