

Seminar Tasks : Moral Psychology

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1. Seminar 1

1.1. Question

What are moral intuitions according to Sinnott-Armstrong et al. (2010)? What is these authors' central claim about them? And what evidence supports this claim?

1.2. Reading

- Sinnott-Armstrong et al. (2010)

1.3. Preparation

Please follow the instructions for *Seminar Tasks*.

1.4. Lecture Notes

- *Moral Intuitions* in Lecture 01
- *Moral Intuitions and an Affect Heuristic* in Lecture 01
- *Moral Intuitions and Emotions: Evidence* in Lecture 01

1.5. Where to Find the Reading?

In some cases the reference section of the lecture notes already includes a link to help you find the reading.

If there is no link in the lecture notes, start by searching for the title (and, if that fails, by title and authors) on google scholar. If this fails, the library has resources. If those fail, please check first with others on the course. If you still have problems, you may email your seminar tutor.

2. Seminar 2

2.1. Question

How, if at all, do feelings of disgust (and perhaps other emotions) influence moral intuitions?

2.2. Reading

- Tracy et al. (2019)

2.3. Preparation

Please follow the instructions for *Seminar Tasks*.

2.4. Lecture Notes

- *Moral Intuitions and Emotions: Evaluating the Evidence* in Lecture 02
- *Conclusion: Two Puzzles* in Lecture 02
- ** ERROR! MISSING xref FOR unit : emotion_influence_or_motivate **

2.5. Where to Find the Reading?

In some cases the reference section of the lecture notes already includes a link to help you find the reading.

If there is no link in the lecture notes, start by searching for the title (and, if that fails, by title and authors) on google scholar. If this fails, the library has resources. If those fail, please check first with others on the course. If you still have problems, you may email your seminar tutor.

3. Seminar 3

3.1. Question

What is moral disengagement? Identify one claim about moral judgement for which the existence of moral disengagement is the source of a potential objection. What is the claim and what is the objection? Does the objection succeed?

3.2. Reading

- Bandura (2002)
- Use the lecture notes to identify a source for the claim about moral judgement you will identify.

3.3. Preparation

Please follow the instructions for *Seminar Tasks*.

3.4. Lecture Notes

- *Moral Disengagement: The Theory* in Lecture 03

- *Moral Disengagement: The Evidence* in Lecture 03
- *Moral Disengagement: Significance* in Lecture 03

3.5. Where to Find the Reading?

In some cases the reference section of the lecture notes already includes a link to help you find the reading.

If there is no link in the lecture notes, start by searching for the title (and, if that fails, by title and authors) on google scholar. If this fails, the library has resources. If those fail, please check first with others on the course. If you still have problems, you may email your seminar tutor.

4. Seminar 4

This seminar is a bit different. Instead of discussing a question, we will discuss the essay plans of anyone who prepares one in advance and brings it to the seminar.

4.1. Aims

- Identify a question for your short essay;
- do some background reading; and
- produce an outline for the essay
- plus a list of readings.

4.2. Questions

You can take one of the suggested questions from the list provided:

- The questions for your short essay are here

Or, if you prefer, you can propose your own question (which will need to be approved before you can submit the essay).

4.3. Hint

Ensure that your plan specifies ideas and arguments in detail. A wishlist is not a plan.

5. Seminar 5

5.1. Questions

- What is moral pluralism?
- What discoveries about moral pluralism are associated with Moral Foundations Theory?
- What, if anything, do these discoveries contribute to philosophical arguments about whether persistent ethical disagreement undermines moral knowledge?

5.2. Lecture Notes

- *Moral Pluralism: Beyond Harm* in Lecture 04

5.3. Reading

The reading for this seminar is a bit different.

Select any one:

- McGrath (2008)
- Doris & Plakias (2008)
- Enoch (2009)

Between them, the people in your seminar group will ideally have read all of these sources and so be familiar with a variety of different philosophical arguments about whether persistent ethical disagreement undermines moral knowledge. They will then share knowledge of these arguments in the seminar.

Your job is to bring knowledge of any one such argument, and thoughts about how discoveries about moral pluralism matter for it, to the seminar.

5.4. Where to Find the Reading?

In some cases the reference section of the lecture notes already includes a link to help you find the reading.

