PSYC GU4672: Moral Psychology (seminar, 4 points). Fall 2021.
Tuesdays, 10:10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Eastern time. Location TBD.
Instructor: Larisa Heiphetz (lah2201@columbia.edu)
Office hours: Mondays, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Eastern time, location TBD. If you have another class during office hours, please e-mail me to set up a meeting at another time. Please also let me know which of your classes conflicts with my office hours so that I can consider how best to arrange my office hours around popular courses in future semesters. The best way to reach me is via e-mail, and I typically reply to e-mails within 72 hours. I am happy to meet with you throughout the semester to discuss anything related to the course.

I. Bulletin description
II. A full description of the content of the course
III. The rationale for giving the course
IV. The reading list and weekly syllabus
V. Course requirements

I. Bulletin description
Prerequisites: Two courses in psychology, including at least one course with a focus on research methods and/or statistics, and permission of the instructor.
Review of theories and current research on moral cognition and behavior. Topics include definitions of morality, the development of moral cognition, the role that other aspects of human experience (e.g., emotion, intentions) play in moral judgments, and the relation between moral psychology and other areas of study (e.g., religious cognition, prejudice and stereotyping, the criminal justice system).

II. A full description of the content of the course.
How do children learn to distinguish right from wrong? Why do some people act more morally than others, and how is it that the same person can make moral decisions in some circumstances but not others? What does it mean to be "moral"?

Questions like these have fascinated scholars and laypeople for centuries. In this seminar, we will discuss a) theories of moral cognition and b) empirical findings on morality in children and adults. The course will emphasize recent research, although classic theories and findings will be discussed when appropriate. While focusing on research from psychology, we will also discuss some ideas from philosophy, criminal justice, and other related disciplines.

Students will read and discuss several articles per week and will complete a final project (a literature synthesis or research proposal). To get the most out of this class, students should be comfortable reading empirical psychology research.

III. The rationale for giving the course
In addition to helping students learn about theories and empirical findings within moral psychology, this course will improve students' written and oral communication skills. Students will write either a literature synthesis or a research summary, which can serve as the foundation for a theoretical/review paper that can be submitted for publication, as the basis for a future empirical project, and/or as the beginning of a grant proposal. Students will also participate in weekly course discussions, lead a discussion on one assigned article, and give a brief presentation of their final project.

This course is an advanced seminar designed for graduate students, for advanced undergraduate psychology majors, and for students participating in the postbac psychology program. It fulfills the following degree requirements:
- For psychology graduate students, Moral Psychology can count as one of the three graduate-level seminars required for the M.A. degree or as one of the two additional graduate-level elective courses for the M. Phil. degree.
- For undergraduate psychology majors, Moral Psychology will meet the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement and the seminar requirement.
- For students in the psychology postbac program, Moral Psychology will fulfill the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement and the advanced seminar requirement.

IV. The reading list and weekly syllabus
[Note: Articles preceded by an asterisk are eligible for in-class presentations.]

Week 1 [Sept. 14th]: Introduction to the class
Please read this syllabus in preparation for class.

Week 2 [Sept. 21st]: What is morality?
Graham, J., Haidt, J., Motyl, M., Meindl, P., Iskiwitch, C., & Mooijman, M. (2019). Moral foundations theory: On the advantages of moral pluralism over moral monism. In K. Gray & J. Graham (Eds.), *Atlas of moral psychology* (pp. 211-222). New York, NY: The Guildford Press.
*Gray, K., Schein, C., & Ward, A. F. (2014). The myth of harmless wrongs in moral cognition: Automatic dyadic completion from sin to suffering. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *143*, 1600-1615. doi: 10.1037/a0036149
*Prentice, M., Jayawickreme, E., Hawkins, A., Hartley, A., Furr, R. M., & Fleeson, W. (2019). Morality as a basic psychological need. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *10*, 449-460. doi: 10.1177/1948550618772011

Week 3 [Sept. 28th]: Are morals facts?
*Heiphetz, L., & Young, L. L. (2017). Can only one person be right? The development of objectivism and social preferences regarding widely shared and controversial moral beliefs. *Cognition*, *167*, 78-90. doi: 10.1016/j.cognition.2016.05.014
*Rai, T. S., & Holyoak, K. J. (2013). Exposure to moral relativism compromises moral behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *49*, 995-1001. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2013.06.008
*Wright, J. C., & Polzer, T. (In press). Should morality be abolished? An empirical challenge to the argument from intolerance. *Philosophical Psychology*.

