

Syllabus

The Psychology of Morality (PSYD15 LEC30)

Prof. Stephanie Schwartz

Fall 2021

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

Instructor

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Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM and by appointment.

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 **Wednesday before class at 7:00 PM, 24 hours before class**, 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?

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 may 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 Fridays.

Attendance

I will be taking attendance at variable times, once during each class via a 'spontaneous' quiz. This is to avoid having folks merely logging into Zoom and walking away from their computers. Sorry to be a square, but dem's the rules!

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 Wednesday, December 1st, at midnight. 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 25th or December 2nd), 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 Monday, December 22nd.

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 **December 1st**. 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 1st) will be docked 5% for each day that they're late.

Extra Credit

The only opportunity for extra credit will come in the form of optional reading quizzes at the beginning of each class. You will be able to earn up to 2% extra on your mark. At the end of the semester, I will calculate how much of this 2% you will receive via this equation:

Your points =

(# of quiz questions you got right / # of quiz questions the student who got the most quiz questions right, got right) * 2

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 9th: 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 16th: 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 23rd: 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: September 30th: 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: October 7th: 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.

READING WEEK – NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 14th

Week 6: October 21st: 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: October 28th: 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: November 4th: 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.

Week 9: November 11th: 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: November 18th: Professors Choice! Stay Tuned.

Week 11: November 25th: Presentation Day 1

Week 12: December 2nd: Presentation Day 2

***** Note: Final papers are due December 1st by MIDNIGHT.**

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. 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, you can ignore 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, FALL 2021

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

- 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, complete the following **three-step** process:

1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>)
2. **Declare your absence** on **ACORN** (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)
3. **Email both the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form AND a screenshot of your Self-Declared Absence on ACORN** to the email address provided by your instructor on the course syllabus **WITHIN 2 BUSINESS DAYS** of the missed work.

Note: If you are unable to submit your documents within 2-business days, **you must still email your instructor within the 2-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: For this semester, we do not require any additional supporting documentation (e.g. 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 midterms 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” 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 your course instructor **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” and noting “Religious conflict” in the space provided.
2. Email the form to your course instructor **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 your course instructor **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 your instructor detailing accommodations required.

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

- If your desired accommodation is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” and you need 3 days):
 1. Complete the **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form**.
 2. Email the form and your **Accommodation Letter** to your instructor, specifying how many days extension you are requesting.
- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. 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 your instructor detailing the accommodations required.

Accommodation Procedure:

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your instructor or TA. This form does not guarantee that you will be accommodated. 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. **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for an instructor response to resume work on your assignment.** Extension accommodations may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. You should complete your assignment as soon as you are able and email it your instructor.

For an anticipated event (e.g. scheduled surgery or an illness with a prolonged recovery period), submit a [Verification of Illness Form](#) completed by your doctor, AND this form to your instructor if you would like to request accommodations in advance of the assignment deadline or midterm date. **Declare your future absence on [ACORN](#) (absences can be declared up to 14 days in the future).**

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. **Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation.** For example, if you are given an extension but are still sick and need more time, or if you miss a make-up midterm, you must submit another request 'Missed Term Work Accommodations' form and declare your extended absence on ACORN. ***Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not be provided.