

Phil 137: Moral Psychology

Instructor: Matthew Fulkerson

Email: mfulkerson@ucsd.edu

MWF: 11-11:50 RWAC 0426

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

Course Description:

This course will examine a number of fundamental issues in moral psychology. As you will learn, moral psychology isn't really about ethics per se (the theory of what is morally correct). It's also not a field within psychology. It's not a science at all. Instead, moral psychology is a distinctive, interdisciplinary field that is concerned with the central normative issue of how our practices ought to be governed given the known facts about the kind of creatures we are. In other words, it's about how our actual nature as psychological agents intersects with our normative concerns, values, and practices. We will examine a series of topics over the quarter, often looking to what our currently best science tells us about ourselves to help guide us.

Course Mechanics:

The course will involve several elements. **First**, every student is required each week to submit a question or reading response, to the Canvas discussion module (more info below). The better your question or engagement, the more credit you will get. **Second**, there are two short writing assignments. Third, there is a **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: Each week there will be a discussion section opened on Canvas. Each student is expected to do one of the following each week by Thursday at noon for full participation credit. (1) Submit a short question or reaction to the course readings, lecture materials, or in-person discussion. Our Friday meetings will involve no new readings. They will focus entirely on answering and discussing material submitted to Canvas. All posts should be in accordance with standard codes of conduct: be respectful and focus on the critical issues in the readings.

Grading:

There will be two short, focused writing assignments (~5pgs), each on specific issues from that section of the course, and a more comprehensive final exam. You will also be responsible for participating in the weekly online discussion forum on Canvas.

Assignments	Value	Date Due
Writing 1	25%	Friday 10/27
Writing 2	25%	Friday 12/1
Final	25%	Dec 12 th , by 2:30
Discussion Contributions	25%	Weekly

Course Policies:

To avoid penalties for late assignments, students must provide official documentation explaining why the assignment could not be handed in on time. Late homework without documentation will not be accepted. Late papers without documentation will receive a late penalty of 1/3 letter grade for each day a paper is late, including weekend days (no exceptions). 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 1: Introduction

F Sep 29th: Course mechanics and introduction to the material

Week 2: The Set up: What is Moral Psychology?

M 10/2: "Moral Psychology" <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-psych-emp/>

W 10/4: Continued.

F: **No class**

Week 3: Selves

M 10/9: William James, "Selections from Principles of Psychology"

W 10/11: Catja Crone: "The self-understanding of persons beyond narrativity"

F 10/13: Discussion

Week 4: Self-Deception

M 10/16: Baghramamian & Nicholson, "The Puzzle of Self-Deception"

W 10/18: Von Hippel and Trivers: The evolution and psychology of self-deception"

F 10/20: Continued.

Week 5: Character and Virtue

M 10/23: Evan Westra, "In defense of ordinary moral character judgment"

W 10/25: Continued

F: 10/27: Discussion; First Essay Due

Week 6: Addiction

M 10/30: Sinnott-Armstrong and Pickard, "What is Addiction?"

W 11/1: Levy, "Autonomy and Addiction"

F 11/3: Discussion

Week 7: Procrastination

M 11/6: Chrisoula Andreou, "Understanding Procrastination"

W 11/8: Steel and Klingsieck, "Academic Procrastination: Psychological Antecedents Revisited"

F 11/10: **No class Veterans Day**

Week 8: The Moral Imagination

M 11/13: Gendler, "The puzzle of imaginative resistance"

W 11/15: Liao, Strohming, and Sripada, "Empirically Investigating Imaginative Resistance"

F 11/17: Continued.

Week 9: Social Influences on behavior

M 11/20: Doris, "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics"

W 11/22: Dana Nelkin, "Freedom, Responsibility and the Challenge of Situationism"

F 11/24: **No Class Thanksgiving**

Week 10: Sympathy and Empathy

M 11/27: Paul Bloor, "Empathy and its Discontents"

W 11/29: Jean Müller, "Sympathy, Interpersonal Awareness and Acknowledgment"

F 12/1: Discussion; Second Paper Due

Week 11: The moral psychology of technology

M 12/4: Rand Hirmiz, "Against the substitutive approach to AI in healthcare"

W 12/6: Zach Irving, "The Spontaneity Deficit: Good Minds in the Age of Distraction"

F 12/8: Discussion; prep for final

Final Exam Due 12/12 by 2:30pm.