

Atlas Shrugged as a Work of Philosophy – Course Outline

Lecture 1:

- Introduction
- Literature and works of philosophy
- Ayn Rand as a philosophical novelist
- The philosophical nature of the theme and plot of *Atlas Shrugged*
- Atlas Shrugged's* inductive methodology and its three Parts.
- Thematic points from Part I
- The motivation of the heroes.
- The relation between reason and purpose
- Some Aristotelian ideas about causality and their relation to *Atlas Shrugged*
- Q & A

Lecture 2:

- The motivation of the heroes and villains
- The first run of the John Galt Line (the relation between spirit and body)
- Some remarks on philosophical induction
- Rearden's liberation from guilt
- Q & A

Lecture 3:

- Rearden's liberation from guilt (continued)
- Rearden and the spirit-body dichotomy
- Dagny's conflict

Lecture 4:

- Galt and the metaphysical turn
- Dagny's return to the world
- The progression after Dagny's return
- Rearden goes on strike
- Galt's speech and Dagny's last steps

(All page numbers on associated course materials refer to the current hardcover and trade paperback editions of the novel.)

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		4.	Cherryl:	At home: her horror at Jim's act; why he married her; he's "a killer for the sake of killing"; he hits her; she runs out	900
				Horror: achievements seized; b/c of inverted morality people know only pain & are concerned only for the guilty	904
				Suicide: her rejection of this world as all that's left of hers; the social worker; she runs off the pier	907
	V. THEIR BROTHERS' KEEPERS	1.	Dagny	Copper's scarcity; Meigs' thievery; supplies spread thinly across the system; lack of initiative amongst workers	909
				Dagny & Jim: RUP is irrational; demand that she make it work b/c she's the doer & he has the right of weakness	910
				dCA nationalized but it's been totally destroyed; Jim's reaction	918
				Dinner w/ Rearden: his attitude towards Francisco & work; plans to bootleg metal for machines for MN farmers	921
				Francisco's parting message to the world; Rearden's reaction	925
		2.		Dagny sends copper wire from MN to MO, which is one of the few remaining suppliers of copper	925
			Rearden	Government officials suddenly solicitous towards him	926
				Phillip's request for a job: he needs it, he's R's brother, and unlike R he feels; R grasps the idea of zero-worship	927
				Divorce court: reflections on the nature of the proceedings; it goes too easily; he feels divorced from the society	932
			Wet Nurse asks Rearden for a job	934	
	3.	Minnesota catastrophe	Deteriorating state of TT: wire sent from terminal to MN; Dagny learns about system from anonymous tips	937	
			Tip that cars haven't been sent for MN harvest (they were sent to Kip's Ma) last ditch effort to get them	939	
			The grain rots, MN descends into violence; the soybeans are moldy	943	
	4.	Dagny	Broken wire in Terminal puts signal system out of commission	943	
			Dagny had been at dinner meeting w/ leaders: they're indifferent to industry and want only power & loot	944	
			Enroot to TT she reflects on waning motivation, but orders herself onward	949	
			At TT: she calls for engineer from other RR and decides to signal trains manually	949	
			Galt: amongst the track workers; makes love to her; how he's watched her; knowingly endangered himself	954	
C	VI. THE CONCERTO OF DELIVERANCE	The set up	Controversy re steel workers' wages	963	
			"Accidental" attachment on Rearden's property	964	
			Holloway's request for a meeting	965	
			Slagenhop & Philip	966	
			Rearden's Mother's insistence on seeing him	967	
		Rearden goes on strike	Family: they plead for his sacrificial help; he sees that they don't want to live & grasps what Lillian is after	968	
			Leaders: they expect him to make the irrational work; "three tumblers" click into place, setting him free	977	
			Driving back to his mills he grasps fully the nature of their value; the context that makes them a value is gone	987	
		The attack on the Mills	Wet Nurse's death (just after learning what it is to be alive); Rearden's reflection on education	989	
			The fighting at the Mills; Rearden's knocked unconscious	995	
		Rearden and Francisco's reunion	998		

