

**Unit Guide – Honours Seminar
Semester 1, 2013
PHILOSOPHY OF MIND AND COGNITION**

In this seminar, we'll cover one aspect of moral psychology: moral cognition. This is the philosophical and scientific study of moral judgment. Relevant questions include: Is moral cognition driven primarily by emotion or reasoning? Is ordinary moral judgment consequentialist or deontological? Are moral judgments driven by deontological principles, such as the Doctrine of Double Effect? We'll focus on evaluating two competing proposals. One is the sentimentalist idea that emotions are necessary for moral judgment. We'll pit this primarily against a theory with ties to John Rawls and Noam Chomsky in the rationalist tradition that draws an analogy with language: moral judgments are largely automatic but are driven by general principles of which ordinary people are unaware. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the field, we'll often look to empirical work that addresses these issues (mostly from psychology and neuroscience) in addition to more traditional philosophical research.

The nine seminars will be on Wednesdays, from **3–5pm** in Building 11 (Menzies), Room **E358** (not 2-4pm in CL_13C/CG60), spread across in the first 10 weeks of semester (skipping mid-semester break, of course). *Important:* We'll have an extra meeting in week 10 (on May 15) since we'll have to skip the April 24 meeting while I'm out of town.

SCHEDULE

Below are the topics of the seminars and the prescribed reading for each week. All readings will be available in electronic form on Moodle. *Important:* Look for directions in brackets for what parts of the articles to read.

Week 1: Intro & Background

1. May, Josh (forthcoming) "Empirical Work in Moral Psychology" *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, pp. 1-12. [Focus on *Intro* and *final section*: ~3 pgs.]
2. Phelan, Mark (2011) "Review of Elements of Moral Cognition." *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*. [Read only *Section 1*: "Exposition," pp. 1-5.]
3. Rawls, John (1971/1999). *A Theory of Justice* (revised edition). Harvard University Press, Section 9, pp. 40-46 only ("Some Remarks about Moral Theory").

Week 2: Modest Sentimentalism

1. Nichols, Shaun (2002). "How Psychopaths Threaten Moral Rationalism." *The Monist* 85 (2):285-303. [Focus most on Sections 3-4.]
2. Nichols, Shaun (2002). "Norms with Feeling: Towards a Psychological Account of Moral Judgment." *Cognition* 84:221–236.

Week 3: Extreme Sentimentalism

1. Prinz, Jesse (2006). "The Emotional Basis of Moral Judgments." *Philosophical Explorations* 9(1):29-43. [Focus most on first half of paper.]
2. Maibom, Heidi (2010). "What Experimental Evidence Shows Us About the Role of Emotions in Moral Judgement." *Philosophy Compass* 5 (11):999-1012. [Focus on Sections 1-4.]

Week 4: Rationalism and the Linguistic Analogy

1. Hauser, Marc et al. (2007). "A Dissociation Between Moral Judgments and Justifications." *Mind and Language* 22(1):1–21.
2. Mikhail, John (2008). "Moral Cognition and Computational Theory." In *Moral Psychology Vol. 3*, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (ed.), MIT Press, pp. 81-91. [References—for entire edited collection—available in separate file.]

Week 5: Linguistic Analogy (LA) Continued

1. Dwyer, Susan (2006). "How Good is the Linguistic Analogy?" In P. Carruthers, S. Laurence & S. P. Stich (eds.), *The Innate Mind, Vol. 2: Culture and Cognition*. Oxford University Press, pp. 237-256.
2. Dwyer, Susan (2009). "Moral Dumbfounding and the Linguistic Analogy" *Mind and Language* 24 (3):274-296.

Week 6: Evaluating the LA: Examining the Data

1. Phelan, Mark (2011) "Review of Elements of Moral Cognition." *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*. [Read only Section 2: "Critical Evaluation," pp. 5-8.]
2. Zimmerman, Aaron (forthcoming). "Mikhail's Naturalized Moral Rationalism." *Jerusalem Review of Legal Studies*, pp. 1-22. [You can skip sections 6-7.]

