Psy 449: The Development of Morality  
Spring, 2013  
Tuesdays 1:30-4, Holmes 211

Prof. C. Sophian

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The goals of this course are (a) to deepen students’ understanding of developmental psychology by examining influential theories and research on the topic of moral development; and (b) to encourage students to use the perspectives on morality that emerge from the study of moral development to reflect on and develop their own personal ethics. This course has both Writing Intensive (W) and Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Focus designations. Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the course material and will comprise at least 30% of the course content. At least 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing ethical issues. Through the course readings, class discussions, and writing assignments, students will develop the ability to recognize ethical issues, analyze them, and make ethically responsible judgments.

Students are expected to

• read the assigned material thoroughly and thoughtfully, with sufficient retention to be able to answer cumulative quiz questions about the main points of each paper;
• prepare weekly written assignments that build on the assigned readings; and
• attend class consistently (and on time) and participate constructively in class discussions and activities.

The course readings consist of journal articles and book excerpts, which will be made available electronically through Laulima. No textbooks need be purchased.

A major goal of the writing assignments is to help students develop skills for analyzing the course material and relating it to the moral issues in their own lives. Only a brief indication of the topic for each assignment is given in the course schedule below. More detailed guidelines for each assignment will be presented in class and posted on Laulima. All papers must be typed double-spaced and using a 12-point font; and they must use correct APA formatting for all citations, quotations, and references.

Most of the writing assignments are one-page “food for thought” assignments (marked “FFT” after the topic in the syllabus). Often, the FFT assignments will also provide material that we will build on in class. Because the FFT assignments will often be the basis for class activities the week they are due, late FFT papers will not be accepted. Students who are unable to attend class on a given day may still receive full credit for the written assignment by emailing it to the instructor or TA before the beginning of class on the due date. Missed FFT papers and quizzes will receive a score of zero unless the student provides documentation of illness (a doctor’s note indicating the period of time in which the student was unable to attend class and/or complete course assignments) or of a major family emergency. Whenever possible, the documentation should be submitted within two weeks of the missed work. If that is not feasible because of a prolonged illness or emergency, the student should notify the instructor as soon as possible of the ongoing illness or emergency (to be documented later).

The final writing assignment, due at the beginning of the last class, is a 3-page integrative paper addressing how you can use ideas from the course material in your own moral decision making. If the final paper is late, a penalty of 1 point will be deducted for each day or part of a day (beginning at the start of class on the due date) it is late unless the student provides documentation of illness or of a major family emergency.
Grading

Course grades will be based on points earned for:
- FFT writing assignments: 3-5 points each—those marked FFT* are worth up to 5 points; the rest are worth up to 3 points⇒ up to 47 points total
- Final paper: up to 28 points
- Quizzes on assigned readings: up to 28 points total

**GRAND TOTAL: 103**

**Letter grades** will be assigned based on total points earned, rounded to the nearest whole number:

- 101 or more . . . A+
- 97 - 100 . . . . A
- 93 - 96 . . . . A-
- 89 - 92 . . . . B+
- 85 - 88 . . . . B
- 82 - 84 . . . . B-
- 79 - 81 . . . . C+
- 75 - 78 . . . . C
- 72 - 74 . . . . C-
- 69 - 71 . . . . D+
- 65 - 68 . . . . D
- 62 - 64 . . . . D-
- below 62 . . . . F

**Extra credit:** Up to 6 points of extra credit can be earned through additional Laulima posts in accordance with the “Morality in the Media” assignment (Week 10). Please see the Morality in the Media FFT assignment for details. No other opportunities to earn extra credit or to make up missed assignments will be available, so please take care not to squander the little bit of latitude that this extra-credit opportunity provides.

General Guidelines

All students are expected to comply with the following guidelines in order to create a positive learning environment for everyone in the class:

1. Please be respectful. The expression of individual points of view in class discussions is encouraged. However, because the material encompasses topics that can be sensitive, it is important that everyone be careful not to offend others by your choice of words, by your tone of voice, or by engaging in conduct such as giggling or whispering with a neighbor during class discussions.

2. Please make it a priority to attend class and give your full attention to what we are doing. Please turn off your cell phone when you come to class, and refrain from texting or engaging in any other activities during class time that take your attention away from the class. Also, please do not come to class expecting to take the quiz and then leave. If you are well enough to get here, you should plan to stay for the whole class. Questions about whether there will be a quiz (in almost all classes, there will be) and when the quiz will take place will not be answered.

3. Class discussions are best when many voices contribute; and students learn best when they participate actively in class. Therefore, please make an effort to contribute to class discussions, even if you are not one of the more talkative or outspoken people in class. Conversely, if you do tend to be an active participant, please take care to allow others ample opportunity to speak as well.

4. Please exercise your judgment in deciding how much or what types of personal information you share in class discussions and in your written work. The course is designed to draw upon your personal experiences, but not to require personal disclosure beyond your personal comfort level. Please let me know if you have concerns about your personal privacy that you do not feel have been adequately taken care of.
COURSE SCHEDULE

1/8 WEEK 1: Introduction

1/15 WEEK 2: What is morality?
Read:
FFT: Moral considerations

1/22 WEEK 3: Perspectives on morality in the media
No assigned reading.
FFT: Media Perspectives on Contemporary Morality

1/29 WEEK 4: An evolutionary perspective on morality
Read:
FFT: Other people behaving morally

2/5 WEEK 5: Culture and morality
Read:
No FFT this week, but preview FFT*: Ethics across cultures

2/12 WEEK 6: Culture and morality, continued
FFT*: Ethics across cultures

2/19 WEEK 7: Kohlberg’s theory of moral development
FFT: My position on a personal moral dilemma

2/26 WEEK 8: Gilligan’s theory of moral voices
Read:
FFT*: Voices of justice and care
3/5 WEEK 9: Domain theory
Read:
DOUBLE-WEIGHTED CUMULATIVE QUIZ: Be prepared!
FFT: Behavior past and future

3/12 WEEK 10: Morality and perspective-taking
Read:
FFT: Morality in the Media

3/19 WEEK 11: Parenting and moral development, part 1
Read:
FFT*: What parents do

3/26 No class – Spring Break

4/2 WEEK 12: Parenting and moral development, part 2
Read:
FFT: Conversational messages

4/9 WEEK 13: Moral identity
Read:
FFT*: Enhancing morality
4/16 WEEK 14: Moral mindsets
Read:


DOUBLE-WEIGHTED CUMULATIVE QUIZ: Be prepared!

FFT: Everyday moral choices

4/23 WEEK 15: Limitations of instinctive morality
Read:


FFT: Ideas that matter for being a moral person

4/30 WEEK 16: Conclusions
No new readings this week but we WILL have class.
Integrative Paper: Formulating personal moral guidelines (3 pp. MAX)