

Moral Psychology (PHIL2550A)

Carleton University, Winter 2019

Day/Time: Wed. & Fri., 10:05 – 11:25 **Location:** Southam Hall 416

Dr. Joshua Shepherd

Office: 3A61 **Office Telephone:** 1783

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1pm – 3pm

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Official Calendar Description

PHIL 2550 [0.5 credit]

Moral Psychology

An examination of psychological underpinnings of morality, focusing on studies at the intersection of philosophy, psychiatry, and psychology.

Prerequisite(s): a course in philosophy or second-year standing.

Lectures three hours a week.

Course Overview

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 highly 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.**

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.

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

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.

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.

Course Requirements and Grade policies

Grade Schematic

Quizzes	33%
Tests	33% each, x2

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. There will be roughly one quiz per week, and I will announce when they occur (usually they occur on Wednesdays).

Missed quizzes policy

Missed quizzes cannot be made up. You have all day to take the quizzes, so an internet failure late at night is no excuse. I will only drop 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.

Attendance policy

I do not take attendance, but it is important. Much that is on the quizzes and tests stems from in-class notes and discussions.

Notes policy

I do not post notes, as I wish to encourage the development of note-taking as a skill. I do encourage students to share notes, and to create editable on-line documents (on google drive, for example) for helping one another out.

Final grade

The final grade is a function of performance on Quizzes and Tests.

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?

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

Weeks Two-Four: Issues in Moral Philosophy (papers on CULearn)

Peter Railton, Sophisticated Consequentialism

Susan Wolf, Moral Saints

Gilbert Harman, Moral Relativism

Williams and Nagel, Moral Luck

Phillippa Foot, Hypothetical Imperatives

Bernard Williams, The Self and The Future

Week Five: Did Morality Evolve?

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/>

TEST: ROUGHLY HERE, PROBABLY ON FEB. 8, ALTHOUGH I WILL CONFIRM CLOSER TO THE DATE

Week Six: Religion and Morality (papers on CULearn)

Scott Atran, 'The Devoted Actor'

Norenzayan et al., 'The Cultural Evolution of Prosocial Religions'

Week Seven-Eight: Moral Cognition (Papers on CULearn)

Joshua Greene, 'Beyond Point-and-Shoot Morality'

Guy Kahane, 'Sidetracked by Trolleys'

Joshua May, 'Precis of Regard for Reason in the Moral Mind'

Weeks Nine-Eleven: Moral Emotions (papers on CULearn)

Empathy

Boston Review Forum on Paul Bloom's Against Empathy:

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

Bloom, 'Empathy and its discontents'

Anger

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>

Martha Nussbaum, 'Transitional Anger'

Amia Srinivasan, 'The Aptness of Anger'

TEST: ROUGHLY HERE, PROBABLY MARCH 22, ALTHOUGH I WILL CONFIRM CLOSER TO THE DATE

Revenge vs Forgiveness

SEP: Forgiveness, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/forgiveness/>

Brian Rosebury, 'Private Revenge and its Relation to Punishment'

Peter French, 'Virtuous Avengers in Commonplace Cases'

Altruism

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 Twelve: Science and Moral Responsibility/Free Will

Shepherd, 'Scientific Challenges to Free Will and Moral Responsibility'

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2018-19)

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 on the first page: student name and number; course name and number; instructor's name.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates below.
- 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.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

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:

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

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/>

Survivors of Sexual Violence: as a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

Important Dates:

Sept. 5	Classes start.
Sept. 18	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. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 8	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 22-26	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 23	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 7	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. 9-21	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. 21	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 7	Classes begin.
Jan. 18	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. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 18	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 18-22	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 26	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 9	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. 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. 12-27	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 19-21	Statutory holiday. University closed. No examinations take place.
Apr. 27	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