C. The successful conclusion of the strike	VII. "THIS IS JOHN GALT SPEAKING"		Jim tells Dagny that Rearden's quit; appeals to her to bring him back; her reaction to the news; his note; her anxiety re Galt	1001
			Dagny is tricked into being in the audience for Mr. Thompson's speech, which he cannot give because the frequencies are blocked	1004
			Galt's speech: the strike; the morality of life; the morality of death; the mystics; the nature of one's choice	1009
	VIII. THE EGOIST	1.	Thomson et al. & Dagny: they try to evade the speech; she says if they want to live they'll decontrol; Thompson suggests a deal	1070
			Dagny & Eddie: Galt; she says the looters will give up b/c they value their lives and know they're through; he questions both premises	1076
		3.	Effects of speech: best men quitting all over the country; government claims Galt will solve problems & broadcasts appeals to him	1078
			Dagny & Thompson: his attempt to reach Halt through her; her advice to decontrol; his suggestion that Galt may be dead	1084
		4.	Dagny & Galt: she comes to his house; he welcomes her; tells her that police will come and she'll have to take their side to save him	1086
			Galt's arrest	1094
		5.	Galt and Thompson: Thompson tried to make a deal but has nothing to offer; a zero can't hold a mortgage over life	1097
		6.	Thompson & advisors: their fear of him	1105
			Dagny & Thompson: lying to him, wonders if fakers want to live; puts Galt's safety before ending regime & saving TT	1108
			Office: indifference to reward check; wonders whether people "non-valuing people" want to live; Francisco's note	1111
			Galt's visitors Thompson & Jim	1111
			Thompson and Morrison	1113
			Thompson and Ferris; G requests Stadler	1114
			Thompson & Mouch: shortages of staples	1115
			Dagny and Eddie: he says she'll quit as soon as she can; he decides to go to CA in effort to save TT; she says there's nothing to save	1116
			Galt & Stadler: Stadler, brought by force, denies that he wants to use force against the mind but ends by saying Galt must be killed	1116
		7.	Banquet Galt brought there by force	1119
	Dagny, in audience, noticing different people's responses to Galt, challenges the premise that they want to live		1120	
	Galt maneuvers so that gun is visible on cameras and says "Get the hell out of my way!"		1125	
	IX. THE GENERATOR	1.	Stadler's attempt to seize and Project X: Meigs beat him to it; the mechanism goes off killing many and destroying the Taggart Bridge	1126
		2.	Dagny goes on strike	1133
			Having overheard plans to torture Galt and understood the motivation, she calls Francisco	1137
			Home & office: she collects a few items, hesitates only momentarily over news of Bridge collapse	1138
		Meets Francisco; takes oath	1139	
	3.	Project F: torture of Galt; Jim's breakdown	1139	
	X. IN THE NAME OF THE BEST WITHIN US	1.	Rescue of Galt	1147
			Dagny and guard: she shoots him because he will not decide	1148
Francisco, Rearden, and Ragnar extract Galt from Project F			1156	
		Plane ride to the valley	1160	
2.		Eddie's uncertain fate	1167	
3.		Strikers in valley preparing to return	1167	

In preparing this outline, I have drawn on previous outlines of the speech prepared by Allan Gotthelf and Onkar Ghate. Dr. Ghate's outline is available with his course "A Study of Galt's Speech", which I highly recommend. In dividing the speech into five major sections derives, I follow Dr. Gotthelf's outline.

I. Introduction (1009)

- A. The state of the world as a realization of its moral ideal (1009)
- B. Galt's removal of the men of the mind who are the victims of the world's morality (1010)
- C. The strike (1010)
- D. The need to discover morality (1011)

II. The Morality of Life (1011)

- A. Traditional morality, whether mystical or skeptical, as sacrificial and anti-mind (1011)
- B. Morality as a survival requirement for a being of volitional consciousness (1012)
- C. The standard, purpose, and reward of morality (1013)
 - i. Man's life as the standard of morality (1013)
 - ii. One's own life as the purpose of morality (1014)
 - iii. Happiness as one's highest moral purpose (1014)
 - iv. The evil and irrationality of the preachers of self-sacrifice (1014)
 - v. The respective roles of choices and facts in the foundations of morality (1015)
- D. The philosophic foundations of morality, which are the ultimate basis for the strike (1015)
 - i. The metaphysical axioms (1015)
 - ii. An epistemology of reason as demanded by the axioms (1016)
- E. The morality of reason (1017)
 - i. The basic choice to think, which amounts to the choice to accept existence, as the basic virtue and the attempt to wipe out existence by evasion as the basic vice (1017)
 - ii. The supreme and ruling values (1018)
 - iii. The virtues (1018)
- F. Emotions as automatic estimates based on one's standard of value (1021)

G. Social Ethics (1022)

- i. The trader principle (1022)
- ii. The evil of initiating physical force (1023)
- iii. The strikers' refusal to submit to force and make terms with evil men whose basic motive is opposite of their own (1024)

III. The Morality of Death (1025)

A. The doctrine of Original Sin (1025)

- i. The contradiction in the doctrine (1025)
- ii. How the doctrine damns human life as such (1025)

B. The soul-body dichotomy (1026)

- i. The nature of the dichotomy (1026)
- ii. The effects of the dichotomy (1026)
- iii. The two teachers of the Morality of Death as products of the dichotomy (1027)

