

## **Syllabus**

The Psychology of Morality (PSYD14H3)

Prof. Yoel Inbar

Fall 2018

Mondays 1-3 PM, SW 316

### **Instructor**

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### **Course Description**

Thinking about good and evil seems to come naturally to human beings. We write poems, novels, and comic books about right and wrong, and make movies and TV shows about ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys.’ Where does this moral sense come from? Is any of it innate? How much depends on socialization? Why do some people disagree so strongly about what is right and wrong? Are there any moral rules that are agreed upon across cultures?

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in the science of human morality. The goal of this course is to offer an introduction to the research in this field. We will read articles from a variety of disciplines including philosophy, animal behavior, neuroscience, economics, and almost every area of scientific psychology (social psychology, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, and cognitive psychology). By the end of the course you should be well versed in the primary issues and debates involved in the scientific study of morality.

### **Course Structure**

This course is designed to not only introduce you to much of the important theory and research in the psychology of morality, but also to develop your skills as critical thinkers and as sophisticated consumers of science; this will help you regardless of what you pursue in your future. I’ve designed this course to maximize meaningful learning and to minimize the memorize-and-regurgitate kind of style that we all get enough of in undergraduate courses. Lecturing will be minimal. On most days, I will try to limit my own talking to a fairly brief orientation to each day’s topic and to guiding discussions where necessary. The course will mainly consist of discussions aimed at fostering meaningful understanding of the material. The success of this seminar depends on everyone’s preparation, and everyone’s preparation will depend on carefully completing the readings and weekly reaction papers.

### **Readings**

The number of readings will vary per week. Readings will mostly be original scientific research, i.e., peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. Reading a journal article carefully takes time; you should expect to spend an hour or more per article. All readings are posted in the course website (see below). Please remember that all readings are mandatory.

## **Course Website**

I will use Quercus to communicate with you (i.e. to make announcements), to host the course discussion forum (see below), and to collect reaction papers. However, readings will NOT be posted on Quercus.

The course website is <http://yoelinbar.net/psychofmorality/>. This is where I will post course documents and readings (in PDF format).

## **Discussion Forum**

To help foster communication between students, I've created a discussion forum on Quercus. This forum should also be the first place you go when you have questions about course material. Please feel free to use this space as our virtual classroom and post requests for clarification on the reading; these posts are valuable because they may echo many people's concerns. Remember, however, to respond to questions as well as this will enhance the classroom experience and create a self-sustaining internet community. The discussion forum is also the place to participate online. If you are shy and have a hard time speaking up in class, you can earn credit for participation by posting commentary, thoughts, and questions on the discussion forum. To keep pace with class, however, you need to make sure that you participate online regularly, at least once per week.

## **Reaction Papers**

To foster thoughtful, exciting, and worthwhile discussion, I ask that you prepare reaction papers to the weekly readings. This request is designed to get you thinking about the readings, while ensuring that everyone has something to contribute during class discussion. You have some freedom in deciding how to complete this assignment. Spend some time highlighting the main points of the readings, but most of your 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. Your goal should be to show me that you really understand the material. To this end, I also encourage you to bring in relevant material from other courses. Details are as follows:

- Papers are due **the evening before class** (cut-off time 11:59 PM) and should be submitted online, via Quercus.
- You may turn in **only one** reaction paper per week.
- Papers should be 1-2 double-spaced pages (500 words max) and follow APA style.
- Papers will be graded on a scale ranging from 5 (excellent) to 0 (fail).

You are required to turn in **five** reaction papers, but you may turn in up to seven (in which case only the best five will count toward your grade). What weeks you chose are up to you. Reaction papers will constitute 25% of your final grade.

## **Class Participation and Attendance**

In a seminar-style class, attendance is expected and participation is essential. Therefore, these will make up part of your grade: Participation is worth 15% of your grade and attendance 5%. Your participation grade will depend on quality as well as quantity of participation. Good

participation includes punctuality, eagerness to participate, showing respect to others' contributions, facilitating discussion, paying careful attention to classmates' presentations, and offering constructive feedback, questions, and comments. Note that I do not want class discussions monopolized by the same 3 or 4 people. That means that people should make an effort to talk enough, but not too much. I will keep a record of participation throughout the term, but to make sure I (and you) keep track of all your class participation, *you should keep a participation log* (noting what questions you answered or asked, what comments you made, etc.). I will collect these from time to time. As mentioned above, you also have the option of participating online on the discussion forum. If you are shy and have a hard time speaking up in class, the discussion forum is the place for you to get your participation credits. To earn top marks online, remember to post regularly, at least once a week. If you think you are participating enough in class, you don't need to participate online.