Week 4 [Oct. 5th]: The development of morality
*Oostenbroek, J., & Vaish, A. (2019). The emergence of forgiveness in young children. *Child Development*, *90*, 1969-1986. doi: 10.1111/cdev.13069
*Smetana, J. G., Ball, C. L., Jambon, M., & Yoo, H. N. (2018). Are young children's preferences and evaluations of moral and conventional transgressors associated with domain distinctions in judgments? *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *173*, 284-303. doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2018.04.008
Van de Vondervoort, J. W., & Hamlin, J. K. (2018). The early emergence of sociomoral evaluation: Infants prefer prosocial others. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *20*, 77-81. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.08.014

Week 5 [Oct. 12th]: Punishment

*Dunlea, J. P., & Heiphetz, L. (2020). Children's and adults' understanding of punishment and the criminal justice system. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *87*, 103913. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2019.103913

*FeldmanHall, O., Sokol-Hessner, P., Van Bavel, J. J., & Phelps, E. A. (2014). Fairness violations elicit greater punishment on behalf of another than for oneself. *Nature Communications*, *5*, 1-6. doi: 10.1038/ncomms6306

*Hofmann, W., Brandt, M. J., Wisneski, D. C., Rockenbach, B., & Skitka, L. J. (2018). Moral punishment in everyday life. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *44*, 1697-1711. doi: 10.1177/0146167218775075

Week 6 [Oct. 19th]: Morality and intent

*Ames, D. L., & Fiske, S. T. (2015). Perceived intent motivates people to magnify observed harms. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *112*, 3599-3605. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1501592112

*Hirschfeld-Kroen, J., Jiang, K., Wasserman, E., Anzellotti, S., & Young, L. (2021). When my wrongs are worse than yours: Behavioral and neural asymmetries in first-person and third-person perspectives of accidental harms. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *94*, 104012. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104102

Nagel, T. (1979). Moral luck. Reprinted in R. Shafer-Landau (Ed.), *Ethical theory: An anthology* (pp. 322-329). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Week 7 [Oct. 26th]: Moral character and emotion
Note: Outlines for final projects are due via e-mail before the beginning of class today.

Cherry, M. (2018). The errors and limitations of our "anger-evaluating" ways. In M. Cherry & O. Flanagan (Eds.), *The moral psychology of anger* (pp. 49-66). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, *108*, 814-834. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.108.4.814

*Jacobson, R. P., Jacobson, K. J. L., & Reid, A. E. (In press). Guilt enhances the persuasive effects of injunctive but not descriptive social norms. *Social Psychological and Personality Science.*

Nov. 2nd: Election Day -- University Holiday

Week 8 [Nov. 9th]: Morality and language

*Knobe, J. (2003). Intentional action and side effects in ordinary language. *Analysis*, *63*, 190-194. doi: 10.1111/1467-8284.00419

*Niemi, L., Hartshorne, J., Gerstenberg, T., Stanley, M., & Young, L. (2020). Moral values reveal the causality implicit in verb meaning. *Cognitive Science*, *44*, 1-27. doi: 10.1111/cogs.12838

*Roberts, S. O., Ho, A. K., & Gelman, S. A. (2017). Group presence, category labels, and generic statements influence children to treat descriptive group regularities as prescriptive. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *158*, 19-31. doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2016.11.013

Week 9 [Nov. 16th]: Morality and religion

*Gervais, W. M., Xygalatas, D., McKay, R. T., van Elk, M., Buchtel, E. E., Aveyard, M., . . ., & Bulbulia, J. (2017). Global evidence of extreme intuitive moral prejudice against atheists. *Nature Human Behavior*, *1*, 1-5. doi: 10.1038/s41562-017-0151

Tsang, J., Al-Kire, R. L., & Ratchford, J. L. (2021). Prosociality and religion. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *40*, 67-72. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.08.025

*Wolle, R. G., McLaughlin, A., & Heiphetz, L. (In press). The role of theory of mind and wishful thinking in children's moralizing concepts of the Abrahamic God. *Journal of Cognition and*

Development.

Week 10 [Nov. 23rd]: Morality and intergroup attitudes

*Branscombe, N. R., Warner, R. H., Klar, Y., & Fernandez, S. (2015). Historical group victimization entails moral obligations for descendants. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *59*, 118-129. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2015.04.003

*Daumeyer, N. M., Onyeador, I. N., Brown, X., & Richeson, J. A. (2019). Consequences of attributing discrimination to implicit vs. explicit bias. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *84*, 103812. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2019.04.010

*Starck, J. G., Sinclair, S., & Shelton, J. N. (2021). How university diversity rationales inform student preferences and outcomes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *118*, 1-7. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2013833118

Week 11 [Nov. 30th]: Doing better
Note: Final projects are due today via e-mail before the beginning of class today.

Effron, D. A., & Conway, P. (2015). When virtue leads to villainy: Advances in research on moral self-licensing. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *6*, 32-35. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.03.017

*Sun, J., & Goodwin, G. P. (2020). Do people want to be more moral? *Psychological Science*, *31*, 243-257. doi: 10.1177/0956797619893078

*Zhang, T., Gino, F., & Margolis, J. D. (2018). Does "could" lead to good? On the road to moral insight. *Academy of Management Journal*, *61*, 857-895. doi: 10.5465/amj.2014.0839

Week 12 [Dec. 7th]: Discussion of students' final projects

V. Course requirements

Grades will be determined as follows:
- Attendance/participation (10%)
- Weekly discussion comments (20%)
- Presentation (20%)
- Final project (outline: 15%; paper: 35%)

Attendance/participation (10%)

Attendance at each class is mandatory. Because life sometimes throws everyone curveballs, all students have one absence to use in whatever way they deem best, with one exception: the free absence cannot be used on the date of your in-class presentation. Each subsequent absence will result in losing participation points for each class missed (see below for more on participation points). Medical and family emergencies are excusable with appropriate documentation. In such instances, with my permission, you may write a 3-page paper on a topic of my choice to receive participation credit for that week. This make-up paper will be due before the beginning of the class following the one you missed (e.g., if you missed class on September 21st and receive permission to write a make-up paper, it would be due by 10:10 a.m. Eastern time on September 28th). Make-up papers should be submitted as a .doc or .docx attachment via e-mail (lah2201@columbia.edu).

If you experience an emergency that affects multiple classes, such as prolonged illness or a family situation that prevents you from completing your coursework, please be in touch with your dean. He or she can coordinate with all of your professors so that you don't have to take on this labor, and I am happy to work with you and your dean to find a solution for your particular situation.

Please arrive in class on time and stay for the entire class period. This is for your own benefit as well as that of the other students, since it can be disruptive for students to come in and out during class

discussion. If you arrive late or leave early, you will not be able to earn full participation credit for that day.

In addition to coming to class, it's important to participate positively (and do other things that alliterate). Positive participation requires a balance between speaking and listening to your classmates. Please speak up if you have a question or thought to share, and please listen to your classmates' ideas and engage with them constructively. It is perfectly acceptable for you to disagree with someone else's comments—in fact, disagreement can make for lively and thought-provoking discussion! Please phrase your disagreements respectfully. If you feel nervous or hesitant about speaking in class for any reason, I'd be happy to discuss your situation with you.

Each week, participation is graded in the following way: 2 points = you were present in class and participated positively; 1 point = you were present but didn't participate positively and/or were not present for the entire discussion; 0 points = you weren't present and you already used your "get out of class free" card (i.e., your one allowed absence).

Weekly discussion comments (20%)
Each week, you are required to turn in a set of discussion comments on that week's reading. Please e-mail me your comments by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on the Sunday before each class. My e-mail address is lah2201@columbia.edu. Comments should be included as a .doc or .docx attachment. You are responsible for making sure that you are attaching a) the correct file and b) an uncorrupted file. I will grade the file I have in front of me at the deadline, even if that file is corrupt or contains comments for the wrong set of readings. Files should be named in the following format: YourLastName_WeekNumber_MoralPsych_DiscussionComments (e.g., Smith_Week2_MoralPsych_DiscussionComments). Please also type your name at the top of the Word document. Part of the goal of discussion comments is to prepare for our conversations in class. Therefore, late discussion comments will not be accepted in most circumstances. If you feel that your situation deserves special consideration (e.g., you experience an emergency due to COVID-19), please discuss with me as soon as you are able.

For each reading, please include a comment that is about 2-3 sentences long. You do not need to integrate the comments for each article into one cohesive essay; instead, many students find it easiest to include one bullet point or short paragraph per article. **Comments should not summarize the article!** Instead, they should discuss your thoughts about conceptual points related to the readings. Some ideas for what you may wish to address in your comments include the following:

- An interesting connection between two or more of the readings. This could involve synthesizing two seemingly disparate areas or highlighting a contradiction between two sets of findings. (Your total number of comments should still equal the total number of readings, so if your comment for one reading connects it with another reading, you should still write a separate comment for the second reading.)
- Possible extensions or applications of findings, including interesting policy implications that were not addressed in the paper.
- Comments about a particularly clever, apt, or unusual experimental design and why it affords a unique ability to learn something about the question of interest.
- Reasons why the authors' conclusions do not follow from their results, alternative explanations for their findings, methodological flaws, and other criticisms. Be civil in your critique, and make a good-faith attempt to understand the authors' reasoning. Also, note that authors typically address potential criticisms at the end of an article, often to the reader's satisfaction…so you might want to make sure you get that far. Additionally, **you may not use your comment to offer criticisms that could be made of the vast majority of psychological studies (the sample size is**

less than a hundred gazillion, the sample was not nationally representative, etc.). Comments that offer these types of criticisms will not receive credit. Instead, if you wish to offer a criticism, focus on something unique to the paper you are criticizing.
- A proposal for a study that could be conducted to clarify the nature of a finding or address an unresolved issue.

Remember: although it is important to maintain a critical eye when reading scientific papers, some of the best discussion comments will be insightfully positive in nature. Weekly comments will be graded on the following scale: 3 = excellent, 2 = good, 1 = poor. Don't be discouraged if you're not getting 3s right away—this is a learning experience, and there's always room for improvement. **If you submit all required discussion comments (i.e., for every week other than the first week and the last week) by their deadline, I will drop your lowest discussion comment grade.**

Presentation (20%)
During one class period, you will give a short (~10 minutes) presentation on one of the assigned readings. Your presentation should include the following components:
- A brief (2-3 sentences) summary of the article. Assume that your classmates have read the article and just need to have their memories jogged.
- What is one strength of the research presented in the article? Please be specific and explain why you like this particular feature (e.g., why a specific aspect of the design is particularly important, or why a particular conclusion is especially interesting, etc.). Include your own ideas; do not just summarize the authors' arguments about the importance of their topic and/or the amazingness of their studies.
- What is one weakness of the research presented in the article? As with discussion comments, this weakness must be specific to the article on which you are presenting; it cannot be a critique that applies to many psychology studies. If the authors attempted to address your concern, why are their attempts unsatisfactory to you?
- How could this weakness be addressed? For instance, could follow-up studies provide a solution? If so, what would those studies look like?

Since your presentation is so short, you do not need to cover all aspects of the article. Instead, focus on the one strength and one weakness that seem most interesting to you. After your presentation, the rest of the class will discuss the article using your comments as a springboard. You may incorporate Power Point slides, videos, etc., if you think that this will enhance your presentation, but you are also welcome to just speak about your article, and doing so may reduce any stress around uncooperative technology.

Please e-mail me by **Wednesday, September 15th, at 5:00 p.m.** Eastern time with a list of your top 5 preferred articles (1 = the article you would most like to discuss). You may choose any articles that are marked with an asterisk (*) in the reading list above. I will e-mail you before the next class to confirm your article. To make sure that presentations are spread relatively equally across articles and weeks, I may not be able to assign you your first choice, but I guarantee that you will be assigned one of your top 5 choices. If I haven't received your preferences by the deadline, I will assign you an article that no one else has selected.

Final project (outline: 15%; paper: 35%)
Formatting requirements for final paper: 15 pages, one-inch margins, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, APA format. Please include a cover page with your name and the title of your paper. Cover page and references do not count toward the page requirement. An abstract is not required. Please title your final paper YourLastName_MoralPsych_FinalPaper (and please title your outline YourLastName_MoralPsych_Outline).
For your final project, you may choose one of the following formats:

- *Research proposal.* Describe a phenomenon related to morality that has not previously been studied or that would benefit from additional research. Review relevant literature, design an experiment to test your ideas, predict results, and discuss the implications of the proposed research. If your proposal has great merit, it could provide the groundwork for your future empirical work (e.g., for a senior thesis or dissertation). If you choose this option, you will be using *new data* that have not yet been collected to make a novel argument. Note that if you select this option, you should propose one thing (not a series of experiments), and the thing you propose should include a manipulation of the independent variable—it should be an actual experiment rather than, for example, a correlational study.
- *Literature synthesis.* Identify two distinct literatures that you think could be fruitfully integrated. Review each area, describe how they could be combined and discuss the insights afforded by such a melding. Your paper should focus on something new that we can learn about morality, but one of the literatures you choose could be in another domain. For example, you could integrate literature on moral development with literature on some other aspect of development to show how development in some other domain might influence moral development. If you choose to write a literature synthesis, you will be using *previously published data* to make a new argument. Although this sometimes seems like an easier option, keep in mind that you will be constrained by what other people have chosen to study; you must use data that are already available to support an argument that is not currently made in either literature.

When creating your outline, please include the following information at the top: a) your name; b) whether your paper will be a research proposal or literature synthesis; and c) a tentative title for your paper. Then, please list the titles of each section you anticipate including in your paper. For a research proposal, this could be Introduction, Participants, Procedure, Expected Results, Discussion, Conclusions. For a literature synthesis, the headings would be more tied to your particular topic. For example, if you wanted to synthesize literature on moral development with literature on the development of theory of mind, your headings might be Introduction, Moral Development, Development of Theory of Mind, Insights on Moral Development from Work on Theory of Mind, Conclusions. (There is already a lot of literature integrating these literatures, so do not write your paper on moral cognition and theory of mind.) At the end of the outline, please include full citations in APA format for any reference that was listed in the outline.

Under each heading, write a brief summary of what you expect to discuss in that section. Please be specific—e.g., if you are writing a research proposal, your sentences should give me a sense of the experiment that you will be proposing. Sections that will reference prior literature (e.g., the Introduction in research proposal; the two sections describing each separate research literature in the literature synthesis) should include references to at least two specific papers you are planning to cite in your paper and an explanation of how you will use that paper (e.g., "I plan to discuss Rai and Holyoak, 2013, to highlight the consequences of moral relativism"). **You may use articles that we have read for class, but you must also include at least three peer reviewed empirical psychology articles (i.e., psychology articles that present new data) that are not on the syllabus.** It is okay if some of your ideas change between the time you submit your outline and the time you write your final paper; the purpose of the outline is for me to get a sense of how you plan to approach your paper and for you to get feedback on your ideas before spending a lot of time and energy on the final paper.

OUTLINES ARE DUE VIA E-MAIL, AS A .DOC OR .DOCX ATTACHMENT, BEFORE CLASS ON OCTOBER 26TH. Please title your file YourLastName_MoralPsych_Outline. Late outlines may be e-mailed to me as a .doc or .docx attachment; however, they will be penalized 2 points out of 20 possible points for every 24 hours late or portion thereof (e.g., if you were going to earn 20 points and you turn the outline in 15 hours late you would earn 18 points, 36 hours late and you would earn 16 points, etc.). Turning in the outline late may also delay my feedback and prevent you from getting timely comments on your ideas. Talk to me if an emergency prevents you from turning in the outline on time.

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE VIA E-MAIL, AS A .DOC OR .DOCX ATTACHMENT, BEFORE CLASS ON NOVEMBER 30TH. Please title your file YourLastName_MoralPsych_FinalPaper. The late policy is similar to that used with outlines, except that final papers will be penalized 10 points out of 100 possible points for every 24 hours late or portion thereof. The first 24 hour late period will begin on December 1st at 10:10 a.m. Eastern time. Again, please talk to me if an emergency occurs.

VI. Plagiarism and academic integrity.

Severe plagiarism (a.k.a. "copying") is the most overt and deceptive form of plagiarism. This involves deliberately misrepresenting all or part of another person's work as one's own. For example, a student might turn in a paper written by another student in a previous term. Another common example is writing containing chunks of "copy-and-paste" from published articles or online sources such as Wikipedia.

Irresponsible plagiarism (a.k.a. "omission") is the act of paraphrasing or quoting from a source, without giving proper credit to the source. The author does not necessarily explicitly take credit for the idea or materials (but this is nevertheless implied).

Self-plagiarism (a.k.a. "recycling") is the act of representing one's own previous ideas or materials as new and original. For example, a student might turn in all or part of the same paper for more than one course. This may not seem as bad as stealing another person's work, but it is *deceptive*, and therefore unacceptable.

Should I plagiarize?
No. You will be caught, and then you will be sad. Assignments that show evidence of academic dishonesty will receive a zero, and any student who submits such an assignment may be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

For more information about academic integrity at Columbia, please see the following sources:
https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-statement
https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity

VII. Students with disabilities.

Students with special needs who may require classroom and/or test accommodations should let me know as soon as possible. ODS often requires a few weeks to process an application, so please contact them as soon as you can. The procedures for registering with ODS can be found at http://health.columbia.edu/services/ods or by calling (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY).

Thanks for reading this far! I am very much looking forward to getting to know you and learning about morality together.