If there is no link in the lecture notes, start by searching for the title (and, if that fails, by title and authors) on google scholar. If this fails, the library has resources. If those fail, please check first with others on the course. If you still have problems, you may email your seminar tutor.

6. Seminar 6

This seminar is a bit different. Instead of discussing a question, we will discuss the short essays you wrote in the light of feedback.

6.1. Preparation

- Re-read your essay and the feedback (if available).
- Formulate with care any questions you have about the substance of the essay or the feedback.
- Rehearse a 90 second oral presentation of how you answered the question in your essay.

6.2. Backup Plan

Some seminar groups may not spend all of the time (or even any) on essays.

Reading: * Rini (2013)

Questions:

1. What is Rini's main thesis?
2. Which claims does she defend to support this thesis?
3. What objections arise to Rini's main thesis?

7. Seminar 7

7.1. Questions

- What do dual-process theories of moral cognition claim?
- What is the evidence for and against a dual-process theory of moral cognition?

7.2. Lecture Notes

- *A Dual Process Theory of Ethical Judgement* in Lecture 07

7.3. Reading

- Cushman et al. (2010) — skip the introduction, read Section 1 only (pp.~49–54).

(If you want a more thorough guide, try Cushman (2013) or Paxton & Greene (2010).)

7.4. Where to Find the Reading?

In some cases the reference section of the lecture notes already includes a link to help you find the reading.

If there is no link in the lecture notes, start by searching for the title (and, if that fails, by title and authors) on google scholar. If this fails, the library has resources. If those fail, please check first with others on the course. If you still have problems, you may email your seminar tutor.

Cushman, F., Young, L., & Greene, J. D. (2010). Multi-system moral psychology. In J. M. Doris, M. P. R. Group, & others (Eds.), *The moral psychology handbook* (pp. 47–71). Oxford: OUP.

8. Seminar 8

This seminar is a bit different. Instead of discussing a question, we will discuss the essay plans of anyone who prepares on in advance and brings it to the seminar.

8.1. Aims

- Identify a question for your long essay,
- do some background reading;
- and produce an outline for the essay
- plus a list of readings.

8.2. Questions

You can take one of the suggested questions from the list provided:

- The questions for your long essay are here

Or, if you prefer, you can propose your own question (which will need to be approved before you can submit the essay).

8.3. Hint

Ensure that your plan specifies ideas and arguments in detail. A wishlist is not a plan.

Glossary

moral disengagement Moral disengagement occurs when self-sanctions are disengaged from conduct. To illustrate, an executioner may avoid self-sanctioning for killing by reframing the role they play as ‘babysitting’ (Bandura 2002, p. 103). Bandura (2002, p. 111) identifies several mechanisms of moral disengagement: ‘The disengagement may centre on redefining harmful conduct as honourable by moral justification, exonerating social comparison and sanitising language. It may focus on agency of action so that perpetrators can minimise their role in causing harm by diffusion and displacement of responsibility. It may involve minimising or distorting the harm that follows from detrimental actions; and the disengagement may include dehumanising and blaming the victims of the maltreatment.’ 4

Moral Foundations Theory The theory that moral pluralism is true; moral foundations are innate but also subject to cultural learning, and the Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement is correct (Graham et al. 2019). Proponents often claim, further, that cultural variation in how these innate foundations are woven into ethical abilities can be measured using the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al. 2009; Graham et al. 2011). Some empirical objections have been offered (Davis et al. 2016; Davis et al. 2017; Doğruyol et al. 2019). See ?? 6

moral intuition According to this lecturer, a person’s intuitions are the claims they take to be true independently of whether those claims are justified inferentially. And a person’s *moral* intuitions are simply those of their intuitions that concern ethical matters.

According to Sinnott-Armstrong et al. (2010, p. 256), moral intuitions are ‘strong, stable, immediate moral beliefs.’ 3

moral pluralism Descriptive moral pluralism is the view that humans’ ethical abilities involve distinct moral concerns (such as harm, equality and purity) which are not reducible to just one moral concern. 6

Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement A model on which intuitive processes are directly responsible for moral judgements (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008). One’s own reasoning does not typically affect one’s own moral judgements, but (outside philosophy, perhaps) is typically used only to provide post-hoc justification after moral judgements are made. Reasoning does affect others’ moral intuitions, and so provides a mechanism for cultural learning. 9

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