

Moral Psychology and Climate Change: Cognitive and Social Obstacles to Saving the Planet (and Our Selves)

Philosophy 490 (Advanced Topics in Philosophy: Moral Psych & Environ)

Fall Term 2016

Purdue University

PHIL 49000 001 – CRN 15042

Instructors: Daniel Kelly

1. Course Description

There's an old saying that if you want to save the world, you need to know which levers to pull; in this course, we'll consider how in many cases, some of the most important of those levers might lie within ourselves. To that end we'll develop concepts to think about the philosophic and ethical facets of existential threats, with an eye toward the human cognitive, affective, and social dimensions that make them difficult to see clearly or address effectively. Our main focus will be on the distinctive kinds of challenges posed by climate change and destabilization of the global ecosystem, but we'll also briefly consider some other examples (the possible rise of hostile artificial intelligence, contact with aggressive extra-terrestrial life) for the contrasts they bring into relief.

We'll first look at state of the art research on the character of human moral psychology that brings together work from philosophers, psychologists, biologists, economists, and anthropologists, paying particularly close attention to our cooperative capacities and the central roles that culture, social norms and informal institutions play in shaping both individual and group behavior. We'll then look at how the threats produced by climate change engage our minds, and more alarmingly, fail to engage them. In contrast to alien invasions or an uprising of the machines, the problems linked to climate change make up a nearly perfect storm, and can appear almost custom designed to elude the grasp of our intuitive moral psychology. We will examine in more detail how key features of those problems lie behind various of our cognitive blind spots, fail to push our emotional buttons or get a grip on our motivational apparatus, and give rise to particularly difficult forms of collective action problems. Finally, we'll consider some ideas for how to get around these types of obstacles. We'll examine strategies that take into account, and often try to leverage, knowledge of the details of human cognition and sociality to more effectively address climate change. We'll also think about what factors might distinguish versions of such strategies that are justifiably paternalistic and ethically acceptable from "nudges" that are excessively manipulative and morally indefensible.

2. Class Meetings

Class lectures meet Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30 – 2:45pm, 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

Office Hours: 11:00am – 1:00pm Wednesdays 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:

100-98:	A+
97-93:	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

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Participation, in class discussion	5%
Participation, written (outlines and blog posts)	25%
Midterm Exam	20%
Prospectus	10%
Final Paper	40%

Outlines: Your participation grade will also include your turning in 10 outlines that meet the following specifications:

- Choose one of the papers assigned to read (the day it is assigned)
- Write up a 1 page (no more, no less) outline of that paper, pulling out the “bird’s eye view” structure of article – sections, main claims of sections, basic arguments for those claims
 - If you’ve never done outlines before, this may be helpful:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/1/>
 - I can also post to the website anonymized examples of ideal outlines once they start coming in
- On the back of the page, separate from your outline:
 - Formulate **in your own words** the main or central question the paper is addressing
 - Identify one sentence from the paper (i.e. quoted verbatim from the text itself) that best states the answer the author gives to the paper’s main question
 - Pose a question of your own that the paper provoked
- Further guidelines
 - You can turn in no more than one outline per week
 - Five outlines are due **before the midterm** on **September 29th**

- The other five outlines are due **no later than November 8th** (the end of the second unit)
- Possible substitutions may be made available throughout the semester – i.e. attend a relevant talk somewhere on campus if/when they are announced

Blog Posts

- There is a (private, password protected) **course blog**, which you can get to via the course website or directly at this address: <http://moralpsychclimatechange.blogspot.com>
- In general, the blog will be an informal place for questions, discussions, and links to relevant news items as the semester unfolds
- Beginning with the second unit on October 4th, for every class session:
 - One student will post a **narrative summary** of the assigned reading, which can highlight interesting or contentious aspects of it, and should raise **two discussion questions** about it
 - **Summaries** should be posted by noon the day before class (on Monday/Wednesday) at the latest
 - Another student will post a short **response** to the summary, elaborating, disagreeing, trying to answer one of the questions
 - **Responses** should be posted ... before you go to bed the day before class (on Monday/Wednesday night)
 - Everyone should read the posts before our class sessions
 - Sign up sheets for particular dates will be circulated soon
 - Each undergraduate will do one summary, one response
 - Each graduate student will do two summaries, two responses
- My hope is for this to be high level but conversational, a place for us to collectively think out loud about the topics raised by the readings, kick starting and following up on discussions we have in the actual classroom. In addition to the required posts, I encourage everyone to post relevant and interesting links, and to contribute to discussions about any and all of the readings. Again, the blog is just us; it's private and password protected, and so not open to the public. Since only invited authors – those of us in the class – can see or contribute to the blog, it can serve as a place to try out ideas without broadcasting them to the entire internet

