

Moral Psychology (PHIL2550A)

Carleton University, Winter 2018

Day/Time: Mon. & Wed., 13:05 – 14:25 **Location:** Tory Building 342

Dr. Joshua Shepherd

Office: 3A51 **Office Telephone:** 1783

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1pm – 3pm

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Course Description

Moral psychology is a somewhat loose collection of topics. What holds these topics together is that they are relevant to questions pursued in ethics, and that pursuit of these questions in moral psychology involves consideration of relevant work in science. Ethics involves the study of the sources of value, the nature of right and wrong action, the nature of happiness and well-being, and the nature of moral character, moral judgment, and moral action. It turns out that the sciences that are relevant to these topics include most of the sciences of behavior and the mind – evolutionary biology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and neuroscience are all on the list. Given this broad set, we will not be able to cover every topic within the growing field of moral psychology. But you will get a good idea of how science is relevant to ethical inquiry, and a good idea of some of the psychological structures that undergird moral cognition and moral behavior. My hope is that this course raises interesting and important questions regarding who we are as human beings and moral agents, and that these questions stay with you long after the course is done.

Course Objectives

I have four main goals for students in this course. First, students will become familiar with the central issues of moral psychology. Second, students will develop an understanding of the diversity and breadth of philosophical and scientific inquiry into these issues. Third, students will be given the chance to improve their critical reasoning skills through direct engagement with philosophical texts, as well as through in-class discussion and analysis of said texts. Fourth, through close engagement – individually and in class – with the fascinating and difficult required readings, students will become better readers.

Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Please turn off (or silence) your cell phones and put them away before the start of class. The use of laptops for the **sole purpose** of note-taking is permitted.

Course Materials

The content of quizzes and tests will come primarily from the lectures. The reading list is recommended, as the lectures will often cover content covered in the readings. **I do not give out lecture notes, nor do I re-deliver lectures during office hours. If you miss a class, or need help with notes, seek help from a classmate or visit the Writing Center's seminars on note-taking.**

The primary source of material is this book:

Doris, John. *The Moral Psychology Handbook*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

There are a number of useful and relatively inexpensive introductions to moral psychology. You might consider checking one of these out of the library to get some background on our topics. In addition, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, on-line, is a valuable resource (plato.stanford.edu). There are a number of useful articles relevant to our topics, which you can find by searching key terms at the site.

Alfano, Mark. *Moral Psychology: An Introduction*. Polity Press, 2016.

Nadelhoffer, Thomas, Nahmias, Eddy, and Nichols, Shaun. *Moral Psychology: Historical and Contemporary Readings*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Tiberius, Valerie. *Moral Psychology: A Contemporary Introduction*. Routledge, 2015. , Robert, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Podcast: Very Bad Wizards (<https://verybadwizards.fireside.fm>)

You may find it interesting to follow this podcast, which involves a bunch of irreverent and possibly offensive conversations between a well-known moral philosopher and a well-known psychologist. The podcast relates the themes of this course to issues in pop culture and academia. I've suggested relevant episodes at places in the syllabus.

Office Hours

I am always happy to see students during my office hours. Due to the size of this class, I am very limited in my ability to meet students outside of office hours. The function of office hours is to clarify concepts and answer questions that cannot be easily answered by consulting the syllabus or by sending an e-mail. The function of office hours is not to re-deliver missed lectures or missed notes, nor is it to haggle over grades.

Course Requirements and Grade policies

Grade Schematic

Quizzes	25%
Tests	25% each, x3

Quizzes

Quizzes will be offered on-line, over the course of a day, at our course's website on CULearn. They will cover content discussed in recent classes, and will give you a sense of the kinds of questions that will constitute the tests. There will be roughly one quiz per week, always on Wednesdays.

Missed quizzes policy

Missed quizzes cannot be made up. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. I will only drop other missed quizzes if the student has a valid excuse, as determined by me (e.g., a doctor's note explaining why you were unable to take a quiz on the day it was offered).

Test policy

Missed tests cannot be made up. If there is an excellent reason for having missed a test and having not notified me ahead of time, I will consider giving a different test covering the material.

Final grade

The final grade is a function of performance on Quizzes, In-class exercises, and Tests. There is no extra credit.

Readings and Course Outline

NOTE: the outline provides a rough guide – our progress through these topics will require some flexibility

Week One: What is Moral Psychology?

Introduction from MPH.

'Moral Psychology: Empirical Approaches,' in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-psych-emp/>

Week Two: Evolution

Chapter One from MPH.

E.O. Wilson, 'Human decency is animal,' in the *New York Times*:

<http://www.nytimes.com/1975/10/12/archives/human-decency-is-animal-hawks-and-baboons-are-not-usually-heroic.html>

Emily Esfahani Smith, 'Is human morality a product of evolution,' in *The Atlantic*:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/12/evolution-of-morality-social-humans-and-apes/418371/>

VBW: episodes 53, 33

Week Three: Multi-system Moral Psychology

Chapter two from MPH.

VBW: episodes 39, 40.

Week Four: Moral Motivation

Chapter three from MPH.

TEST ONE – at the end of week four or beginning of week five

Week Five: Emotions

Chapter four from MPH.

Boston Review Forum on Paul Bloom's Against Empathy:

<http://bostonreview.net/forum/paul-bloom-against-empathy>

Aeon: Martha Nussbaum, 'There's no emotion we ought to think harder about than anger':

<https://aeon.co/essays/there-s-no-emotion-we-ought-to-think-harder-about-than-anger>

VBW: episodes 31, 24.

Week Six: Altruism

Chapter five from MPH.

TED Talk: Why some people are more altruistic than others

https://www.ted.com/talks/abigail_marsh_why_some_people_are_more_altruistic_than_others

Week Seven: Moral Reasoning (**NOTE: there will be no class Monday, February 12**)

Chapter six from MPH.

Guy Kahane Lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKNvdQeLJrU>

David Pizarro Lecture: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_zBlhYfGgU

Week Eight: Moral Intuitions

Chapter seven from MPH.

VBW: episodes 51, 52.

TEST TWO – either in week eight or nine

Week Nine: Moral Responsibility

Chapter ten from MPH.

VBW: episode 101.

Week Ten: Virtue and Character

Chapter eleven from MPH.

VBW: episode 9.

Week Eleven: Well-being

Chapter twelve from MPH.

VBW: Episode 79.

Week Twelve: Race

Chapter thirteen from MPH.

VBW: episode 16.

TEST THREE – will occur during the exam period

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2017-18)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

If you miss a final examination (formally scheduled or take-home) because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral. You must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of your formally scheduled exam or within 3 working days after the due date of a take-home exam. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.5>

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC

website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 6	Classes start.
Sept. 19	Last day for registration and course changes for Fall term and Fall/Winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 9	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 23-27	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for summative or final examinations in Fall term courses before the official examination period.
Dec. 8	Last day of Fall term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a Fall term course.
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 8	Classes begin.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in the Winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from Winter term courses or from the Winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 19	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 19-23	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 27	Last day for summative or final examinations in Winter term or two-term courses before the official examination period.
Mar. 30	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 11	Last day of two-term and Winter term classes. Classes follow a Friday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall/Winter and Winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for Winter term courses.
Apr. 14-26	Final examinations for Winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 26	All take home examinations are due on this day.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Academic Advising Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/academicadvising 520-7850
Writing Services:	4 th Floor, Library http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/ 520-3822
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735