C. Sacrifice (1027)

- i. The meaning of the term (1028)
- ii. The immorality of sacrifice (1028)
- iii. How, in sacrificing material values, one renounces one's spirit (1029)
- iv. Sacrifice vs. the mind (1030)

D. Altruism (1030)

- i. The non-objectivity of altruism (1030)
- ii. The psychology by which altruism accepted (1031)
- iii. Worship of need (the zero) as the "secret core" of altruism—how this means that death is its standard of value (1031)
- iv. The meanness of soul created by altruism's sacrifice of morality and self-esteem (1032)
- v. Altruism's justification in a self-contradictory demand for causeless love (1033)
- vi. The consequences of altruism (1034)

IV. The Teachers of the Morality of Death (1034)

A. How mystics' attacks exploit fear of independence (1034)

B. The mystics as motivated by a desire to escape the law of identity—as sacrificing existence to their wishes (1035)

- C. The primacy of consciousness as a rebellion against causality and existence as such (1036)
 - D. The men of the mind as the unacknowledged cause of the values and the victims of the seekers of the unearned (1038)
 - E. How the mystics evade (“blank-out”) the source of the concepts they take over (1039)
 - F. The concept of “objective reality”, which the mystics aim to destroy, as the culmination of the development of a human consciousness (1040)
 - G. The doctrines by which the mystics of muscle seek to reduce men to the state of savages (1042)
 - i. Epistemological and metaphysical doctrines (1042)
 - ii. Psychological and linguistic doctrines (1042)
 - iii. Socio-economic doctrines (1043)
 - H. The world as reduced to a clash between rival gangs of power-lusting mystics (1044)
 - I. The psychology of a mystic (1044)
 - i. How the object of the mystic’s worship and fear is the consciousness of others (1044)
 - ii. How the mystic is driven to seek power over other consciousnesses in order control reality (1045)
 - iii. How death is the mystic’s goal (1046)
 - J. The impossibility of making terms with evil—with death-seeking mystics (1046)
- V. Choosing the Morality of Life (1047)
- A. How Galt, by withdrawing the mind, has brought the Morality of Death to its conclusion (1047)
 - i. How Galt reached the decision to strike (1047)
 - ii. What the men of the mind contribute to society (1048)
 - iii. The attempt by incompetents to enslave the men of the mind (1049)
 - iv. The historical significance of the strike (1050)
 - v. As a result of Galt’s action, men will die unless they recognize that their lives are made possible by the mind’s dominion over matter (1051)
 - B. People’s attitude towards morality (1052)
 - i. How people fake belief in altruism to themselves and to others (1052)
 - ii. The lethal breach between the moral and the practical (or pleasurable) (1053)
 - iii. The belief that morality is a necessary evil (1053)

- C. Why there is no room for compromise and altruism must be rejected outright (1054)
 - i. The evil attitude that there are no absolutes, which is a result of trying to practice an impracticable code (1054)
 - ii. The growth of evil when virtue is compromised (1054)
 - iii. Evasion of the state of the world as a means of avoiding the the necessity of rejecting altruism (1054)

- D. Self-esteem (1056)
 - i. The need for self-esteem and the danger of tying it to an irrational standard (1056)
 - ii. Self-doubt as caused by non-thinking, often in the attempt to preserve a self-esteem based on an irrational standard of value (1057)
 - iii. Self-esteem as the lost paradise of childhood, and of one's best moments, which can be reclaimed (1057)
 - iv. The need to take responsibility of one's consciousness by choosing to think and accepting as one's moral ideal the task of becoming a man (1058)
 - v. Pride (including the rejection of self-sacrifice) as the means to self-esteem (1059)
 - vi. Self-esteem as motivating the rational to strike against a world that doesn't value the mind (1060)

- E. Rights as the moral foundation of America, on which strikers will rebuild it (1060)
 - i. America as a product of selfish reason being destroyed by the European doctrine of sacrifice (1060)
 - ii. The moral and metaphysical source of man's rights (1061)
 - iii. The evil of a government that initiates force rather than protecting rights (1062)

- F. The relationship between the geniuses and men of lesser ability (1063)
 - i. The benefits of trade with a genius (1063)
 - ii. The motives and consequences of the mediocrities' resort to force (1065):
 - iii. The irredeemable evil of geniuses who, because they regard knowledge as impractical, reject trade and put their minds in the service of force (1066)

- G. Advice to people in the world (1066)
 - i. Go on strike (1066)
 - ii. If possible build proper communities in the wilderness (1067)

- H. Message to hidden heroes (1068)