

Syllabus

The Psychology of Morality (PSYD15)
Prof. Stephanie Schwartz
Winter 2024

Wednesdays

LEC02: 09:00AM - 11:00 AM in AC332

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Office Hours: TBD – we will decide

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’ vs ‘bad’ people. 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).

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 a virtual extension of our 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 class discussion. 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 **Tuesdays before class at 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?

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. 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.

Attendance

I will be manually taking attendance during each class.

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, April 5th, 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 (March 29th or April 5th), 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 Sunday, April 2nd.

To have your topic approved, you will need to have on group member email me your names and provide:

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 **April 5th**. Papers will constitute 40% of your final grade and presentations 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 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: January 10th: Introduction, Background, and Logistics**

0. *Optional*: I suggest you read this article on how to read journal articles
<http://www.uvm.edu/~dguber/POLS234/articles/read.htm>
1. Pinker, S. (2008) *The Moral Instinct*. *New York Times Magazine*.

Week 2: January 17th: Helping and Cooperation

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

Week 3: January 24th: Revenge and Punishment

4. Pinker, S. (1997). *How the Mind Works*. “Doomsday Machine” (Excerpt from “Hotheads”). W. W. Norton & Company.
5. Fehr, E., & Gächter, S. (2002). Altruistic punishment in humans. *Nature*, 415, 137-140.
6. 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: January 31st: Moral Signaling

7. 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.
8. 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 7th: Two Perspectives on Moral Intuitions

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

Week 6: February 14th: Harm and Consequences

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

NO CLASS FEBRUARY 21 – Reading week**Week 7: February 28th: Character**

14. 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.
15. Uhlmann, E. L., Pizarro, D. A., & Diermeier, D. (2015). A person-centered approach to moral judgment. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *10*, 72-81.
16. 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 6th: Sacred Values

17. Roth, A. E. (2007). Repugnance as a constraint on markets. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* *21*, 3 7-58.
18. Tetlock, P. E. (2003). Thinking the unthinkable: Sacred values and taboo cognitions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *7*, 320-324.
19. 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: March 13th: Morality and Politics

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

21. 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.
22. Wang, S. Y. N., & Inbar, Y. (2021). Moral-language use by US political elites. *Psychological Science*, 32(1), 14-26.

Week 10: March 20th: **Professors Choice! Stay Tuned. (Yes, there will be a reading response paper opportunity this week.)**

Week 11: March 27th: **Presentations Day 1 (No reading response opportunity)**

Week 12: April 3rd : **Presentations Day 2 (No reading response opportunity)**

***** Note: Final papers are due *APRIL 5th* by *MIDNIGHT*.
Your final topic must be approved by me by *APRIL 2nd*!**

University's Plagiarism Detection Tool

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Quercus

This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. The site is dynamic and new information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or "card" for PSYD15 LEC 02. You may need to scroll through other cards to find this. Click on the link to open our course area, view the latest announcements and access your course resources. There are Quercus help guides for students that you can access by clicking on the "?" icon in the left side column.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE:

Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Department of Psychology Missed Term Work Policy

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

Note:

- 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.
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar's Office [petition process](#).

The email address to submit missed term work accommodation requests is: Stephanie.schwartz@mail.utoronto.ca

ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY accommodations:

For missed work due to ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY, complete the following process:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Declare your absence on [ACORN](#) (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)
3. Email **both** of the following items to the course email **within 2 business days** of the missed work:
 - a. the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#)
 - *AND*
 - b. a screenshot of your Self-Declared Absence on ACORN

Note:

- *If you are unable to submit your request within 2 business days, you must still email your instructor within the 2 business day window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the 2 business day deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.*
- *If your absence is declared on ACORN, we do not require any additional supporting documentation (e.g. medical notes) to support your missed term work accommodation request.*

ACADEMIC CONFLICT accommodations:

For missed term work due to an ACADEMIC CONFLICT (e.g. two midterms at the same time):

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Take screenshots of your course Quercus pages that demonstrate the conflict.
3. Email the form and screenshots to the course email **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. Requests sent after the activity deadline may not be accommodated.

Note:

- *Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.*
- *Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered conflicts. Only overlapping activities are conflicts.*
- *Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.*

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT accommodations:

For missed term work due to a RELIGIOUS CONFLICT:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Email the form to the course **email 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. Requests sent after the activity deadline may not be accommodated.

ACCESSABILITY SERVICES accommodations:

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

- **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email the course email 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 the course email 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 the course email 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. **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 the instructor’s response to resume work on your assignment.**

Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you’re able, and email it to your instructor.

For an **anticipated absence** (e.g. a scheduled surgery or an illness with a prolonged recovery period), if you would like to request accommodations in advance, submit a [Verification of Illness Form](#) completed by your doctor AND the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) to the course email. Absences can be declared up to 14 days into the future on ACORN.

Missed Accommodations

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting its requirements, 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.** E.g. If you are given an extension but are still sick and need more time, or if you miss a make-up term test, you must submit *another* [Request for 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 necessarily be provided.

Disability-Related Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office (<http://www.uts.utoronto.ca/ability/>) as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm AA142, Arts and Administration Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please contact 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email ability.uts@utoronto.ca for more information.

The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
Academic Integrity

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

Potential offences in papers and assignments include 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 cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

Religious Accommodations

The University has a commitment concerning accommodation for religious observances. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. According to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.