

# Mind and Morality

Philosophy 580 – Spring Term 2009 – Purdue University

Instructor: Daniel Kelly

## 1. Course Description

This course will focus on the recent explosion of interdisciplinary work on moral psychology. We'll look at some of the ways that findings in cognitive, developmental, and social psychology, cognitive neuroscience, experimental philosophy, and evolutionary theory might help to shed light on, resolve, deflate, and transform issues and debates that arise in more traditional moral theory. Topics we will look at will likely include: the status of virtue ethics and the character wars; altruism and its role in morality; the psychology of moral judgment; the definition of morality and distinctive features of moral norms; moral nativism; moral realism, diversity and disagreement.

## 2. Class Meetings

Class meets Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30-2:45am, in Room 1248 of Beering Hall.

## 3. Office Hours and Contact Information

Office: 7126 Beering Hall

Office phone: 765-494-4290 (4-4290)

Email: [drkelly@purdue.edu](mailto:drkelly@purdue.edu)

Spring Term Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-4:00pm, or by appointment.

## 4. Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading

Grades on papers and exams will be given on the standard 0-100 point grading scale:

100-90: A  
89-87: B+  
86-80: B  
79-77: C+  
76-70: C  
69-60: D  
59-0: F

Students have 2 options for how they will be assessed in the course. First, each student will also give a 30 minute presentation at some point during the semester. Students should set up a time to meet with me before they give their presentation. Students have a choice on papers, however.

Option 1: Students will write three 5-7 page papers, in which they will be expected to make an argument. Final grades for Option 1 will be determined:

Each Paper	30%
Presentation and Class Participation	10%

**Option 2:** Students will write the first 5-7 page paper, in which they will be expected to make an argument. Student will also write a journal length term paper, which will be due the last day of the semester. If you take this option, you should make an appointment to talk to me about your paper, and submit an outline for you proposed topic. Final grades for Option 2 be determined thus:

5-7 page paper	30%
Term paper	60%
Presentation and Class Participation	10%

EMAILED AND ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Papers not given to me by the end of class (2:45pm) the day they are due are LATE. For each day late, 7 points will be deducted.

There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course. Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be handed given to the university authorities. For more on the Purdue University policy on plagiarism, see the following website:

[http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu\\_conduct/stu\\_regulations.html](http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu_conduct/stu_regulations.html)

Classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion focused on the topics raised by the readings. Students are encouraged to ask questions and participate in the conversation – this is usually the best way to get a grip on some very abstract issues and ultimately to understand philosophy. There is no formal attendance policy for this class. But:

*Class participation:* This does make up 10% of your final grade, and attendance does informally factor into the equation. I realize that not everyone is equally outgoing or talkative in class. However, participation in class discussion almost always helps in learning philosophy. So while I highly encourage it, I do not penalize students simply for not speaking up. That said, a consistent record of participation and attendance will always help a student's final grade if it is on a borderline at the end of the semester. On the other hand, students who have not been present and engaged throughout the semester will not get the benefit of the doubt in similar borderline cases, and in particularly egregious cases will have their grades dragged down.

**Emergency:**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances.

5. Texts

There will be no required texts for this course. All required readings will be posted on the course website, or (very occasionally) put on reserve in the philosophy department office. There are, however, some excellent book length treatments out there, which we will be reading parts of, and that students may want to follow up on. Some of the best written by philosophers include:

- *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* by John Doris
- *The Evolution of Morality* by Richard Joyce
- *Sentimental Rules: On the Natural Foundations of Moral Judgment* by Shaun Nichols
- *The Emotional Construction of Morals* by Jesse Prinz

Another excellent resource is the three volume anthology edited by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. We will read many papers in these volumes, which can be browsed here:

<http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/author/default.asp?aid=32674>

A word on using external (i.e. not required) sources in your papers: that is fine, as long as they are to the point, and are properly cited. When in doubt, *cite your sources!* It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

Wikipedia can be valuable for getting a very broad grasp of positions and debates, but when it gets into details, especially on philosophic topics, it is very often horrible – sketchy, convoluted, misinformed, and often simply wrong. If you wish to consult online resources, I suggest you use some of the other, much better sites. Most prominent is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, but others are useful as well:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/>  
 The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>  
 Episteme Links <http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/MainEncy.aspx>

## 6. Course Website

Information and comments will often be posted on the website, which can be reached via my homepage:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/>

## 7. Topics and Readings

Here is a tentative list of topics and readings. Specific readings and dates will be announced in class, on the webpage and/or over the class email list. Since reminders and other information will be distributed of the email list, *make sure you check the website and your Purdue account on a fairly regular basis.*

More than other courses I've taught, this syllabus is a very loose set of guidelines, and how much time we spend on particular topics, if we want to delve deeper, when we want to move on and which direction we want to go will be up for negotiation as we proceed. The field is still young, and no clear canon has coalesced, so up to a point we can follow our interests and hop around as we choose.