5. Course Policies

Readings: Do them. From a recent book's introduction: "Patience is a primary virtue in philosophy. Genuine understanding is a rare and valuable commodity, not to be obtained on the cheap. One cannot reap philosophy's rewards breathlessly, or by looking for the intellectual equivalents of sound bites. Very large claims are at issue here, claims that bear on understanding some of the matters most important to being human. Understanding requires investing time, close reading, and reflection."

Attendance: Starting the second week of classes, August 29th, a sign in sheet will be passed around at the beginning of every class. You get 6 absences for free, and then

subsequent absences are penalized: 5 points on the 100 point grading scale will be deducted from your final grade **for each class over 6** that you have missed. So you will lose 5 points if you have missed 7 classes, 10 points if you have missed 8 classes, 15 point if you have missed 9 classes, and so on. The results can be quite dramatic. A student who would otherwise get a B (84) and who has missed 7 classes can have his or her grade lowered to a C+ (79). A student who misses 12 classes will get an F in the course even if he or she has done A work throughout the term. The formal attendance policy does not include anything about class participation, but:

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. If you are unable to make a class session, please email me to let me know.

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. Conversations may get animated and in the course of our frank discussion of ideas we will likely not always agree with each other; but we will all keep the atmosphere respectful and inclusive. The formal attendance policy does not include anything about class participation, but:

Class participation: 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 all the time. That said, a consistent record of participation 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.

Laptop computers: I would prefer that you exercise enough self-restraint to keep from texting for the 75 minutes that class is in session, but since a formal prohibition would be too difficult to enforce, this remains a preference. If I see you consistently texting or listening to your iPod/iPhone during class, it will be reflected poorly in you're the attendance/participation portion of your final grade. Use of laptop computers and iPads during lectures will not be allowed, however.

Emergencies: (See end of Syllabus for full Purdue attachment on Emergency Procedures). 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 (see above for that information). Purdue's Emergency Procedures Handbook and other important emergency planning information is available online at

http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/

To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, and to sign up for Purdue Alert text messages, go to

<http://www.purdue.edu/emergency/>

For the full document of Beering Hall Building Emergency Plan

https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/bep/brng-bep.html

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 I 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/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/>

6. Texts

Almost all of the readings will be .pdfs that will be posted on the course website or blog. The exception is this book, which should be available at the standard campus bookstores, and can certainly be ordered online.

- **A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change** by Stephen Gardiner (2011)

Other useful but not required books (some of which we will read material from):

- **Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World**, by John Broome (2012)
- **The Secret of Our Success: How Culture Is Driving Human Evolution, Domesticating Our Species, and Making Us Smarter**, by Joseph Henrich
- **Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them**, by Joshua Greene (2013)
- **The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion**, by Jonathan Haidt (2012)

6. Course Website

Information and comments will often be posted on the website (and via that, the blog) both of 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/KellyMoralPsychClimateChangePHIL490Fall2016.html>

Again, the blog is here:

<http://moralpsychclimatechange.blogspot.com>

You should check it fairly regularly. Also, if there is ever a problem with the website, information will be distributed via the course listserv, which you are automatically included on if you are officially signed up for the course.

7. Topics and Readings

Here is a tentative list of topics and readings. We'll reserve the right to pick and choose as we go, depending on how fast we are going, and what catches our collective imagination. Specific readings and dates will be announced in class and on the webpage.

