

## Moral Psychology: The Science of Good and Evil? (Autumn Term 2019-20)

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Questions your 70% essay may answer include the following.

Notes: (i) the references attached to questions are a guide to get you started, you should not restrict yourself to these sources (nor need you use all of them); (ii) you may email me a request to add a question of your choice to this list, which we will discuss; (iii) this list will be updated periodically. Last updated 2019-12-01

Could **scientific discoveries** undermine or support **moral principles** (Singer 2005; Greene 2014)?

Why does morality vary so much across **cultures**, and why are there themes that recur across cultures (Graham et al. 2013; Curry, Mullins, and Whitehouse 2019)?<sup>1</sup>

Do humans substantially and systematically disagree on ethical matters? If so, does this threaten **moral realism** or **moral epistemology** (Doris and Plakias 2008; Enoch 2009; McGrath 2008)?

What do **dual-process theories of moral cognition** claim? What is the evidence for, and against, them? (Van Bavel, FeldmanHall, and Mende-Siedlecki 2015; Greene 2015; Conway & Gawronski, 2013; Gawronski et al, 2017)?<sup>2</sup>

Can dual-process theories of moral abilities invoke modularity? If so, should they?

In what ways, if any, can **emotions** influence unreflective ethical judgements (Haidt 2001; Huebner, Dwyer, and Hauser 2009; Cameron, Lindquist, and Gray 2015; Nichols 2002)?

Are there **innate** drivers of morality? Why do **infants** behave prosocially and respond to prosocial behaviour by others from the second year of life or earlier (Brownell 2013; Hamlin, Wynn & Bloom 2007; Hamlin 2013; Olson & Spelke 2008)?

Why do ethical failures threaten the **sense of self** (Barkan et al. 2012; Shalvi et al. 2015)?

Could human moral psychology make **mitigating climate change** democratically infeasible (Markowitz and Shariff 2012; Gardiner 2011)? And why are some people moved to act on climate change by thoughts of **harm**, others by thoughts of **purity** (Feinberg & Willer 2013)?

### Sources (this is not an exhaustive list)

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<sup>1</sup> You may answer either or both questions.

<sup>2</sup> OR: Is Greene's argument against the reliability of fast processes for moral judgements contingent on any particular metaethical position?

OR: How could we know whether Cushman's dual-process theory of moral cognition is true?

OR: Is it true that, as Greene claims, whenever two parties disagree, 'one party's automatic settings are going astray'?

OR: What, on balance, does evidence from applications of the CNI model allow us to conclude?

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