

# Minds and Morals

Philosophy 490 – Fall Term 2010 – 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, and the nature of agents, selves, and persons.

## 2. Class Meetings

Class meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2:30am – 3:20 am in Room 1230 on the first floor of Beering Hall.

## 3. Office Hours and Contact Information

Office: 7126 Beering Hall

Office Phone: 765-494-4290

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

Fall Term Office Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm Tuesdays and by appointment

## 4. Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading

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

100-93:	A
92-90:	A-
89-87:	B+
86-83:	B
82-80:	B-
79-77:	C+
76-73:	C
72-70:	C-
69-60:	D
59-0:	F

Students (who are signed up for PHIL 490) will take a midterm exam and write two 5-7 page papers. Potential topics for papers will be distributed roughly two weeks before they are due. Final grades will be determined thus:

Midterm	30%
2 Papers	30% each

Class Participation 10%

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

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 always helps 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.

## 5. Course Policies

**Class sessions:** I will try to begin on time, and will usually go right up until the end of the class session. Please come on time. Do not pack up your materials until class has been dismissed. Talking out of turn during lectures will not be tolerated. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave.

**Emergencies:** 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. Information about emergencies changes in the course can be gotten by contacting either instructor via email or phone, or by consulting the course website. Purdue's Emergency Procedures Handbook and other important emergency planning information is available online at

[http://www.purdue.edu/emergency\\_preparedness/](http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/)

**Plagiarism:** With the advent of the internet, plagiarism has become an increasingly serious problem at universities around the country, particularly in classes like this one, where papers determine a substantial part of the grade.

In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both direct quotations *and paraphrases or summaries* of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.

Plagiarism and cheating on exams undermines the integrity of the academic community. When undetected, it gives the perpetrator an unfair advantage over students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will do our best to detect plagiarism and cheating. Students who are aware of violations by others should bring this to my attention. This is the right thing to do. It is also in your own self-interest.

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 websites:

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

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>

With each paper assignment, a handful of students may be selected at random to submit their papers to TurnItIn, an online service that maintains an enormous database of papers that it uses to check for instances of plagiarism.

**External Sources:** Using sources not listed on the syllabus in researching and writing your papers is fine, as long as they are both to the point, and are properly cited. And at all times, when in doubt, *cite your sources!* It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

This is probably the best place to make this point, too: 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. Texts

There will be only required texts for this course is *A Very Bad Wizard* by Tamler Sommers. Most of the required readings, however, will be posted on the course website. There are also 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

Two other excellent resources are the three volume anthology edited by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong and *The Oxford Handbook of Moral Psychology* edited John Doris. We will read many papers in these volumes, which can be browsed here:

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

<http://www.oup.com/uk/catalogue/?ci=9780199582143>

## 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/>

To go directly to this course's website, the address is:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/KellyMindsMoralsFall2010.html>

## 7. Topics and Readings

Here is a tentative list of topics and readings. Specific readings and dates will be announced in class and posted on the on the course webpage.

### Week 1: August 23rd

Introduction, Overview and some useful Background

- J. Rachels, 'Naturalism'
- J. Doris and S. Stich 'Moral Psychology: Empirical Approaches'
- W. Lycan 'The Mind/Body Problem'
- Other Readings
  - Darwall, S., Gibbard, A., & Railton, P. 'Towards Fin de siecle Ethics: Some Trends'
  - J. Levin 'Functionalism'

### Week 2, 3: August 30<sup>th</sup> - September 6<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'
- Precis 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*
  - *A Very Bad Wizard* interview with Philip Zimbardo

### Week 4, 5: September 13<sup>th</sup> - September 20<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*

### Week 6 – 9: September 29<sup>th</sup> – October 18<sup>th</sup>

**“Midterm” Exam in class Wednesday October 6<sup>th</sup>**

**No Class Monday 11<sup>th</sup> (or Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>) – October Break**

## 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'
  - *A Very Bad Wizard* interview with Stephen Stich
- J. Haidt 'The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment'
  - *A Very Bad Wizard* interview with Jonathan Haidt
- 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'
    - *A Very Bad Wizard* interview with Joshua Greene and Liane Young
  - J. Prinz 'The Emotional Basis of Moral Judgment'
  - S. Nichols & R. Mallon 'Moral Dilemmas and Moral Rules'
  - D. Kelly et al. 'Race and Racial Cognition'
  - V. Tiberius & A. Plakias 'Well-Being'
  - 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*

Week 10 - 12: October 25<sup>th</sup> – November 8<sup>th</sup>

## First 5-7 page paper due Monday 8<sup>th</sup>

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

- 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. Doris & A. Plakias 'How to Argue About Disagreement: Evaluative Diversity and Moral Realism'
- Machery et al. 'Moral Realism and Cross Cultural Normative Diversity'
  - *A Very Bad Wizard* interview with Joseph Henrich
- Other Readings:
  - J. Mikail 'Universal Moral Grammar: Theory, Evidence, and the Future'
  - G. Harman & E. Roedder 'Moral Grammar'
  - J. Prinz 'Against Moral Nativism'

- J. Prinz ‘The Genealogy of Morals’ Chapter 6 of *ECM*
- 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. Greene ‘Is Moral Truth an Illusion?’
- T. Sommers ‘Two Faces of Revenge’
- *A Very Bad Wizard* interview with Wiliam Ian Miller

Week 13 - 16: November 14<sup>th</sup> - December 6<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:
  - J. Doris ‘Skepticism about Persons’
  - P. Strawson ‘Freedom and Resentment’
  - Frankfurt ‘Free Will and the Concept of a Person’
  - J. Doris & D. Murphy ‘From My Lai to Abu Ghraib: The Moral Psychology of Atrocity’
  - *A Very Bad Wizard* interview with Galen Strawson
  - Dennett ‘Conditions of Personhood’

**Second 5-7 Paper Due Last Day of Class Friday December 10th**