Law, Self, and Society

Syllabus and Reading List

Part I: Moral Theory and Conceptions of Self

1. The experiential 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”
   M. Dan-Cohen, “Harmful Thoughts”

2. The choosing self
   Robert Johnson, “Kant's Moral Philosophy”
   M. Dan-Cohen, “Conceptions of Choice and Conceptions of Autonomy”
   *People v. Minkowski*

3. The constructed self
   R. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (excerpt)
   J.P. Sartre, @The Humanism of Existentialism@
   D.C. Dennett, A-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, A-Defending Dignity@

(turn over)

Part II: Law and the Boundaries of Self
1. **The physical dimension**
   M. Dan-Cohen, *A The Value of Ownership*
   M.J. Radin, “Commodification as a Worldview”
   – “Prostitution and Baby-Selling: Contested Commodification and Women’s Capacities”
   – “Commodification, Objectification, and Subordination”
   *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, *A Role Distance*
   J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (excerpt)
   M. Dan-Cohen, *Interpreting Official Speech*

4. **The temporal dimension**
   Michael Quante, “Precedent Autonomy and Personal Identity”
   David Heyd, “From Wrongful Life to Wrongful Identity”
   Bonnie Steinbock, “The Logical Case for ‘Wrongful Life’”
   Ernest Partridge, “Posthumous Interests and Posthumous Respect”

**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.