

University of Toronto, Scarborough
PSYD30, Lecture 01
Fall, 2012

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Office Hours: Thursday 17:00 – 18:00

Monday 13:30 – 14:30

Class time: Monday 15:00 – 17:00 in MW140

Course description: In this course we will address the question of what defines a “good person” and how this concept is dealt with in the psychological literature. We will begin by jointly constructing a model of what we, as a group, believe defines a good person, based on our own intuitions and on data that we will collect by interviewing key people. We will then consider the important debate of whether true altruism exists or is, in fact, self-serving at its core. After breaking for the Thanksgiving holiday, we will look at various ways in which the good person has been defined in psychology and some related domains, including the taxonomy developed by Peterson and Seligman, the concept of moral character, the idea of social value orientation, and the domain of human values.

Prerequisites: PSYB30H3 plus one C-level half credit in PSY. Exclusion: PSY430H

Readings: There is no textbook for this course. The readings will be posted online or handed out in class over the course of the term. The full list of readings can be found in the reference section below; if anyone needs to access them in advance, they are all available through the library website, or directly from the web.

Components of Evaluation:

1. Interview Assignment: 15%

For this assignment you will interview a person who *you believe* is a good person. There is no ideal type of person to choose for this – all that matters is that you personally think of that person as a good person. You will interview the person using a protocol that will be provided to you, and you will produce a report summarizing the person’s responses, and your own reflections on what that person told you. Further details will be provided in class.

2. Reaction Papers: 25%

Over the course of the term you are required to hand in 4 reaction papers about the readings for that week. You may choose the weeks in which you would like to hand in your reaction papers, but they must be handed in before the discussion of the readings takes place, and you must include all the readings for that week in your reaction paper. It can be easy to get behind with these papers, so get as many of them out of the way as early as you can. The content of the reaction papers is up to you, but they must include a brief summary of each article (summaries s/b no more than ½ page for each article), and what the articles tell you about the topic for the week (i.e. what do you understand about the topic for the week, based on what you read in the articles). Some other things you can include are:

- Similarities and differences between the article
- Weaknesses and/or strengths of the research
- Ways that the research could be improved upon
- Whether you agree or disagree with the research and why
- What you found surprising or interesting about the article

Your reaction papers should be 2.5 to 3 pages long.

3. Course Portfolio: 15%

For your course portfolio, you will maintain a file of newspaper or magazine articles or web pages that have stories about people who strike you as good people. Similar to the interview assignment, you do not need to choose people who have been hailed as heroes, or people who are “stereotypical” good people – all that matters is that they strike you as good people. You should add to this file over the course of the term, so that at the end of the term you have at least 20 articles. You will hand the entire file in, with a

summary of what you have collected. The details of what to include in the summary will be provided later in the term. Your summary should be 4-5 pages long.

4. Research Proposal (based on course portfolio): 25%

For your term paper, you will develop a research proposal based on the articles in your course portfolio. News stories are usually anecdotal, but often imply that a relationship of some sort exists between two factors. Identify one of these relationships and develop a research plan based on it. For this proposal you must include at least eight articles from high-quality psychology journals as part of your literature review. If you are unclear about the format of a research proposal, please discuss it with me.

5. Attendance and participation: 20%

This course will be conducted as a seminar, which means that participation is crucial. You **MUST** come to class having read and carefully considered the articles for the week. I suggest that you prepare some questions for me or for the class so that you are prepared to contribute. If it becomes clear that you are consistently unprepared for class, I will ask you to leave and return the following week with renewed commitment.

Tentative Schedule and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings
Sept 10	Introduction to the course, open discussion of what defines a good person.	
Sept 17	Does true altruism exist?	1. Batson, Batson, Griffitt, Barrientos, Brandt, Sprengelmeyer & Bayly (1989) 2. Ferguson, Farrell & Lawrence (2008)
Sept 24	Altruism continued	1. deWaal (2007) 2. Ben-Ner & Kramer (2011) 3. Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes & Jackson (1998)
Oct 1	Discussion of interviews. Interview report due	
Oct 8	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class	
Oct 15	Character strengths / Peterson & Seligman	1. Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman (2005) 2. Park, Peterson & Seligman (2004)
Oct 22	Additional definitions of the “good person”	1. Holmgren (2005) 2. Smith, Smith & Christopher (2007)
Oct 29	Moral character	1. Walker & Frimer (2007) 2. Walker & Pitts (1998)
Nov 5	Moral character	1. Hitlin (2011) 2. Hardy & Carlo (2011)
Nov 12	Social value orientation	1. Hilbig & Zettler (2009) 2. Van Lange, Bekkers, Schuyt, & Van Vugt (2007) 3. DeClerck & Bogaert (2008)
Nov 19	Discussion about term papers Course portfolio due	
Nov 26	Human values	1. Schwartz (2007) 2. Brucks & Van Lange (2007)
Dec 3	Becoming a good person / development Term Paper due	1. Hardy, Walker, Olsen, Skalski, & Basinger (2011) 2. Eisenberg, Guthrie, Murphy, Shepard, Cumberland & Carlo (1999)

Rules and Policies Pertinent to This Class:

1. 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 the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible. I will work with you and AccessAbility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. The UTSC AccessAbility Services staff (located in S302) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (416) 287-7560 or ability@utsc.utoronto.ca.
2. In accordance with the Provost's guidelines on appropriate use of information and communicative technology, and for reasons of privacy and copyright protection, you may not record class session in either audio or video format without the explicit consent of the instructor.
3. Laptops should only be used in class if you are using it to take notes.
4. Email policy: Whenever possible, please talk to me in person if you have a question or problem. Typing an email requires a great deal more time than a verbal response, and talking in person makes it easier for me to understand what you are asking and give an appropriate response. If you must send email, please put the class you are in and the topic of your email in the subject line.
5. Respect for all class participants is essential, and it is something that I insist on as an instructor. When another member of the class is speaking, everyone else is expected to give that person their full attention.
6. Distracting behaviour will not be tolerated. This includes talking to fellow classmates, playing video games, texting (unless there is an emergency), and attempting to redirect the discussion to a topic that is not relevant to the class.
7. Extensions on graded assignments *may* be granted depending on the circumstances, but you must speak to me in advance of the due date. Each case will be considered individually, so please be prepared to tell the reason you need the extension, and how much more time you think you will need to complete the work. Work that is handed in late and has not been approved for an extension will be penalized 5% for each working day that it is late.
8. Academic integrity is one of the cornerstones of the University of Toronto. It is critically important both to maintain our community which honours the values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility and to protect you, the students within this community, and the value of the degree towards which you are all working so diligently. 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 (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:
 - IN PAPERS AND ASSIGNMENTS: Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor. Making up sources or facts. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
 - ON TESTS AND EXAMS: Using or possessing unauthorized aids. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test. Misrepresenting your identity.
 - IN ACADEMIC WORK: Falsifying institutional documents or grades. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

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 <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html>).

References

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