### **Final Paper and Presentation**

You will form into groups of two and each group will submit an 8-10 pages, typed, double-spaced experimental research proposal in which you review a body of literature, describe new research hypotheses based on this literature, and propose a study (or studies) which will test these hypotheses. Which literature you focus on is up to you, though it must relate to morality (from a social psychological perspective). You should consult with me when choosing your topic, and as your paper progresses. *I must approve all paper topics.* Note that your paper is just a research proposal; no data needs to be collected. Details of the assignment will be specified later, but you should start thinking about the topic as early in the semester as possible.

This paper is due Monday, December 3 in class. I encourage you to use this paper as an opportunity to apply the social psychological methods that you will learn to a topic in psychology about which you care deeply. You will also give a formal poster or PowerPoint presentation of your proposed research on one of the two presentation days (November 26 or December 3), much in the style of a presentation at a professional conference.

### **Important Dates and Details**

Although it's not mandatory, I encourage you to turn in a draft research idea with a typed reference list (10 references, minimum) by **Nov 5**. Final versions of your paper should contain at least 10 references, conform to APA style, and must be turned in by **December 3** (in class). Papers will constitute 40% of your final grade and posters 15%. More details about this assignment will be discussed in class.

### **Guidelines for Written Assignments**

- Use APA style.
- All works that are referred to (directly or otherwise) must be cited in the text, and in a reference page at the end of your work.
- Omit needless words. Good writing is concise.
- Avoid quotes, especially lengthy ones.
- Spelling, grammar, and sentence structure are important and figure into the grading.

### **Email Policy**

My policy is to respond to emails within 2 working days of receipt (which means that if you email me on a Friday you might not get a response till Tuesday). Often, the best way to get an answer to your question is to talk face-to-face, so I encourage you all to visit me during office hours, even if it's just to have a casual chat.

### **Late Papers**

As you have a choice of turning in your reaction papers on any of five topic weeks, late reaction papers will not be accepted. Late final papers (due Dec 3 in class) will be docked 5% for each day that they're late.

### **Grading Summary**

Reaction papers—25%  
Class Attendance—5%  
Class Participation—15%  
Final Paper—40%  
In-Class Presentation—15%

### **List of Topics and Readings**

#### **Week 1: Sept. 10      Introduction, Background, and Logistics**

No official reading, but I suggest this article on how to read journal articles: <http://www.uvm.edu/~dguber/POLS234/articles/read.htm>

#### **Week 2: Sep 17      Helping and Cooperation**

1. Bloom, P. (2009). *Descartes' Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains What Makes Us Human* (Excerpt - “Good and Evil”). Basic Books.
2. Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2006). Altruistic helping in human infants and young chimpanzees. *Science*, 311, 1301-1303.

#### **Week 3: Sep 24      Revenge and Punishment**

3. Pinker, S. (1997). *How the Mind Works*. “Doomsday Machine” (Excerpt from “Hotheads”). W. W. Norton & Company.
4. Fehr, E., & Gächter, S. (2002). Altruistic punishment in humans. *Nature*, 415, 137-140.
5. Greene, J., & Cohen, J. (2004). For the law, neuroscience changes nothing and everything. *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci*, 359, 1775-1785.

#### **Week 4: Oct 1      Moral Signaling**

6. Dana, J., Cain, D. M., & Dawes, R. M. (2006). What you don't know won't hurt me: Costly (but quiet) exit in dictator games. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 100, 192-201.

7. Dunning, D., Anderson, J.E., Schloesser, T., Ehlebracht, D. & Fetchenhauer, D. (2014). Trust at zero acquaintance: More a matter of respect than expectation of reward. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107, 122-141.

**Oct 8**                   **No class: Fall break**

**Week 5: Oct 15**       **Two Perspectives on Moral Intuitions**

8. Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, 108, 814-834.
9. Gray, K., Young, L., & Waytz, A. (2012). Mind perception is the essence of morality. *Psychological Inquiry*, 23, 101-124.

**Week 6: Oct 22**       **Harm and Consequences**

10. Singer, P. (1979). *Practical ethics* (Excerpt – “About Ethics”). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Greene, J. D., Cushman, F. A., Stewart, L. E., Lowenberg, K., Nystrom, L. E., & Cohen, J. D. (2009). Pushing moral buttons: The interaction between personal force and intention in moral judgment. *Cognition*, 111, 364-371.
12. Cushman, F., Gray, K., Gaffey, A., & Mendes, W. B. (2012). Simulating murder: The aversion to harmful action. *Emotion*, 12, 2-7.

