

## **Syllabus**

The Psychology of Morality (PSYD15 LEC02)

Prof. Stephanie Schwartz

Winter 2021

Wednesdays 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM via Zoom

### **Instructor**

Steph Schwartz

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Office Hours: Mondays 11:00 AM to Noon 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 [Google Drive](#) (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 [Google Drive](#). 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 will post weekly discussion forums on Quercus. These forums 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 (Tuesday) 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 for me 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 some of your participation credits. To earn top marks online, remember to post regularly, at least once a week. You can earn up to 50% of full participation marks via the discussion forum, and to do this, you must post one question / idea / concern, as well as reply to one of your classmates' per 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 Wednesdays evenings or Thursday morning.

### **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 Tuesday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm, 15 hours before the first presentations. 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 (March 31<sup>st</sup> or April 7<sup>th</sup>), much in the style of a presentation at a professional conference.

### **Important Dates and Details**

You must have your paper topic approved by me by Friday, March 26<sup>th</sup>.

To have your topic approved, I will need an email from one member of your team (CC all members) stating:

Area of interest, research question of interest, dependent variables you will be measuring, independent variables / manipulations you will be using.

These measures don't have to be EXACTLY WORD FOR WORD what end up in the paper, I just want to make sure you've narrowed everything down sufficiently.

Final versions of your paper should contain at least 10 references, conform to APA style, and must be turned in by **March 30<sup>th</sup>**. 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 March 30<sup>th</sup>) 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: January 13<sup>th</sup>                      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: January 20<sup>th</sup>                      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: January 27<sup>th</sup>                      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: February 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. 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: February 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Fall Break: February 17<sup>th</sup> NO CLASS**

**Week 6: February 24<sup>th</sup> 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: March 3<sup>rd</sup> 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: March 10<sup>th</sup> 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 before class this week

**Week 9: March 17<sup>th</sup>   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*.

**Week 10: March 24<sup>th</sup>           Professors Choice! Stay Tuned.**

**Week 11: March 31<sup>st</sup>           Presentation Day 1**

**Week 12: April 7<sup>th</sup>           Presentation Day 2**

**\*\*\* Note: Final papers are due *March 30<sup>th</sup>* before the beginning of class.**

## 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. Behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences are outlined in The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic

Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

Potential offences include, but are not limited to: • On tests and exams: (a) Using or possessing unauthorized aids; (b) Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test; (c) Misrepresenting your identity.

• In academic work: (a) Falsifying institutional documents or grades; (b) 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

## 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](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.

**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.

## Psychology Department Missed Term Work Policy, WINTER 2021

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedures outlined below.

Notes:

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: travel for leisure, weddings, personal commitments, work commitments, human error.
- Missed Final Exams are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>
- 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.utsc.utoronto.ca/registrar/term-work>

## Accommodations for Illness or Emergency:

For missed work due to ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY, please complete the following **two-step** process:

1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>) and email it to Keely Hicks at [keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) ,

**\*and\***

2. **Declare your absence** on [ACORN](#) (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)

**Deadline:** You must complete the above steps **within 3 business days** of the missed work.

*Note: For this semester, we do not require any additional supporting documentation (ex. medical notes) to support your missed term work accommodation request.*

### **Accommodations for Academic Conflicts:**

For missed term work due to an ACADEMIC CONFLICT (i.e. two quizzes or tests scheduled at the same time), please complete the following process:

1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), choosing “Other” as your reason for missed work and explaining the conflict in the space provided.
2. Take screenshots of your course homepages that demonstrate the conflict.
3. Email the form and screenshots to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)).

**Deadline:** You should report the conflict to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

*Note: Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered conflicts. Accommodations may only be possible in the case of quizzes and tests that are both scheduled during the same discrete period. Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered conflicts.*

*Note: Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who choose to register in two synchronous courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules may not necessarily be accommodated.*

### **Accommodations for Religious Conflicts:**

For missed term work due to a RELIGIOUS CONFLICT, please complete the following process:

1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), choosing “Other” as your reason for missed work and noting “Religious conflict” in the space provided.
2. Email the form to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)).

**Deadline:** You should report the conflict to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

### **Accommodations for 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, please complete the following process:

1. Complete the **Time Zone Conflict Form** (<https://uoft.me/PSY-TimeZone>), and
2. Email the form to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca))

**Deadline:** You should report the conflict to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible, if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

### **Accommodations for Students Registered with AccessAbility Services:**



For missed **TERM TESTS** due to ACCESSABILITY REASONS:

- **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) detailing accommodations required.

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 3 days):
  1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>).
  2. Email the form and your **Accommodation Letter** to Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)).
- 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):
  1. **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) detailing the accommodations required.

#### **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 and declare your extended absence on ACORN.

#### **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](mailto: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**.

#### **Questions?**

If you have any questions about this Missed Term Work policy, please contact Keely Hicks ([keely.hicks@utoronto.ca](mailto:keely.hicks@utoronto.ca)) **well before** the date of the test / assignment deadline to describe your circumstances and inquire about procedures.