Weeks 1 – 6 (8/22 – 9/29): **Moral Psychology**

- **Important Dates**
 - **No Class:** Tues 9/6
 - **Midterm Exam:** 9/29
- **Readings**
 - The Human Mind as a Collection of Problem Solving Gadgets: Structure & Bugs
 - Stich, Is Man a Rational Animal?
 - Harman, Moral Psychology Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error
 - Todd and Gigerenzer, Environments That Make Us Smart: Ecological Rationality
 - Social Norms: Cognition, Emotion, Variation
 - Nichols, Norms with Feeling
 - Stich, Is Morality a Kludge?
 - Kelly, Selective Debunking Arguments, Folk Psychology, and Empirical Moral Psychology
 - Sripada and Stich, A Framework for the Psychology of Social Norms
 - Gelfand and Jackson, From one mind to many: the emerging science of cultural norms
 - Haidt, **The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion**, Introduction and Chapter 1 & 7 (online)
 - Cooperation, Groups, and Evolutionary Theory
 - Chudek, Zhau, and Henrich, Culture-Gene Coevolution, Large Scale Cooperation, and the Shaping of Human Social Psychology
 - Chudek and Henrich, Culture–gene coevolution, norm- psychology and the emergence of human prosociality
 - Baumard et al., A mutualistic approach to morality: The evolution of fairness by partner choice
 - Sterelny, Culture Cooperation, and Conflict
 - Wilson, Van Vugt, and O’Gorman, Multilevel Selection Theory and Major Evolutionary Transitions: Implications for Psychological Science
 - Individuals, Norms, and Institutions
 - Cushman, Punishment in Humans: Intuitions to Institutions
 - Richerson and Henrich, Tribal Social Instincts and the Cultural Evolution of Institutions to Solve Collective Action Problems
 - Richerson, Collins, Genet, Why managers need an evolutionary theory of organizations

Weeks 7-11 (10/4 – 11/3): **Climate Change and Environmental Ethics**

- **Important Dates**
 - **No Class** Tues 10/11 Fall Break

- **Readings**
 - Gardiner, **A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change**
 - Supplementary Material
 - Broome, **Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World**
 - Kitcher, The Climate Change Debates
 - Markowitz and Shariff, Climate Change and Moral Judgment
 - Van de Poel et al, The Problem of Many Hands: Climate Change as an Example
 - Werndl, On Defining Climate and Climate Change
 - Woodward and Porter, Food, hunger, health, and climate change

Weeks 12-16 (11/7 – 12/8): **So Which Levers Should We Pull? Climate Change & Moral Psychology**

- **Important Dates**
 - **No Class** Thurs 11/24 Thanksgiving
 - **Prospectus** (2 pages): Tues 11/29
 - **Final Paper** (8-10 pages): Mon 12/18
- **Readings** (Note: Obviously we aren't going to discuss all of the below readings; this is more of an idea board we can use to Choose Our Own Adventure once we've gotten through the first two units, can take stock, and figure out would be most interesting to do next. So when we get to this third unit, we'll collectively decide which selections from this list will be our Official Assigned Readings. All of these, however, will be made available online and can be used for term papers.)
 - How to Fix Stuff: General Overviews
 - Henrich, **The Secret of Our Success: How Culture Is Driving Human Evolution, Domesticating Our Species, and Making Us Smarter**, Chapter 17 (online)
 - Raymond et al., Making Change: Norm-Based Strategies for Institutional Change to Address Intractable Problems
 - Waring et al., A multilevel evolutionary framework for sustainability analysis
 - Wilson et al., Evolving the future: Toward a science of intentional change
 - Wilson, Intentional Cultural Change
 - Nudges and The Ethics of Nudging
 - Bovens, The Ethics of Nudging
 - Bruns et al., Can Nudges Be Transparent and Yet Effective?
 - Cohen, Nudging and Informed Consent
 - Frey and Gallus, Beneficial and Exploitative Nudges
 - Hausman and Welch, Debate: To Nudge or Not to Nudge
 - Jachimowicz and McNerney, Should Governments Nudge Us to Make Good Choices?
 - Lowenstein et al., Warning: You Are About To Be Nudged
 - Nys and Engelen, Judging Nudging: Answering the Manipulation Objection

