

Phil 137: Moral Psychology

Instructor: Matthew Fulkerson

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MWF: 11-11:50 CSB 001

Office Hours: Weds 1-2pm and by appt, RWAC 0495

Course Description:

This is a course on Moral Psychology. This is a unique subfield that isn't really about ethics and it also isn't really psychology. What is it, then? In this class we will discuss the field itself and many of its traditional questions. This quarter this will include issues about agency and the self, the nature of personality and character traits, the role of moral emotion and perception, and issues about self-control and personal identity.

As you will learn, Moral psychology is a distinctive, interdisciplinary field that is concerned with the central issue of how our normative practices ought to be understood, given the known empirical facts about the kind of creatures we are. In other words, it's about how our actual natures as psychological agents intersects with our normative concerns, values, and practices.

Course Mechanics:

The course will involve several elements. We will discuss 1-2 papers per week, with background and lectures on Mon and Weds, with Fri sessions reserved for in-class discussion. **First**, there are two short writing assignments. **Second**, there is an in-class midterm exam. **Third**, there is an in-person **final exam**.

Materials: Everything is on Canvas. All handouts, slides, homework assignments, and supplementary readings (if any) will be made available through this site. It is your responsibility to check this site regularly.

Discussion: This class is large for an upper-division course, and it does not have dedicated discussion sections. For this reason, we will dedicate one class session per week, on Fridays, as a dedicated Q&A session, to have discussions about the topics of the week. On these days we will take attendance and note contributions to be used for extra credit applied at the end of the quarter.

Tas: This class has two TAs: Bas Tönissen (btönisse@ucsd.edu) and Emiliano Salomon (esalomn@ucsd.edu). They will each be primarily responsible for grading course assignments, but will also have their own posted office hours for meeting and discussing course materials.

Grading:

There will be two short, focused writing assignments (~6pgs), each on specific issues from that section of the course, and a more comprehensive final exam.

Assignments	Value	Date Due
Essay 1	20%	11/8
Essay 2	30%	11/27
Midterm	20%	10/25 (in person)
Final Exam	30%	12/10 at 11:30 (in person)

Extra credit: attendance will be taken, and participation noted on Friday classes, and this will be used to calculate a small percentage of extra credit to be applied at the end of the quarter.

Course Policies:

To avoid penalties for late assignments, students must provide official documentation or evidence explaining why the assignment could not be handed in on time *prior to the deadline*. Late papers without prior approval will receive a late penalty of 1/3 letter grade for each day a paper is late, including weekend days (no exceptions). That said, things happen, and evidence of legitimate circumstances preventing the timely submission of course work on or after the due date will be evaluated on a case-by-case-basis. This course adheres to all UCSD standards for academic integrity (<https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu>).

Canvas boilerplate: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin or similar service for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Reading Schedule (subject to small changes):

Week 0: Introduction

F Sep 27th: Course mechanics and introduction to the material

Week 1: The Set Up: What is Moral Psychology?

M 9/30: "Moral Psychology" <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-psych-emp/>

W 10/02: "Motivation, Desire for Good, and Design in Plato's Moral Psychology" by Rachana Kamtekar

F: 10/04: Discussion

Week 2: What are We? The Self and Self-Identity

M 10/07: "Death and the Self," Nichols et al.

W 10/09: "Personhood and Personal Identity," Marya Schechtman

F 10/11: Discussion

Week 3: Character and Virtue

M 10/14: Doris, "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics"

W 10/16: Evan Westra, "In defense of ordinary moral character judgment"

F 10/18: Discussion

Week 4: Self-Control

M 10/21: "The Atoms of Self-Control," Chandra Sripada

W 10/23: "Half-Hearted Action and Control," Josh Shepard

F: 10/25: **Midterm (in class)**

Week 5: Addiction

M 10/28: Loss of Control in Addiction: The Search for an Adequate Theory and the Case for Intellectual Humility, Chandra Sripada

W 10/30: "Addiction and the Self," Hannah Pickard

F 11/1: **Discussion**

Week 6: Moral Emotions

M 11/4: "Without Fellow Feeling," by Heidi Maibom

W 11/6: "Emotion and Moral Judgment," by Avramova and Inbar

F 11/08: **First Essay Due**; Discussion

Week 7: Love

M 11/11: **No class Veterans Day**

W 11/13: "Love and the Anatomy of Needing Another," by Monique Wonderly

F 11/15: Discussion

Week 8: Moral Perception

M 11/18: "Moral Knowledge by Perception," by Sarah McGrath

W 11/20: "Moral Perception," Preston Werner

F 11/22: Discussion

Week 9: The moral psychology of attention

M 11/25: Zach Irving, "The Spontaneity Deficit: Good Minds in the Age of Distraction"

W 11/27: Discussion; **Second paper due**

F 11/29: **No Class Thanksgiving**

Week 10: Evolutionary Moral Psychology

M 12/2: "Methods, Models, and the Evolution of Moral Psychology," by Cailin O'Connor

W 12/4: "Animal Moral Psychology," Monsó and Andrews

F 12/6: Discussion

Final Exam 12/10/24 11:30-2:30