Phil 134/234G: MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

Professor Aaron Zimmerman   aaronzimmerman@ucsb.edu
SH 5707   Office Hours: M&W 3:30-4:30PM

Course Description: Moral Psychology examines phenomena that are both psychological and moral in nature: good and evil, virtue and vice, praise and blame, pride and humility, freedom and responsibility, practical deliberation and justification. To further our understanding of these things the moral psychologist must try to answer a number of thorny questions about the way we think, feel, and act, and the ways we evaluate our thoughts, actions and reactions. We'll address some of these questions this quarter.

Is morality a natural phenomenon? What distinguishes a moral principle from a "mere" custom or convention? Are there universal moral norms: actions or motives that almost everyone, everywhere, has thought moral or immoral throughout the course of human history? Are there innate features of moral judgment or action? To what extent did our moral capacities evolve biologically? To what extent do they owe their existence to cultural development? Do cultures and their constitutive ideals and norms evolve via "natural" forms of selection? What impact does knowledge of the origins of your moral faculties and beliefs have on your confidence in those moral beliefs and sentiments? What distinguishes someone who resists temptation from someone who yields to her desire to do something she judges bad? What role do our moral beliefs and sentiments play when we exhibit self-control? When are people responsible for their immoral actions? What is it to be a responsible or autonomous agent? When, if ever, is it appropriate to praise or blame someone for what she has done? When, if ever, is an intentional action not freely performed? Can we reasonably evaluate people differently when the difference in their characters, motives or behaviors is due to environmental or developmental factors over which they had no control? Is a difference in luck ever morally significant?

Requirements: (1) Two 5-6-page papers worth about 30% of your grade each. (2) One final exam worth 30% of your grade. (3) Short additional assignments will make up the remaining 10%. Points may also be awarded for attendance and participation or deducted for the absence of such. Graduate students must also attend an additional section (yet to be scheduled) and e-mail comments on assigned readings to all the members of the section prior to each meeting.

Do not plagiarize. Do not use anything from the web when you are writing your papers. If you must do so (and I urge you not to) you must quote and cite everything you use. If you use something from the web and do not cite it, that is plagiarism. And if you plagiarize, you **will fail** the class and you may also be expelled from the university.

Text: Required: A packet of readings is available at SB Printer—the copy shop in the UCEN: 805-699-6342.

Schedule of Readings:

A. <u>What is Morality?</u>

1. Stephen Stich, "The Quest for the Boundaries of Morality" in A. Zimmerman, K. Jones and M. Timmons (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Moral Epistemology*, New York: Routledge (2019), pp. 15-37.

1st paper assigned: 1/15/20

2. Sarah Vincent, Rebecca Ring and Kristin Andrews, "Normative Practices of Other Animals," in A. Zimmerman, K. Jones and M. Timmons (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Moral Epistemology*, New York: Routledge (2019), pp. 57-83.

B. <u>Altruism and Evolution</u>

3. Elliott Sober and David S. Wilson, *Unto Others*, chs. 7-8; pp. 223-74.

1st paper due: 1/29/20

C. <u>The Dual Process Theory</u>

4. J. Haidt, "The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail," *Psychological Review,* (2001).

2nd paper assigned: 2/12/20

5. Jeanette Kennett and Cordelia Fine, "Will the Real Moral Judgment Please Stand Up? The Implications of Social Intuitionist Models of Cognition for Meta-Ethics and Moral Psychology," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 12, 1 (2009), pp. 77-96.
6. J. Demaree-Cotton and G. Kahane, "The Neuroscience of Moral Judgment," in A. Zimmerman, K. Jones and M. Timmons (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Moral Epistemology*, New York: Routledge (2019), pp. 84-104.

2nd paper due: 2/26/20

D. <u>Moral Responsibility and Luck</u>

7. Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person."

8. Gary Watson, "Free Agency."

9. Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck."

10. Brian Rosebury, "Moral Responsibility and Moral Luck."

Final Exam: Monday, March 16, 4-7PM.