- Reisch and Sunstein, Do Europeans Like Nudges?
- Sunstein, Nudging and Choice Architecture: Ethical Considerations
- Wilkinson, Nudging and Manipulation
- The Psychology of Climate Change and Sustainability Grab Bag
 - Andreou, C. Environmental Preservation and Second Order Procrastination
 - Andreou, C. A Shallow Route to Environmentally Friendly Happiness: Why Evidence That We Are Shallow Materialists Need Not Be Bad News for the Environment(alist)
 - Clark et al., Knowledge Helps: Mechanistic Information and Numeric Evidence as Cognitive Levers to Overcome Stasis and Build Public Consensus on Climate Change
 - Clayton et al., Expanding the Role for Psychology in Addressing Environmental Challenges
 - Fehr-Duda and Fehr, Sustainability: Game human nature
 - Goldstein et al., A Room with a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels
 - Hennes et al., Motivated Recall in the Service of the Economic System: The Case of Anthropogenic Climate Change
 - Kahan et al., Climate Science Communication and the Measurement Problem
 - Kahan et al., Cultural Cognition of Scientific Consensus
 - Milkoreit, The promise of climate fiction: Imagination, storytelling, and the politics of the future
 - Princen, Speaking of sustainability: the potential of metaphor
 - Raymond, L. and Cann, H. Normative Reframing and Climate Policy Innovation
 - Rottman et al., Hindering Harm and Preserving Purity: How Can Moral Psychology Save the Planet?
 - Smith and O'Sullivan, Environmentally responsible behavior in the workplace: An internal social marketing approach
 - Swim et al., Psychology's Contributions to Understanding and Addressing Global Climate Change
 - Torcello, The Ethics of Belief, Cognition, and Climate Change Pseudoskepticism: Implications for Public Discourse
 - Van der Linden et al., Improving Public Engagement With Climate Change: Five "Best Practice" Insights From Psychological Science
- More of a Stretch, but Interesting and Potentially Relevant
 - Chalmers, The Singularity: A Philosophical Analysis
 - Fischer et al, How Do Rituals Affect Cooperation? An Experimental Field Study Comparing Nine Ritual Types
 - Heath and Anderson, Procrastination and the Extended Will
 - Joye and Van den Berg, Is love for green in our genes? A critical analysis of evolutionary assumptions in restorative environments research

- Mercier and Sperber, Why do humans reason? Arguments for an argumentative theory
- Pronin et al., Doing Unto Future Selves As You Would Do Unto Others: Psychological Distance and Decision Making
- Schneider, Alien Minds
- Xygalatas et al., Extreme Rituals Promote Prosociality



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES are based on a simple concept – if you hear a fire alarm inside, proceed outside. If you hear a siren outside, proceed inside.

- **Indoor Fire Alarms** mean to stop class or research and immediately **evacuate** the building.
 - Proceed to your Emergency Assembly Area away from building doors. **Remain outside** until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.
- **All Hazards Outdoor Emergency Warning Sirens** mean to immediately seek shelter (**Shelter in Place**) in a safe location within the closest building.
 - “Shelter in place” means seeking immediate shelter inside a building or University residence. This course of action may need to be taken during a tornado, a civil disturbance including a shooting or release of hazardous materials in the outside air. Once safely inside, find out more details about the emergency*. **Remain in place** until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

**In both cases, you should seek additional clarifying information by all means possible...Purdue Home page, email alert, TV, radio, etc...review the Purdue Emergency Warning Notification System multi- communication layers at*

http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/warning-system.html

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES:

- Review the **Emergency Procedures Guidelines**
https://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/flipchart/index.html
- Review the **Building Emergency Plan** (available from the building deputy) for:
 - Evacuation routes, exit points, and emergency assembly area
 - when and how to evacuate the building
 - Shelter in place procedures and locations
 - Additional building specific procedures and requirements.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AWARENESS VIDEOS

- "Shots Fired on Campus: When Lightning Strikes," is a 20-minute active shooter awareness video that illustrates what to look for and how to prepare and react to this type of incident.

See: <http://www.purdue.edu/securePurdue/news/2010/emergency-preparedness-shots-fired-on-campus-video.cfm> (Link is also located on the EP website)

MORE INFORMATION

Reference the Emergency Preparedness web site for additional information:

http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness