

PHIL 257: Moral Minds

Lecture Room Location
 XXX

Lecture Time/Days
 XXX

Instructor
 Maria Waggoner
waggonmr@purdue.edu
 Office Hours: XXX
 Beering Hall, #7154

Teaching Assistant
 XXXX

Course Overview:

This course introduces students to questions about how we should think about issues of morality in a way that intersects with empirical research in human psychology. We begin with question about being a good person -- Are you a good person? Are we all just selfish, deep-down? Is it plausible that one could ever develop virtue or good character? We then look at what moral judgments consist of — are they emotional 'gut reactions' or do they proceed from reflection and reason? Within this unit, we also consider whether emotions are at least necessary for moral judgments, and what to make of the 'moral psychopath' who seems to be able to behave correctly while lacking typical moral emotions. Finally, we consider how we are to think about a few important moral emotions: empathy, anger, grief, disgust, shame, and love.

Required Text

Required readings will be posted on Brightspace.

General Course Structure: The course will combine in-class discussion, exercises, and exams/quizzes with out-of-class reading, research and writing. During lecture and recitation, the focus will be on discussing the assigned readings. Thus, to follow and contribute to the class discussion, it is important that you do the assigned readings before class. You should complete the reading assigned for that day *before* coming to class. Weekly quizzes may consist of 'pop quizzes' on the reading that is to be completed for that day *or* may consist of a summary of that week's lecture material (to be taken in recitation sections). Grading for the course is composed of two exams, weekly quizzes, attendance/participation, and a final presentation.

Course Schedule

Date	Subject	Readings
Mon, 1/12	Introduction	
Wed, 1/14	Are You a Jerk?	Schwitzgebel, "A Theory of Jerks." <i>Aeon</i> . https://aeon.co/essays/so-you-re-surrounded-by-idiot-guess-who-the-real-jerk-is
Fri, 1/16	<i>Recitation Section</i>	
Mon, 1/19	No Class - MLK Day	
Wed, 1/21	Why Be Moral?	Plato, "The Immoralist's Challenge," <i>The Republic</i>

Date	Subject	Readings
Fri, 1/23	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 1</i>
Mon, 1/26		<i>Class Canceled – Inclement Weather</i>
Wed, 1/28	Are We All Selfish, Deep Down?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miller, “Do We Ultimately Only Care About Ourselves? Egoism and the alternatives.” <i>Moral Psychology</i>. [2.0-2.4] 2. Hopwood, “How to know if you’re being selfish” <i>Aeon</i>. https://aeon.co/videos/for-iris-murdoch-selfishness-is-a-fault-that-can-be-solved-by-reframing-the-world
Fri, 1/30	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>NO QUIZ</i>
Mon, 1/28	Character & The Virtues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miller, “Good character: What is it, and does it even exist?” <i>Moral Psychology</i>. [3.0-3.3] 2. Smilie & Andrejevic. “Your sense of right and wrong is interwoven with your personality.” <i>Psyche</i>. https://psyche.co/ideas/your-sense-of-right-and-wrong-is-interwoven-with-your-personality
Wed, 2/4	<i>Class Canceled</i>	
Fri, 2/6	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 2</i>
Mon, 2/9	What Does It Take to Be a Good Person?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schmidt, “Unconflicted Virtue.” <i>AMP</i> 2. Little, “Performance-enhancing vices.” <i>Aeon</i>. https://aeon.co/essays/does-it-take-a-bad-person-to-be-a-good-athlete
Wed, 2/11	Too Much of a Good Thing?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wolf, “Moral Saints.” 2. Summers, “When ethical thinking goes awry,” <i>Psyche</i> https://psyche.co/ideas/why-wont-the-sin-wash-away-when-thinking-ethically-goes-awry
Fri, 2/13	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 3</i>
Mon, 2/16	Unity of the Virtues	Walker, “Virtue and Character”
Wed, 2/18	Lack of Character	Miller, “Good character: What is it, and does it even exist?” <i>Moral Psychology</i> . [3.4-3.5]
Fri, 2/20	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 4</i>
Mon, 2/23	The Replication Crisis	Lewis-Kraus, “They studied dishonesty. Was their work a lie?” <i>The New Yorker</i>