**Week 7: Oct 29**       **Character**

13. Goodwin, G. P., Piazza, J., & Rozin, P. (2014). Moral character predominates in person perception and evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106, 148-168.
14. Uhlmann, E. L., Pizarro, D. A., & Diermeier, D. (2015). A person-centered approach to moral judgment. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10, 72-81.
15. Uhlmann, E. L., Zhu, L., & Tannenbaum, D. (2013). When it takes a bad person to do the right thing. *Cognition*, 126, 326-334.

**Week 8: Nov 5**       **Sacred Values**

16. Roth, A. E. (2007). Repugnance as a constraint on markets. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21, 37-58.
17. Tetlock, P. E. (2003). Thinking the unthinkable: Sacred values and taboo cognitions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7, 320-324.
18. Ginges, J., Atran, S., Medin, D., & Shikaki, K. (2007). Sacred bounds on rational resolution of violent political conflict. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104, 7357-7360.

\*\*\* Note: Non-mandatory refined research idea with 10 references due this week

**Week 9: Nov 12      Morality and Politics**

19. Inbar, Y., & Lammers, J. (2012). Political diversity in social and personality psychology. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 496-503.
20. 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.
21. Voelkel, J. G., & Brandt, M. J. (in press). The effect of ideological identification on the endorsement of moral values depends on the target group. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

**Nov 19                  No class: Prof. Inbar out of town**

**Week 10: Nov 26      Presentation Day 1**

**Week 11: Dec 3        Presentation Day 2**

\*\*\* Note: Final papers are due **Dec 3 in class**.

## **Other useful information about course policies and procedures**

### **Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Other Emergency:**

All students citing a documented reason for missed term work must bring their documentation to the Psychology Course Coordinator in SW427C within three (3) business days of the assignment due date. You must bring the following:

1. A completed Request for Missed Term Work form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), and
2. Appropriate documentation to verify your illness or emergency, as described below.

### **Appropriate Documentation:**

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to ILLNESS:

- Submit an original copy of the official UTSC Verification of Illness Form (<http://uoft.me/UTSC-Verification-Of-Illness-Form>) or an original copy of the record of visitation to a hospital emergency room. Forms are to be completed in full, clearly indicating the start date, anticipated end date, and severity of illness. The physician's registration number and business stamp are required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to ILLNESS:

- Submit both (1.) a hardcopy of the Self-Declaration of Student Illness Form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-form>), and (2.) the web-based departmental declaration form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-web>).

For missed term tests or assignments in OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES:

- In the case of a death of a family member, a copy of a death certificate should be provided.
- In the case of a disability-related concern, an email from your Disability Consultant at AccessAbility Services should be sent directly to both the Course Coordinator ([psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca)) and your instructor, detailing the accommodations required.
- For U of T Varsity athletic commitments, an email from your coach or varsity administrator should be sent directly to the Course Coordinator ([psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca)), detailing the dates and nature of the commitment. The email should be sent well in advance of the missed work.

Documents covering the following situations are NOT acceptable: medical prescriptions, personal travel, weddings, or personal/work commitments.

### **Procedure:**

Submit your (1.) request form and (2.) medical/self-declaration/other documents in person **WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS** of the missed term test or assignment.

**Submit to:** Course Coordinator, Room SW427C, Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 4 PM

If you are unable to meet this deadline for some reason, you must contact the Course Coordinator via email ([psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca)) within the three business day window. Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.

Within approximately one week, you will receive an email response from the Course Instructor / Course Coordinator detailing the accommodations to be made (if any). You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily, as accommodations may be time-critical.

Completion of this form does NOT guarantee that accommodations will be made. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.

Note that this policy applies only to missed assignments and term tests. Missed final exams are handled by the Registrar's Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>).

### **AccessAbility:**

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 as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations [416-287-7560](tel:4162877560) or email [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca). The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

### **Academic Integrity:**

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/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PPDF/ppjun011995.pdf>) 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; and
- When you knew or ought to have known you were doing it.

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; and
- When you knew or ought to have known you were doing so.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

Note:

You may see advertisements for services offering grammar help, essay editing and proof-reading. Be very careful. If these services take a draft of your work and significantly change the content and/or language, you may be committing an academic offence (unauthorized assistance) under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*.

It is much better and safer to take your draft to the Writing Centre as early as you can. They will give you guidance you can trust. Students for whom English is not their first language should go to the English Language Development Centre.

If you decide to use these services in spite of this caution, you must keep a draft of your work and any notes you made before you got help and be prepared to give it to your instructor on request.

### **TurnItIn**

Normally, students are required to submit their coursework to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.