

Syllabus

The Psychology of Morality (PSYD15 LEC30)

Prof. Stephanie Schwartz

Fall 2020

Thursdays 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM via Zoom

Instructor

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Office Hours: Mondays 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM via Zoom

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 will:

- Understand the primary issues and debates involved in the scientific study of morality.
- Be able to explain the major normative ethical perspectives: deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics (character).
- Know how to critically evaluate the primary research literature (i.e. empirical journal articles) and share your perspective with your classmates.
- Have formally presented a research proposal to your peers.
- Have written an in-depth research proposal in APA style, just as you would if you were submitting an empirical article for publication.

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. This course is intended to maximize meaningful learning and to minimize the memorize-and-regurgitate kind of ‘learning’ style.

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 [DropBox](#) (link in a Quercus announcement). Please remember that all readings are mandatory.

Course Websites

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.

I will post course documents and reading in shared course folder in [DropBox](#). This is where I will post course documents and readings (in PDF format).

I will post recordings of the previous day's Zoom discussion (ie class) to Quercus.

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 outside of Zoom. 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. **Additionally, I will be assigning participation marks via the forum based on the *quality* of the comments and ideas that you post.** You will not earn participation points for posts / replies by merely echoing others' comments, or via superficial contributions.

Reaction Papers

To foster thoughtful, exciting, and worthwhile discussion, I ask that you prepare reaction papers to the weekly readings. These are 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 (Wednesday) 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 about 2 double-spaced pages (600 words max) and follow APA style.
- Papers will be graded on a scale ranging from 5 (excellent) to 0 (fail).
- Each paper must end with **two** discussion questions you think would be good to pose to the class the next day. Think like a professor here! What questions are left up for debate in your mind after completing a week's readings? (And yes, you'll be doing a bit of my work for me 😊)

You are required to turn in **five** reaction papers, but you may turn in up to six (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 on the discussion boards.

ZOOM SPECIFIC NOTE:

Due to the obviously inconvenient time we are living in, and hosting class via Zoom, I understand that some of you may not be able to "participate" in each class' discussion by contributing your own voice / connecting via video.

I will not require that everyone use their camera to connect to our discussions, but I would greatly prefer that you do, if you can. It's nice to be able to recognize faces over the course of a semester. That being said, if you cannot connect via video, I ask that you use a clear photo of your face as your Zoom profile picture.

Participation via Zoom will require use of the "raise hand" function. Because we will have up to 20+ participants in our discussions, everyone will be muted until they "raise their hand" and I unmute their mic.

Our discussions will be recorded and then uploaded to Quercus on Friday mornings.

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 Thursday, December 3rd before the beginning of 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 26th or December 3rd), 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** (BEFORE 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 December 3rd, before 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: September 10th 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: September 17th 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: September 24th 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: October 1st 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.

- Jordan, J.J., Sommers, R., Bloom, P., & Rand, D.G. (2017). Why do we hate hypocrites? Evidence for a theory of false signaling. *Psychological Science*, 28, 356-368.

Week 5: October 8th Two Perspectives on Moral Intuitions

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

October 15th No class: Fall break

Week 6: October 22nd Harm and Consequences

- Singer, P. (1979). *Practical ethics* (Excerpt – “About Ethics”). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 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.
- Cushman, F., Gray, K., Gaffey, A., & Mendes, W. B. (2012). Simulating murder: The aversion to harmful action. *Emotion*, 12, 2-7.

Week 7: October 29th Character

- 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.
- Uhlmann, E. L., Pizarro, D. A., & Diermeier, D. (2015). A person-centered approach to moral judgment. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10, 72-81.
- 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: November 5th Sacred Values

- Roth, A. E. (2007). Repugnance as a constraint on markets. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21, 37-58.
- Tetlock, P. E. (2003). Thinking the unthinkable: Sacred values and taboo cognitions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7, 320-324.
- 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 in class this week

Week 9: November 12th Morality and Politics

- Inbar, Y., & Lammers, J. (2012). Political diversity in social and personality psychology. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 496-503.
- 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.
- 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*.