Date	Subject	Readings
Wed, 2/25	Judging Character	1. Helzer & Critcher, “What do we evaluate when we evaluate moral character?” <i>AMP</i> . 2. Jordan et al., “The real problem with hypocrisy,” <i>The New York Times</i>
Fri, 2/27	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 5</i>
Mon, 3/2	EXAM 1	
Wed 3/4	Morality: Innate or Learned?	Bloom, <i>Just Babies: The Origins of Good and Evil</i> , Ch.1 “The Moral Life of Babies” (2013)
Fri, 3/6	<i>Recitation Section</i>	No Quiz
Mon, 3/9	Morality: Innate or Learned?	Nichols, <i>Rational Rules</i> , Ch. 7, “Moral Empiricism” (2021) (p. 139, 147-163)
Wed, 3/11	Emotion & Reason	Haidt, “The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail,” (2001).
Fri, 3/13	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 6</i>
Mon, 3/16	No Class – Spring Break	
Wed, 3/18	No Class – Spring Break	
Fri, 3/20	No Recitation – Spring Break	
Mon, 3/23	Emotion & Reason	Pizarro & Bloom. “The Intelligence of the Moral Intuitions: A Reply to Haidt,” (2003).
Wed, 3/25	Neurodiversity & Morality	Duff, “Psychopathy & Moral Understanding,” (1977)
Fri, 3/27	<i>Recitation Section</i>	
Mon, 3/30	Neurodiversity & Morality	De Vignemont & Frith, “Autism, Morality, and Empathy” (2008)
Wed, 4/1	Empathy	Kornhaber, “Empathy: Overrated?,” <i>The Atlantic</i> , (2015)
Fri, 4/3	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 7</i>
Mon, 4/6	No Class	
Wed, 4/8	Anger	Kauppinen, “Valuing Anger,” (2018)
Fri, 4/10	<i>Recitation Section</i>	<i>Quiz 8</i>
Mon, 4/13	Shame	Manion, “The Moral Relevance of Shame,” (2002)

Date	Subject	Readings
Wed, 4/15	Disgust	Plakias, "Putting Our Morals Where Our Mouths Are" (2018)
Fri, 4/17	<i>Recitation Section</i>	Final Project Topic Proposal Due <i>Quiz 9</i>
Mon, 4/20	Review For Exam 2	
Wed, 4/22	EXAM 2	
Fri, 4/24	<i>Recitation Section</i>	Final Project Workshop, Outline draft swap
Mon, 4/27	Love	Baier, "Unsafe Loves" (1991) Final Project Outlines Due
Wed, 4/29	Grief – Guest Lecture	Reading TBD
Fri, 5/1	<i>Recitation Section</i>	Final Project Presentations

Important Due Dates & Allocation of Course Points (Non-Honors)

Due Date	Item	Point Percentage		
3/4	Exam 1	25%		
4/22	Exam 2	25%		
Weekly	Quizzes	10%		
Weekly	Attendance/Participation	10%		
5/1	Final Project	Topic Proposal	30%	5%
		Written Outline, References		10%
		Oral Presentation		15%

Grades will be assigned according to this chart:

Final Average	Course Grade
97.5% and above	A+
92.5-97.4%	A
89.5-92.4%	A-
87.5-89.4%	B+

82.5-87.4%	B
79.5-82.4%	B-
77.5-79.4%	C+
72.5-77.4%	C
69.5-72.4%	C-
59.5-69.4%	D
59.4% and below	F

Office Hours and Communication: Please (!) come to my office hours or schedule an appointment if you have any questions about the course material, preparing for an exam or assignment, or just want to discuss interesting questions! I prefer to meet with students in-person in my office but can also meet via Zoom if need be. Please contact me via email if you wish to set up a meeting outside of my scheduled office hours.

What are office hours?

Office hours are a set time each week when I am available in my office to talk with you. You should come if, you:

- Have questions/are confused about the course material.
- Have questions about the requirements, or preparing, for an upcoming assignment.
- Have questions about taking other philosophy classes, or ways to pursue your academic interests.
- Want to talk more about philosophical questions!

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information is submitted the greater the opportunity for the university to investigate the concern. More details are available on our course Brightspace under University Policies and Statements.

The Purdue Honor Pledge: “As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue.”

AI/Chatbot Policy: The use of AI tools, such as chatbots, for writing and research is strictly prohibited. Submitting AI-generated writing or research as your own is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as plagiarism. If any portion of your assignment was generated by a chatbot, you are in violation of the academic integrity expectations of this course and the university. Your case will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of your status at this University. The instructor reserves the right to request student’s version history for every assignment.

Attendance Policy: This section is a face-to-face instructional class, so your attendance is vital. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each lecture/recitation and lateness will be noted. Being excessively late or

leaving early will count as an absence. Students have **three free “sick days”** you may utilize without penalty during the semester. Each absence after these three absences, however, will result in a 0% for that day’s participation/attendance grade. After **6 absences** (i.e. on the 7th absence), your overall course grad will receive a 5% deduction for each day you are absent. This means that on your 7th absence, if your grade was a 90%, it will now be an 85%.

When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University-sponsored activities and religious observations, you should inform me of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification is not possible, contact me as soon as possible. Purdue supports students who must miss class due to Grief/Bereavement, Military Service, Jury Duty, Parenting Leave, or the Medically Excused Absence Policy for Students. Please view the [Office of the Dean of Students \(ODOS\) website](#) to complete appropriate request forms. ODOS reviews these requests and, if granted, will notify all your instructors.

