Philosophy 316: Mind and Morals
Autumn 2007
TuTh 11:30-1:00 PM
Earth & Planetary Sciences 203

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Ofc. Hrs.: Tu 1:15-2:15 PM
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Course Description:

Until recently, contemporary moral philosophers working in the English-language “Analytic” tradition for the most part (blissfully or willfully) neglected empirical research on moral functioning conducted in the human sciences. Over the past decade or so, this methodological stasis has been disrupted by an explosion of aggressively interdisciplinary approaches to what is nowadays called “moral psychology.” The work has taken various forms, with philosophers offering theoretical interpretations of empirical work in the human sciences and, with growing frequency, conducting their own experimental work. At the same time, psychologists and other cognitive scientists producing experimental work on morality have become increasingly philosophically self-conscious. The result is a quantity of empirical and theoretical resources for the study of human morality -- and, one hopes, for the development of empirically sensitive ethical theory -- unprecedented in contemporary philosophy. We will survey some of this research, and attempt to elucidate the philosophical issues -- and controversy -- it engenders.

Course Schedule:

1. Facts & Values: Ethics and The Sciences of Mind (2 sessions)

   Final (unprintable) version here – click “A sample of this book”:
   http://www.oup.com/uk/catalogue/?ci=9780199242955

   A printable preprint is here (in a blog post which gives a sense of the controversy in the area):
   http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2006/03/experimental_ph.html

2. First Passes: The Character Wars (6 sessions)


3. The Experimental Turn: A Tale of Two Joshes (8 sessions)
*Joshua Knobe & Colleagues: Intentional Action, Moral Responsibility, etc.*


The above papers can be found here: http://www.unc.edu/~knobe/


The above paper (together with some optional commentary) can be found here:

*Josh Grene and Colleagues: The Moral (or Immoral) Brain*


The above papers can be found here: http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~jgreene/


The above paper can be found here:
http://www.philosophy.utah.edu/faculty/mallon/index.html

4. “Naturalizing” Ethics: NeoSentimentalism (5 sessions)

5. The Predicament of Culture: Diversity and the Status of Morality (5 sessions)


The Mikhail paper may be accessed through this link:


The Stich and colleagues papers can be found here:
http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~stich/Publications/publications2.htm
Course Texts:

Doris' *Lack of Character* is available at the bookstore. The rest of the readings will be made available through a variety of electronic expedients.

Course Work:

The subject matter of this course is very much the latest "cutting edge" research, written by and for professionals. Every effort will be made to render the material accessible, but students will be well served by having, minimally, the following background: (1) A previous philosophy course with a substantial ethics component; preferably a free standing, reasonably advanced, course in ethical theory. (2) At least one course in psychology or a related human science. If you have any questions about the suitability of your background, please be in touch.

*The basis of evaluation will be:*
2 papers, 8-10 pp., 45% ea.
Participation, attendance, etc. 10%
Attendance is mandatory.

*In upper division course, the following should go without saying, but it pays to be sure:*

- Late papers may be penalized in evaluation.
- Always credit the source for any idea you use in a paper that is not originally your own. The university regards *plagiarism* as a serious offense, and penalties are accordingly harsh.
- For your own protection, be sure to retain a hard copy of any paper you hand in.
- Participation. Much philosophical work takes to form of discussion, and class discussion will be a major part of our work. Accordingly, your participation and attendance may have some impact on your grade.
- Philosophy is best done in the spirit of cooperation. Behavior disrespectful of other participants -- including and especially talking while others have the floor -- will not be tolerated. I couldn’t be more serious about this.
- A significant number of absences (exact number determined by “curve”) may adversely impact grades.
- To receive a passing mark, all coursework must be completed during the term.
- **Be on time to class.** Late arrivals disrupt discussion, and waste our time.
- If you have any questions on these policies, please contact an instructor as soon as possible.