Week 10: November 19th Class' choice (will vote on applied topic for this week part way through the semester)

Week 10: November 26th Presentation Day 1

Week 11: December 3rd Presentation Day 2

***** Note: Final papers are due *December 3rd* before the beginning of class.**

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 or email 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.

Other useful information about course policies and procedures (Don't @me here please, this is all straight from the department). Note: as there will be no exams in this course, I have deleted information specific to exams. Other courses will have specific guidelines for this, so please read all of your syllabi.

Time Zone conflicts

If you are physically in a different time zone and a quiz or midterm is scheduled outside of 7:00am to midnight in your local time, you may use the following form to request special arrangements. Note that the form is only for term work. [Final exam conflicts](#) are handled by the Registrar's Office.

The form must be submitted **at least ten (10) business days before the activity.**

Form: <https://uoft.me/PSY-TimeZone>

Submit via email to: Keely Hicks, Departmental Assistant,
keely.hicks@utoronto.ca

Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Other Emergency

All students citing a documented reason for missed term work must submit their request for accommodations **within three (3) business days** of the deadline for the missed work.

Submit via email to: Keely Hicks, Departmental Assistant,
keely.hicks@utoronto.ca

Students must submit **BOTH** of the following:

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

Appropriate documentation:

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS or TERM TESTS** due to **FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS or SELF-ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS:**

- Email the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (uoft.me/PSY-MTW) to Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca), and
- **Declare** your absence on [ACORN](#) (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to **OTHER ILLNESS:**

- Email the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (uoft.me/PSY-MTW) to Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca), along with the Self-Declaration of Student Illness Form (uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-form).

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to **ACCESSABILITY REASONS:**

- If your desired accommodation is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" and you need 1-7 more days), email the Request for Missed Term

Work Accommodations form (uoft.me/PSY-MTW) to Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca), and attach a **copy of your letter**. Specify how many days extension you are requesting in your email.

- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but you need more time than that) you will need to meet with your **AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) detailing the accommodations required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS or TERM TESTS** in **OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**:

Email the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>) form to Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca), along with:

- For the **death of a family member/friend**, provide a copy of the death certificate.
- For U of T varsity-level or professional **athletic commitments**, an email from your coach or varsity administrator should be sent directly to Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **well in advance** of the missed work, detailing the dates and nature of the commitment.
- For **religious accommodations**, please email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **well in advance** of the missed work.
- For circumstances **outside of these guidelines**, please email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **on or before the date of the test / assignment deadline** to describe your circumstances and determine appropriate documentation.

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

As stated above, your documents must be submitted **within three (3) business days** of the deadline for the missed work.

After submitting your documentation:

Within approximately one to five business days, you will receive a response from your instructor 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.

You should continue to work on your assignments to the best of your ability, as extension accommodations may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency.

If an accommodation has been granted but you are unable to meet the conditions of the accommodation (ex. you need a longer extension, or you missed a make-up test), you will need to repeat the missed term work procedure and submit additional forms to request further accommodation. Note that in the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not be provided.

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.

Missed Accommodations

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting the requirements of your accommodation, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations.

(E.g.) If you miss a make-up midterm, you would need to submit another Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form. If your original medical note / documentation included the date of the make-up midterm, then only the Request form is required. If the date of the make-up midterm fell outside of the dates indicated on your original medical note/other documentation, then a new medical note/other appropriate documentation must also be submitted.

Importance of Three Business Day window:

If you are unable to submit your documents within the three business day window, **you must email Keely** (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **within the three business day window** to explain the nature of the delay, and when you will be able to provide your documents. Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.

NOTE: Assignments due at end of term

Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, you would need to file a petition with the Registrar's Office (<https://www.uts.utoronto.ca/registrar/term-work>).

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/PDF/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.

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.