Brightspace. Access the course via Purdue’s Brightspace learning management system. Begin with the Start Here tab, which offers further insight to the course and how you can be successful in it. It is strongly suggested that you explore and become familiar not only with the site navigation, but also with content and resources available for this course. See the Student Services widget on the campus homepage for resources such as Technology Help, Academic Help, Campus Resources, and Protect Purdue.

All instructions, assignments, readings, and essential information will be posted on the Brightspace site. Check Brightspace regularly and [enable your notifications](#) at brightspace.purdue.edu. I will announce any course changes in class and via a Brightspace announcement with as much notice as possible.

Freedom of Expression: In this class, students are encouraged to exercise their right to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to express any view on the subject matter introduced by the instructor or other class members within the structure of the course. While you are responsible for learning the content of this course, you remain free to take a reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgment about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, immoral, or unwise, you are encouraged to engage them with reasons, evidence, and arguments. Your course grade will be based on your academic performance, not on the opinions you express. Our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds, but disruptive or disorderly behavior, threats, or harassment are strictly prohibited and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

See the University's “Commitment to Freedom of Expression” and “Bill of Student Rights” in the University Policies and Statements module on Brightspace.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access: Our classroom is composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those who are neurodiverse. I encourage all of us to recognize and embolden the unique strengths, perspectives, and ways of learning that each person brings to this space. All are welcome here, and together we can create an environment where everyone feels valued and supported in their academic journey. If there are ways that I can facilitate your learning style, please let me know.

Emergency Preparation Statement: 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 beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting Prof. Waggoner via email.

Late Work: Except for extenuating circumstances, late work will not be accepted. However, I am much more likely to make accommodations (if the class schedule allows) for due dates if asked ahead of time.

Nondiscrimination Statement: Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. A hyperlink to Purdue's full Nondiscrimination Policy Statement is included in our course Brightspace under University Policies and Statements.

Questions about a grade? Consultations about grades are welcome to clarify course standards and procedures and to provide guidance that might improve future performance. You have seven (7) days after a grade has been assigned to contest the grade.

There is no extra credit offered in this course. Please do not ask for it. Please also do not ask me to 'bump up' your grade at the end of the semester. This is an unfair request to ask, and would be unfair for me to grant, since many of your other classmates will not make such a request. **Any requests for 'bumps' or extra credit will result in a 1% overall grade penalty every time the request is made.**

Technology: In general, PHIL 257 will be a device-free zone. Please bring hard copies of the readings, with your notes and annotations. You should always bring a notebook or binder with a loose leaf for note taking, along with writing utensils, to every class.

Despite us typically using pen and paper, you should also bring your phone, laptop or tablet with you. On occasion, I will ask you to respond to a poll, research a question, look up a particular historical case, etc. Use of technology though, is limited to those instances where I request it. Otherwise, phones, tablets, laptops, etc. should be kept tucked away. If I see a student using their phone, tablet, laptop, etc. at a time when it is not permitted, they will lose 50% of their discussion/participation points for that day. If this occurs a second time during the same class period, the student will be asked to leave class for the day and they will receive a 0% for that day/s discussion/participation.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this policy, please email or meet with me.

Academic Integrity

All work handed in for this class must be your own. The inclusion of any data, words, or ideas from any other source must be acknowledged, and that source must be given proper credit. Failure to do so will be considered plagiarism. For this course, plagiarism is defined as: a) The use of any passage of three words or longer from another source without proper attribution. Use of any phrase of three words or more must be enclosed in quotation marks ("example, example, example"). The source of the material must be identified in the text, by a parenthetical reference, footnote, or endnote. b) Use of material from an un-cited source, making very minor changes (like word order or verb tense) simply to avoid the three-word rule. c) Inclusion of facts, data, ideas,

or theories originally thought of by someone else, without giving that person (organization, etc.) credit. You must identify the source, whether in an endnote, footnote, parenthetical reference, or in the text. d) Paraphrasing ideas or theories (writing them in your own words) without giving the original thinker proper credit. e) Allowing another person to make extensive changes to your work. This is considered “unauthorized aid.” (Allowing a friend to check your work for typos or grammar is fine.) f) Using artificial intelligence (e.g. ChatGPT) to produce your work (in part or full). The instructor reserves the right to determine whether ChatGPT was used, via technology including, but not limited to, using ChatGPT detectors (Hugging Face, GPTZero, etc.).

Even partially plagiarized assignments will receive a failing grade, so it is in your best interest to do your work on your own. Even assignments that you have struggled with will probably result in a grade higher than that of plagiarized work. If you have any questions about what constitutes or how to avoid plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask.

Special Accommodations:

Any student who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible, so that we can discuss any accommodations necessary to ensure full participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

Emergencies

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and even grading percentages are subject to change. Information about emergency changes in the course can be obtained by consulting the course website, or, if necessary, by contacting me via email or phone. Purdue’s Emergency Procedures Handbook and other important emergency planning information are available online at:

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