

PSY 324: Moral Thought and Behaviour
Prerequisites: PSY201H1 (or equivalent), PSY220H1

Note: Material on this syllabus is subject to change

Winter 2022
Time: Mondays 10:10pm – 1:00pm
Location: Zoom link:
<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/84755616379>
Meeting ID: 847 5561 6379
Passcode: 387361

NOTE: CONDITIONS PERMITTING, THE CLASS WILL SHIFT TO IN-PERSON ON FEB 7. IF SO, THE CLASSROOM WILL BE 1086 SIDNEY SMITH HALL

Professor: Dr. Jason E. Plaks
Office: 4003 Sidney Smith Hall
Office hour: by appointment
Email address: jason.plaks@utoronto.ca

TA: Cory McKenzie
Office: N/A
Office hour: Thursdays 3-4pm
<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/81219638257?pwd=K0w3ZG5SaVV6S2FhSDA4RVQ3NmXQUT09>
Meeting ID: 812 1963 8257
Passcode: 4mNxUg
Email address: cory.mckenzie@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Description:

This third-year undergraduate course primarily involves reading and discussion of seminal articles on the psychology of morality. The instructor will also deliver a short mini-lecture at the start of most sessions. A key emphasis of the course will be on identifying specific psychological processes that lead people (a) to adopt the moral positions they do, (b) to translate their moral positions into action, and (c) to communicate their moral positions to others. Students will read seminal articles from a range of disciplines, including social psychology, cognitive neuroscience, animal behavior, philosophy, and evolutionary psychology. Students will gain: (a) thorough background knowledge on the main issues and debates in the field and (b) critical reading and writing skills necessary for understanding and communicating complex ideas.

Course Format and Requirements:

Grades. Grades will be based on the following components:

1. Weekly reaction papers: 20%

2. Class participation (verbal): 25%
3. Assignment #1 Mid-term 'long answer' exam: 30%
4. Final Paper (Research Proposal): 25%

penalty for lateness: 1% per day

1. To foster thoughtful, exciting, and worthwhile discussion, students are asked to prepare reaction papers to the weekly readings. This request is designed to get students to think about the readings, while ensuring that everyone has something to contribute during class discussion. Students have some freedom to decide how to complete this assignment. Spend some time highlighting the main points of the readings, but most of the paper should do other things: e.g., connect these main points, critique a study or its findings (or the authors' interpretation of the findings), consider/discuss/develop new ideas, and/or propose a new study. The goal should be to demonstrate that you really understand the material. To this end, students are encouraged to bring in relevant material from other courses. Details are as follows:

- Papers should be **submitted to Quercus before the start of class**.
- Papers should be roughly 500 words.
- Papers will be graded with a '2' (excellent), '1' (adequate), or '0' (inadequate).

2. Issues of morality are, of course, an endless source of fascinating debate. To that end, the course will be structured as much as possible to foster high level, intellectual, respectful dialogue among the students on the foundational moral issues that come up in the readings. A significant portion of the course mark (25%) will be based on the instructor's assessment of the quantity and quality of each student's contribution to the discussions.

3. For Assignment #1, students will be asked to write in class a 2-3 'long answer' responses to questions posed by the instructor. These questions will ask students to compare, contrast, and synthesize different theorists' approaches to understanding a contemporary moral issue. Responses will be marked for correctness, clarity, and intellectual rigor.

4. For Assignment #2, students will write a 10-12 page literature review/research proposal. Students will propose new studies to test specific hypotheses that address a lacuna in the literature. The instructor will provide more specific instruction about the nature and format of this paper after the midpoint of the semester.

Course website information

Course readings are available in PDF form on the Quercus site for the course.

TOPICS AND READINGS

Boldfaced items are required.

Regular-type items are available for additional enrichment.

January 10: Introductory Lecture

no readings

January 17: Origins of Morality

Podcast interview with Philip Pettit on “The Birth of Ethics” from *Philosophy Bites*: https://hwdn.libsyn.com/p/2/1/6/216ca4288bd45785/Philip_Pettit_on_the_Birth_of_Ethics.mp3?c_id=35171321&cs_id=35171321&expiration=1608840041&hwt=eb7cfe984941cf7908713addf7652dd

Tomasello, M., & Vaish, A. (2013). Origins of human cooperation and morality. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, 231–55.

Sloane, S., Baillargeon, R., & Premack, D. (2012). Do infants have a sense of fairness? *Psychological Science*, 23(2), 196–204.

Prentice, M., Jayawickreme, E., Hawkins, A., Hartley, A., Furr, R. M., & Fleeson, W. (2019). Morality as a basic psychological need. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 10, 449-460.

