

Introduction to Moral Psychology

Fall 2022

PHIL/PSYC 2415

TR1:00pm - 2:15pm

Baker Laboratory 219

Instructor: Shaun Nichols

326 Goldwin Smith Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM, and by appointment

Note: My office is not wheelchair accessible. Please e-mail me if you need to set up a meeting elsewhere.

sbn44@cornell.edu

Course description:

This course is an introduction to the moral mind from the philosophical, psychological, and neuroscientific perspective. The interdisciplinary field of moral psychology is relatively young. For most of the 20th century, moral philosophy and experimental psychology were conducted separately. Only in the last two decades have philosophers and psychologists started working together in order to address questions about the origin and nature of moral thought. This collaboration has proven to be quite fruitful. As we will see, many traditional philosophical problems about morality are illuminated by current work in psychology. Philosophical concepts and theories have also informed and guided new empirical research in psychology. In this course, we will look at several prominent issues in moral psychology, including moral judgment, altruism, and punishment.

Teaching Assistants

Randy Lee

Section: DIS 203 | Rockefeller Hall 105 | Friday 11:20am-12:10pm

Office (for office hours): G75 Uris Hall (in the Social Psychology Lab corridor)

Office Hours: Monday 4:00 - 5:00pm, and by appointment

Email: t1729@cornell.edu

Claudia Wang

Section: DIS 202 | Goodwin Smith Hall 124 | Friday 12:25-1:15pm

Office (for office hours): Goldwin Smith Hall 344

Office Hours: Thursday 2:30-3:00pm, and by appointment

Email: sw726@cornell.edu

Brianna Zgurich

Section: DIS 201 | Goldwin Smith Hall 124 | Fridays 11:20-12:10

Office (for office hours): Goldwin Smith Hall 217 (Zoom by request)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-2:30pm and by appointment.

Email: bmz9@cornell.edu

Contact:

If you have questions about the syllabus, canvas, or other administrative matters, please email Claudia Wang sw726@cornell.edu

TEXT: No required text.

Readings will be posted on canvas.

Course requirements and grading:

Students are required to attend weekly lectures (Tu/Th) as well as the weekly discussion section (F).

Participation: 10%

This includes:

1. participation in section
2. short writing assignments (e.g., argument sketches) for lectures [Grading for this will be minimal: check / no check, and a good faith effort gets a check.]
3. participation in class. In class, most weeks, one section will be assigned to be responsible for explaining the reading for the day. Students from that section will be called on to explain the arguments in the reading.

Quizzes: 10%

Most weeks there will be a short quiz (administered via Canvas) consisting of multiple choice and T/F questions about material presented in the previous lecture(s) that week. You will have a 24-hour window to complete the quiz outside of class.

We will automatically drop your two lowest quiz scores as a way to accommodate any emergency situations, illnesses, or just a rough week.

Response papers for discussion sections: 15%

You will be required to turn in 5 response papers, turning in no more than one response paper in per week. (If you turn in more than 5, the lowest grade(s) will be dropped.)

NOTE: These must be turned in 24 hours before your discussion section meets, so that the TA will have time to review them before your section.

Grades for this will be 0 (=0), 1 (=87), 2(=94), 3(=98). The expectation is that most submissions will get a 2.

Essay: 25%

The essay is to be submitted twice. The first version is due on October 28 (by 11:59PM) and will be returned by November 14 ungraded, but with comments. It should then be handed in again (by 11:59PM) on December 7 with those comments, and with the second, revised, version, which will be graded.

Exams: 40%

Exam 1: Oct 6, 20%

Exam 2: Final, Dec 1, 20%

Grading scheme: F=0-59; 60-62 = D-; 63-66 = D; 67-69 = D +; 70-72=C-; 73-76 = C; 77-79=C+; 80-82=B-; 83-86=B; 87-89=B+; 90-92=A-; 93-96=A; 97-100=A+.

On the S/U grading scheme, U=0-69; S= 70-100

Late Work: Except for lateness due to documented emergencies, late work will be penalized by 1/3 letter grade per day (this is in the interest of fairness to all students).

Notes on Academic Integrity

1. Each student in this course is required to adhere to Cornell's Academic Integrity Code: <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm>

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Code, and what constitutes a violation of it. All work submitted must be the student's own, and all sources must be properly cited.

2. All papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Further, all papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the usage policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.
3. Students are not permitted to buy or sell any course materials, online or otherwise. This includes handouts, paper topics, homework questions, etc. Such behavior constitutes academic misconduct.

Use of Canvas Software

You will be automatically enrolled in the Canvas site when you enroll in the course. I will use it to post paper topics and send occasional e-mails, and you will use it to submit assignments. Finally, your TA might use it to assign homework questions or online discussions. If you have trouble with Canvas, go here first: <https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1848/pages/student-resources>

Students with Disabilities: Cornell University is committed to ensuring access to learning opportunities for all students. Student Disability Services (SDS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you are registered with SDS and have a faculty notification letter dated for this semester, please contact me early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course. If you have an immediate access need, please see me after class.
- If you have, or think you have, a disability in any area such as, mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the SDS office to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the SDS as noted above.
- If you are registered with SDS and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your SDS Counselor.

Student Disability Services is located at Cornell Health Level 5, 110 Ho Plaza, 607-254-4545, sds.cornell.edu.

Financial Hardship: <https://dos.cornell.edu/first-generation-low-income-student-support/access-fund>

The reading assignments are on the syllabus. The reading listed for the date is to be done before that class period. (Syllabus will be updated periodically)

Tentative Schedule

Readings are in the textbook unless explicitly noted as on canvas.