Week 7: Evaluating the LA: How Strong is the Analogy? [+Discuss Essay]

1. Enoch, David (forthcoming) "On Analogies, Disanalogies, and Moral Philosophy: A Comment on Mikhail." *Jerusalem Review of Legal Studies*, pp. 1-25.

Week 8: Rationalist Alternatives, Pt. 1

1. Kennett, Jeanette & Fine, Cordelia (2009). "Will the Real Moral Judgment Please Stand Up?" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 12:77–96.
2. Fine, Cordelia (2006). "Is the Emotional Dog Wagging Its Rational Tail, or Chasing It?" *Philosophical Explorations* 9 (1):83–98.

Week 9: Rationalist Alternatives, Pt. 2

1. Sauer, Hanno (2011). "Social Intuitionism and the Psychology of Moral Reasoning." *Philosophy Compass* 6(10):708-721.
2. Sauer, Hanno (2012) "Psychopaths and Filthy Desks: Are Emotions Necessary and Sufficient for Moral Judgment?" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 15(1):95-115.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Hurdle Requirements

There are three hurdle requirements for the unit:

1. Attendance in *at least 75% of seminars* (7 meetings).
2. Participation: Provide one or more questions for discussion (posted on Moodle) for at least 7 meetings. (More info below.)
3. You must not fail any of the assignments.

Students who fail one of the hurdle requirements will have their grade for the unit capped at 49%.

Assessment Tasks

The assessment structure involves three pieces of work:

- Discussion Piece (500 words, 15%), due by 11pm the day before the relevant meeting
- Essay (4000 words, 85%), see general Honours Unit Guide for due date.

More detail on the assessment tasks below.

The Faculty of Arts policies can be found at:

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/policies/group-project-work.php>

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/policies/oral-assessment.php>

More on Participation

Note Well: Attendance and participation are required for at least 7 of the 9 seminar meetings. As part of participation, you will be expected to come to the seminar meeting having done the readings. Moreover, for at least 7 of the meetings, you must post one or more discussion questions on the relevant part of the Moodle site. (Note that your Discussion Piece counts for one of these 7.) The questions are meant to stimulate discussion in the seminar. They can be *clarificatory* (e.g. 'What exactly is a linguistic parameter and what would be the analogue for morality?') or *critical* (e.g. 'Couldn't a sentimentalist respond by saying that

emotions are really required for deliberation?'). It is recommended that you *elaborate* on your question, but it's not required.

The Faculty of Arts Tutorial Attendance Policy can be found at:

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/policies/tutorial-attendance.php>

Discussion Piece

Due Date: By 11pm the day before the relevant seminar meeting.

Details of task: During the first seminar meeting, you will be assigned one article to briefly summarize and provide some critical questions for discussion in the relevant seminar meeting (this can count toward one of your 7 discussion questions as part of your participation). These short assignments are meant to provide a springboard for discussion during the relevant seminar meeting and also to help you prepare for the kind of work required for the essay (exposition and critical evaluation).

Release dates (where applicable): NA

Word limit (where applicable): 500 words

Value: 15%

Presentation requirements: Type your answer up and post it on the relevant discussion board on Moodle clearly identified as "Discussion Piece."

Individual Assessment in Group Tasks (where applicable): NA

Criteria for Marking: Discussion pieces will be evaluated on the quality of exposition and critical questions raised. You should demonstrate that you've done the reading and spent time thinking about it carefully.

Essay

Due Date: See general Honours Unit Guide.

Details of task: The essay is an opportunity to write an extended response to some of the philosophical controversies we have encountered in the seminars. A set of recommended topics will be provided later in the semester. Students may devise their own topics, but the proposed topic must be approved by the lecturer.

Release dates (where applicable): NA

Word limit (where applicable): 4000 words

Value: 85%

Presentation requirements: For information and advice on the preparation and writing of philosophy essays go to: <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/philosophy/ugrad/resources.php>

Individual Assessment in Group Tasks (where applicable): NA

Criteria for Marking: For information on the marking criteria for philosophy essays go to: <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/philosophy/ugrad/resources.php>