January 24: Emotion / Reason (a)

Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*. 108, 814-834

Pizarro, D.A., & Bloom, P. (2003). The intelligence of moral intuitions: Comment on Haidt (2001). *Psychological Review*, 110, 197-198.

January 31: Emotion / Reason (b)

Giner-Sorolla, R.G. & Chapman, H.A. (2017). Beyond purity: Moral disgust toward bad character. *Psychological Science*, 28 (1), 80-91

Cameron, C.D., & Payne, B.K. (2011). Escaping affect: How motivated emotion regulation creates insensitivity to mass suffering. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100, 1-15.

February 7: Understanding ‘Harm’

Schein, C., & Gray, K. (2018). The theory of dyadic morality: Reinventing moral judgments by redefining harm. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*.

Crockett M. J., Kurth-Nelson Z., Siegel J. Z., Dayan P., & Dolan R. J. (2014). Harm to others outweighs harm to self in moral decision making *Proceedings*

of the National Academy of Sciences, 111(48), 17320-17325.

February 14

ASSIGNMENT #1 Mid-term: Online assessment via Quercus Quizzes to be completed during normal class time.

February 21

NO CLASS (UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY)

Feb 28: Psychological Utilitarianism and Deontology (a)

Greene, J. D., Sommerville, R. B., Nystrom, L. E., Darley, J. M., & Cohen, J. D. (2001). An fMRI Investigation of Emotional Engagement in Moral Judgment. *Science*, Vol. 293, 2105-2108.

Kurzban, R., DeScioli, P., & Fein, D. (2012). Hamilton vs. Kant: Pitting adaptations for altruism against adaptations for moral judgment. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 323-333.

Bago, B. & de Neys, W. (2019). The intuitive greater good: Testing the corrective dual process model of moral cognition. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 148, 1782-1801.

March 7: Psychological Utilitarianism and Deontology (b)

Kahane, G., Everett, J., Earp, B., Caviola, L., Faber, N., Crockett, M., Savulescu, J. (2018). Beyond sacrificial harm: A two dimensional model of utilitarian psychology, *Psychological Review*, 125, 131-164.

Conway, P., Goldstein-Greenwood, J., Polacek, D., & Greene, J.D. (2018). Sacrificial utilitarian judgments do reflect concern for the greater good: Clarification via process dissociation and the judgments of philosophers. *Cognition*, 179, 241-265.

Robinson, J.S., Joel, S., & Plaks, J.E. (2015). Empathy for the group versus indifference to the victim: Effects of anxious and avoidant attachment on moral judgment. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 56, 139-152.

March 14: Character and Virtue Ethics

Everett, J.A.C., Pizarro, D. A. & Crockett, M.J., (2016). Inference of trustworthiness from intuitive moral judgments. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 145, 772-787.

Gino, F., Kouchaki, M., & Galinsky, A. D. (2015). The moral virtue of authenticity:

How inauthenticity produces feelings of immorality and impurity. *Psychological Science*, 26(7), 983-996.

Goodwin, G.P. (2015). Moral character in person perception. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24, 38-44.

Robinson, J. S., Page-Gould, E., & Plaks, J. E. (2017). I appreciate your effort: Asymmetric effects of actors' exertion on observers' consequentialist versus deontological judgments. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 73, 50–64.

March 21: Intentionality and Responsibility (a)

Malle, B. F., & Knobe, J. (1997a). The folk concept of intentionality. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 33, 101-121.

Leslie, A., Knobe, J. & Cohen, A. (2006). Acting intentionally and the side-effect effect: 'Theory of mind' and moral judgment. *Psychological Science*, 17, 421-427.

March 28: Intentionality and Responsibility (b)

Young, L., Camprodon, J., Hauser, M., Pascual-Leone, A., Saxe, R. (2010). Disruption of the right temporoparietal junction with transcranial magnetic stimulation reduces the role of beliefs in moral judgments. *PNAS*, 107, 6753-6758.

Plaks, J.E., McNichols, N.K., & Fortune, J.L. (2009). Thoughts versus deeds: Distal And proximal intent in lay judgments of moral responsibility. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35, 1687-1701.

April 4: The Cultural Context of Morality

Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B.A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 1029-1046.

Rai, T. S., & Fiske, A. P. (2011). Moral psychology is relationship regulation: Moral motives for unity, hierarchy, equality, and proportionality. *Psychological Review*, 118, 57-75.

April 8

ASSIGNMENT #2: RESEARCH PAPER DUE submitted via Quercus

Accessibility Needs:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please

feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978-8060; accessibility.utoronto.ca.

Writing:

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html).

Other Resources

Student Life Programs and Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>)

Academic Success Services (<http://www.asc.utoronto.ca/>)

Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>)