PSY 324: Moral Thought and Behaviour

Syllabus and Schedule
Winter 2023
Time: Thursdays, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon
Location: SSH 1086

Prerequisites: PSY201H1/ ECO220Y1/ EEB225H1/ GGR270H1/ POL222H1/ SOC202H1/
STA220H1/ STA238H1/ STA248H1/ STA288H1/ PSY201H5/ STA215H5/ STA220H5/
PSYB07H3/ STAB22H3/ STAB23H3/ STAB57H3, and PSY220H1/ PSY220H5/ PSYB10H3/
SOC213H1 Exclusion: PSYD14H3
Note: Material on this syllabus is subject to change

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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
lecture at the start of each session. 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 will be based on the following components:
1. Reaction papers: 25%
2. Class participation (verbal): 20%
3. Assignment #1 Mid-term 'long answer' term test: 20%
4. Final Paper (Research Proposal): 35%

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 Packback before the start of class.**
- Papers should be 1-2 double-spaced pages (500 words max).
- Papers will be graded on a scale ranging from 1-30. Packback's AI marks the grammar/structure/flow. I mark the content. See the Packback rubric.

2. 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 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.

Missed Test Policy:
If you miss the mid-term test, you must declare your absence on ACORN within one week. You must also email me and the TA to schedule a time/place to take the makeup.

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 12: Introductory Lecture
no readings

January 19: Origins of Morality
Podcast interview with Philip Petit on "The Birth of Ethics" from *Philosophy Bites*:
https://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/2/1/6/216ca4288bd45785/Philip_Pettit_on_the_Birth_of_
Ethics.mp3?c_id=35171321&cs_id=35171321&expiration=1608840041&hwt=eb7cfe
d984941cf7908713addf7652dd

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 26: 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.

Appiah, K.A. (2019). Dialectics of enlightenment. *New York Review of Books,* May,
2019.

February 2: 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.**

Srinavasan, A. (2018). The aptness of anger. *Journal of Political Philosophy, 26,* 123-
144.

February 9: Understanding 'Harm'

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

Roets, A., Bostyn, D.H., De keersmaecker, J. *et al.* **(2020). Utilitarianism in minimal-group decision making is less common than equality-based morality, mostly harm-oriented, and rarely impartial.** *Scientific Reports,* **10, 13373.**

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 16
ASSIGNMENT #1 Mid-term: during normal class time.

February 23
NO CLASS

March 2: 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.**

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.**

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.

March 9: Psychological Utilitarianism and Deontology (b)
Podcast on Kant's Categorical Imperative from *In Our Time* **on the BBC: https://podtail.com/en/podcast/in-our-time-philosophy/kant-s-categorical-imperative/**

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 16:
NO CLASS

March 23: 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.**

Plaks, J.E., Robinson, J.S., & Forbes, R. (2022). Anger and sadness as moral signals. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 13,* **362-371.**

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

March 30: 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 6
ASSIGNMENT #2: RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

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)