Week 1: Jan 13<sup>th</sup>

Introduction and Overview

- J. Doris and S. Stich 'Moral Psychology: Empirical Approaches'

Week 2, 3: Jan 20<sup>th</sup> - Jan 29<sup>th</sup>

Virtue Ethics and the Character Wars

- J. Doris 'Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics'

- G. Harman ‘Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error’
- Precip to *Lack of Character*, Replies to Doris, Doris’s Response
- M. Merritt ‘Virtue Ethics and Situationist Personality Psychology’
- Other Readings
  - R. Adams *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good*
  - J. Doris *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior*

Week 4, 5: Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> - Feb 12<sup>th</sup>

Altruism and Morality

- S. Stich, J. Doris & E. Roedder ‘Altruism’
  - S. Stich ‘Evolution, altruism and cognitive architecture: a critique of Sober and Wilson’s argument for psychological altruism’
  - Other Readings:
    - D. Bateson *The Altruism Question: Toward a Social-Psychological Answer*.
    - E. Sober & D. Wilson *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior*
- **First 5-7 page paper due Feb 12<sup>th</sup>**

Week 6 – 9: Feb 17<sup>th</sup> - March 10<sup>th</sup>

Moral Judgment

- J. Smetana ‘Understanding Social Rules’
- J. Haidt ‘Affect, Culture and Morality, or Is It Wrong to Eat Your Dog?’
- S. Nichols ‘Norms with Feeling’
- C. Sripada & S. Stich ‘A Framework for a Psychology of Norms’
- D. Kelly & S. Stich ‘Two Theories of the Cognitive Architecture Underlying Morality’
- J. Haidt ‘The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment’
- Other Readings:
  - H. Gabennesch ‘The Perception of Social Convention by Children and Adults’
  - J. Nado et al. ‘Moral Judgment’
  - D. Kelly et al. ‘Harm, Affect, and the Moral/Conventional Distinction’
  - J. Greene & J. Haidt ‘How (and where) does moral judgment work?’
  - J. Greene ‘The Secret Joke of Kant’s Soul’
  - J. Prinz ‘The Emotional Basis of Moral Judgment’
  - S. Nichols & R. Mallon ‘Moral Dilemmas and Moral Rules’
  - M. Hauser *Moral Minds: How Nature Designed Our Universal Sense of Right and Wrong*
  - S. Nichols *Sentimental Rules: On the Natural Foundations of Moral Judgment*
  - J. Prinz *The Emotional Construction of Morals*

**Spring Break:** No Class March 16-20

Week 10 - 12: March 24<sup>th</sup> – April 9<sup>th</sup>

The Sources & Transmission of Morality: Nativism, Alternatives to Nativism, & Some Implications

- **Second 5-7 page paper due March 26<sup>th</sup>** [For Option 1 students]
- M. Hauser et al. ‘Reviving Rawls’ Linguistic Analogy’
- J. Prinz ‘Is Morality Innate?’
- K. Sterelny ‘Moral Nativism: A Skeptical Response’
- S. Nichols ‘On the genealogy of norms: A case for the role of emotion in cultural evolution’
- P. Rozin et al. ‘The CAD Triad Hypothesis: A Mapping Between Three Moral

Emotions (Contempt, Anger, Disgust) and Three Moral Codes (Community, Autonomy, and Divinity)

- J. Prinz 'The Genealogy of Morals' Chapter 6 of *ECM*
- J. Doris & A. Plakias 'How to Argue About Disagreement: Evaluative Diversity and Moral Realism'
- Machery et al. 'Moral Realism and Cross Cultural Normative Diversity'
- Other Readings:
  - J. Mikail 'Universal Moral Grammar: Theory, Evidence, and the Future'
  - G. Harman & E. Roedder 'Moral Grammar'
  - J. Prinz 'Against Moral Nativism'
  - C. Sripada 'Nativism and Moral Psychology Three Models of the Innate Structure that Shapes the Contents of Moral Norms'
  - S. Stich 'Is Morality An Elegant Machine Or a Kludge?'
  - D. Kelly 'Moral Disgust and Tribal Instincts: A Byproduct Hypothesis'
  - J. Knobe 'Reason Explanation in Folk Psychology'
  - J. Greene 'Is Moral Truth an Illusion?'

Week 13 - 15: April 14<sup>th</sup> - April 30<sup>th</sup>

Moral Responsibility and Personhood

- J. Doris 'How To Build A Person'
  - S. Nichols & J. Knobe 'Moral Responsibility and Determinism: The Cognitive Science of Folk Intuitions'
  - J. Doris & J. Knobe 'Responsibility'
  - Other Readings:
    - P. Strawson 'Freedom and Resentment'
    - J. Doris & D. Murphy 'From My Lai to Abu Ghraib: The Moral Psychology of Atrocity'
    - C. Sripada 'The "Deep Self" Model and asymmetries in folk judgments about intentionality and responsibility'
- Final Paper Due April 30<sup>th</sup>**