

**PHIL3073, Advanced Ethics, Social,
and Political Philosophy Honours Seminar:
Moral Psychology**

Course Description:

Moral psychology is an interdisciplinary field that seeks to understand the nature of moral judgment and action. In this seminar, we will discuss both historical and cutting-edge contemporary readings on questions such as: How do we form moral judgments? Does reasoning have an important role to play in moral action, or only emotion? Are human beings inherently selfish or is genuine altruism possible? Is the idea of a stable and enduring character that is presupposed by our judgments of virtue and vice psychologically realistic? To what extent are our character traits determined by situational factors as opposed to under our control? Are we really morally responsible agents, and how is moral responsibility compatible with our best science of the mind? Where do moral intuitions, such as the intuition that it would be wrong for one person to hurt another just because they felt like it, come from? Are some of our intuitions more reliable than others? How might psychological research help us to adjudicate between conflicting intuitions? Through the seminar, you will learn about a great deal of philosophical and also psychological research on these topics, and come to a better understanding of both the state of existing research and your own views on them.

Course Meetings:

Melville Hall G051, Friday 1-4pm

Instructor:

Matthew Lindauer
matthew.lindauer@anu.edu.au
Coombs 2210
Wednesday 3-5pm and by appt.

Course Requirements:

First Paper: 25%
Second Paper: 50%
Preparation and Participation: 25%

Course Papers:

Topics will be distributed in advance of the paper due dates. I will be available in office hours to discuss outlines and even early stage ideas (so don't hesitate to come and meet with me). Please submit papers double-spaced with normal font on Wattle.

Course Readings:

We will use the following volume for most of the course readings:
Moral Psychology: Historical and Contemporary Readings, eds. Thomas Nadelhoffer, Eddy Nahmias, and Shaun Nichols, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Additional readings will be posted under each Course Topic on Wattle (marked with a *).

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation:

1) Attendance: To get the most out of the seminar, you should do your best to attend each meeting.

2) Preparation and Participation: When you attend the seminar meetings, I will expect you to have done the required reading and to participate in our discussions. I will also ask that each student submit a brief reading response using Wattle at least 24 hours in advance of the next lecture. These reading responses will not be graded (beyond whether or not they were submitted, which is included under your participation grade), but will be used to get a sense of what parts of the readings were most exciting or confusing and where discussion should tend towards in the coming seminar meeting. They can take the form of just two or three questions, and I don't want students to be concerned about putting a lot of time or effort into these. Since you'll be doing the readings anyway, it shouldn't be much extra work to jot down a few thoughts or questions that came to you in the course of reading.

Academic Integrity:

I expect all students to abide by the standards of academic integrity. For the ANU's website containing information about these requirements, see <http://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/assessments-exams/academic-honesty-plagiarism>. One of the most severe violations of academic integrity is plagiarism. If you directly quote, closely paraphrase, or use some original idea from another author, you must cite the source of this material. This includes material drawn lectures, journal articles, books, and also internet sources, such as websites. Do make use of the university requirements or get in touch if you have questions about these requirements. All violations of academic integrity or honesty will be taken seriously and resolved in line with the University's policies.

Course Meeting Schedule:

July 29, Introduction

Overview of Ethical Theories

Course Topics

I. Reason and Emotion

August 5:

David Hume, Selections from *Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Morals*

Immanuel Kant, Selections from *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*

Michael Smith, Selections from *The Moral Problem*

Lawrence Kohlberg, "The Claim to Moral Adequacy of a Higher Stage of Moral Judgment"

Carol Gilligan, Selections from *In a Different Voice* *

Jonathan Haidt, "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail" *

August 12:

Paul Slovic, “If I Look At the Mass I’ll Never Act’: Psychic Numbing and Genocide” *
 Jeannette Kennett and Cordelia Fine, “Would the Real Moral Judgment Please Stand Up? The Implications of Social Intuitionist Models of Cognition for Meta-Ethics and Moral Psychology” *

II. Altruism**August 19:**

Plato, Selections from *The Republic*
 Thomas Hobbes, Selections from *Leviathan*
 Thomas Nagel, Selections from *The Possibility of Altruism*
 C. Daniel Batson, “How Social an Animal?: The Human Capacity for Caring”

August 26:

Robert L. Trivers, “The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism”
 Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson, Summary of *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior*

III. Virtue**September 2:**

Aristotle, Selections from *Nicomachean Ethics*
 Stanley Milgram, “Behavioral Study of Obedience”
 Lee Ross and Richard Nisbett, Selections from *The Person and the Situation*
 John M. Doris, “Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics”
 Rachana Kamtekar, “Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of Our Character”
 Julia Annas, “The Phenomenology of Virtue” *
 Maria Merritt, “Virtue Ethics and Situationist Personality Psychology”

September 2-16, Teaching Break**September 16, First Paper Due****IV. Moral Responsibility****September 23:**

Aristotle, Selections from *Nicomachean Ethics*
 Kant, Selections from *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* *
 P.F. Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment” *
 Susan Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility” *
 Gary Watson, “Responsibility and the Limits of Evil” *

September 30:

Daniel M. Wegner and Thalia Wheatley, “Apparent Mental Causation: Sources of the Experience of Will”
 Eddy Nahmias, “Agency, Authorship, and Illusion”
 Roy F. Baumeister, “Free Will in Scientific Psychology”
 Alfred R. Mele, “Scientific Skepticism About Free Will”

Joshua Knobe, “Free Will and the Scientific Vision” *

V. Intuitions and Methodology

October 7:

Henry Sidgwick, Selections from *The Methods of Ethics*

W.D. Ross, Selections from *The Right and the Good*

Judith Jarvis Thomson, “The Trolley Problem”

Joshua Greene, “The Secret Joke of Kant’s Soul”

Joshua Greene and Jonathan Haidt, “How (and Where) Does Moral Judgment Work?” *

Selim Berker, “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience” *

October 14:

Joshua Knobe, “Experimental Philosophy is Cognitive Science” *

Matthew Lindauer, “Experimental Philosophy and the Fruitfulness of Normative Concepts” *

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, “Moral Intuitionism Meets Empirical Psychology”

*Topics for the Last Two Sessions Determined by Student Interest
(All Readings on Wattle)*

VI. Causal Judgment

October 21:

Tania Lombrozo, “Causal-Explanatory Pluralism: How Intentions, Functions, and Mechanisms Influence Causal Ascriptions”

Christopher Hitchcock and Joshua Knobe, “Cause and Norm”

Fiery Cushman, Joshua Knobe, and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, “Moral Appraisals Affect Doing/Allowing Judgments”

Christian Barry, Matthew Lindauer, and Gerhard Øverland, “Doing, Allowing, and Enabling Harm: An Empirical Investigation”

VII. Gender Differences

October 28:

Cordelia Fine, “Explaining, or Sustaining, the Status Quo? The Potentially Self-Fulfilling Effects of ‘Hardwired’ Accounts of Sex Differences”

Wesley Buckwalter and Stephen Stich, “Gender and Philosophical Intuition”

Louise Antony, “Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?”

Toni Adleberg, Morgan Thompson, and Eddy Nahmias, “Do Men and Women Have Different Philosophical Intuitions? Further Data”

Rebecca Friesdorf, Paul Conway, and Bertram Gawronski, “Gender Differences in Responses to Moral Dilemmas: A Process Dissociation Analysis”

November 6, Second Paper Due