This schedule will be updated on canvas as the course develops. The listing here is just to give you a general idea of what we will be covering.

Week 1: Aug 23 & 25

Intro

Classical theories of moral judgment: Rationalism and Sentimentalism

Clarke, 11-20

Hutcheson, *Essay on the Nature...* Treatise 1, Section 1 (CANVAS)

Hutcheson, 21-31

Hume, 32-36

Gill, "Moral rationalism vs. moral sentimentalism" Sections 1-3 (CANVAS)

Classical arguments regarding moral judgment

Week 2: Aug 30 & Sep 1

Hume / Contemporary rationalism & sentimentalism

Required reading:

Hume excerpt

Contemporary rationalism and sentimentalism (cont'd)

Required reading:

Maibom, "Moral unreason" skim 237-239; read 241-245: section 2: "Psychopathic reason"

Week 3: Sept 6 & 8

Why be moral?

Classical accounts of moral motivation

Hobbes, 97-100

Classical arguments

Plato, 94-95 (the long Glaucon passage)

Butler, 104-5 (3 paragraphs, starting with paragraph that begins "Every man hath a general desire...")

Hutcheson, 114 (starting at section V)

Week 4: Sept 13 & 15

Contemporary psychological and evolutionary arguments for altruism

Sober & Wilson, 142-146

optional reading: Batson, Crockett

Moral motivation

Rosati, Moral motivation (SEP), section 3.2 (Internalism v. Externalism) just pp. 17-23 (CANVAS)

Schmidt & Tomasello, "Young children enforce social norms" (CANVAS)

Smith, *The moral problem*, chapter 3, pp. 71-76; 81-84 (CANVAS)

Issues in contemporary moral psychology

Week 5: Sept 20 (no class on Sept 22)

Emotions, intuitions, and debunking

Thomson, 327-334

Greene, 359-372

Week 6: Sept 27 & 29

Moral learning

Cushman, "Action, Outcome, and Value" 273-279 (up to "neural and psychological correlates"),
282-283 (section titled "Trolley cases and "personal" harms) (CANVAS)

[Recommended reading:

Crockett, "Models of morality" (CANVAS)]

The end of moral learning

Haidt, "Emotional dog" 343-345

Railton, "The affective dog" sections III-VI, pp. 826-839, XVII-XVIII, XXI; **but especially sections V, X, XVII, XVIII** (CANVAS)

Week 7: Oct 4 & 6

Pickard, "Addiction and the Self" (Canvas)

*****Oct 6: Midterm exam**

Week 8: Oct 13 (no class Oct 11)

Decision theory

Week 9: Oct 18 & 20

Nudges

Game theory

Week 10: Oct 25 & 27

Property

Oct 25: philosophical background
short writing assignment on Locke

Oct 27: the origins of property

Week 11: Nov 1 (no class Nov 3)

Anger

Reading:

Robert Frank (1988): *Passions within Reason*, ch. 3, & p. 83 (Norton) (CANVAS)

Punishment

J. L. Mackie (1982). "Morality and the Retributive Emotions" (CANVAS)

Fehr & Gächter (2002). "Altruistic Punishment in Humans" *Nature* (CANVAS)

Week 12: Nov 8 & 10

Moral luck and agent regret in philosophy

Reading:

Williams, "Moral Luck" just pages 27-30 (the selection is marked in the paper)

Gregory, "The sorrow and the shame of the accidental killer"

Moral luck and agent regret in psychology

Readings:

Kamtekar & Nichols, "Agent-Regret and Accidental Agency"
Cushman 2008 "Crime and Punishment", just pages 353-365

Week 13: Nov 15 & 17

Free will and moral responsibility

Greene & Cohen (canvas)

[Background readings:

Aristotle, Reid, Wegner & Wheatley, Roskies]

Personal identity

Strohminger & Nichols, "Neurodegeneration and Identity" (CANVAS)
Starmans & Bloom, "Nothing Personal" (CANVAS)
Nichols, Strohminger, Rai, & Garfield, "Death and the Self" (CANVAS)

Week 14: Nov 22 (no class Nov 24)

Norm change in the wild#

Bicchieri & McNally 2018 (Canvas)

[Fernbach et al. 2013, "Political Extremism Is Supported by an Illusion of Understanding"

Tan, C., Niculae, V., Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, C., & Lee, L. (2016, April). Winning arguments:

Interaction dynamics and persuasion strategies in good-faith online discussions. *In Proceedings of the 25th international conference on world wide web* (pp. 613-624)

Broockman & Kalla 2016]

[Background reading: Gillespie and Melching 2010, Tostan (Dutton 2010 summarizes Cialdini)]

Week 15: Nov 27 & Dec 1

Moral relativism and universalism in philosophy

Mackie (canvas)

Moral relativism and universalism in psychology

Sarkissian et al., "Folk moral relativism" (CANVAS)

***Dec 1: FINAL EXAM

Leftovers

Is morality innate?

Dwyer, "How Good is the Linguistic Analogy" just pages 237-242 (CANVAS)

Hamlin, "Moral Judgment and Action in Preverbal Infants and Toddlers: Evidence for an Innate Moral Core" (Canvas)

[Background reading:

Mikhail 2011, chapter 6

Dwyer, "Moral Competence"

Laurence & Margolis (2001). The Poverty of the Stimulus Argument. *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, Sections 3, 7.2*

Noam Chomsky (1967). Recent contributions to the theory of innate ideas]