

POLS 4410H: Morality and Politics
University of Georgia
Spring 2017, MWF 1:25-2:15 pm, Peabody Hall 205C

Instructor: Dr. Kristin Garrett
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“Morality binds and blinds. It binds us into ideological teams that fight each other as though the fate of the world depended on our side winning each battle. It blinds us to the fact that each team is composed of good people who have something important to say.” ~ Jonathan Haidt

Course Overview

Why do some political attitudes get connected to a person's sense of right and wrong, and what are the consequences of these moralized attitudes for politics? In order to address such questions, this course will investigate how principles from moral psychology help explain political attitudes and behavior. It will overview various theories about how morality and politics intersect, and it will raise important normative questions about the moralization of politics. As a seminar course, classes are meant to stimulate vibrant discussion, engagement, and critical thinking. Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class and to come to class prepared to discuss them.

Course Objectives

- Equip students with a better understanding of how perceptions of morality affect political attitudes and behavior
- Prepare students to integrate and apply the principles we learn about moral psychology to current events and real-world politics
- Challenge students to critically evaluate the normative costs and benefits of a moralized political climate
- Strengthen critical thinking, writing, and communication abilities

Required Texts

- Haidt, Jonathan. 2012. *The Righteous Mind*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Any additional readings will be posted on eLearning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>)

Course Requirements and Grading

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions, debates, and activities. While this portion of the final grade should help everyone who works hard and actively contributes in class, it is by no means a freebie. It will reflect both your attendance and level of engagement in class each day.

Please come talk to me early in the semester if you have any questions or concerns about the attendance and participation requirement for the class. I recognize that there are other ways to participate besides talking frequently in class. For example, students who are shy or otherwise feel that their participation

was subpar for the day are encouraged to email me their thoughts about the topic of class discussion or a news article that addresses an issue we considered in class, along with a few comments explaining why the article is pertinent to what we learned. Also, students can stop by and share their thoughts about the topic of class discussion during office hours. To get credit, you must email me or stop by my office within the same week that we discuss a topic in class.

Article Discussion and Connections Summary (10%)

Each student must take a turn finding a news or scholarly article pertaining to morality and politics and then leading the class through a short discussion of that article. Students must e-mail me a link to their article by 5 pm the night before they are going to lead the class through a discussion, so I can post it for the rest of the class to read. Also, students must submit a short one-page summary of the connections they see between their article and principles we discussed or read about moral and political psychology. I will be evaluating how well you critically analyze claims, integrate ideas, apply what you learn, and clearly articulate your thoughts, rather than the length of what you write, so you may submit either a double- or single-spaced paper.

The main goal of this assignment is to help students connect abstract class concepts to real-world political issues and events, to provide a chance for them to delve deeper into course topics in which they are interested, and to give them practice coming up with critical thinking questions and leading a discussion. More information about this requirement will be provided in class.

Critical Discussion Points (10%)

Each week, students must post two discussion points to the designated eLC forum based on the assigned readings. Each discussion point should convey an argument that you found convincing or unconvincing in one of the readings, a question that you would like to discuss with the class about one of the readings, or the main point you found most interesting or confusing from one of the readings. Each discussion point should be a short statement rather than a paragraph, and while it can certainly be informal in tone, it should be clear and grammatically correct. The best discussion points are those that engage in critical analysis, demonstrate a solid grasp of arguments made in the text, include connections to class discussions, and/or contemplate implications of the text for the political world. If a discussion point is particularly astute and articulate, I reserve the right to give extra credit towards a student's exam grade.

All discussion points must be submitted to the appropriate eLC forum by 11 am on Monday each week, unless we do not meet for class on Monday or there is an exam on Monday, in which case the discussion points must be posted by 11 am on Wednesday of that particular week. You will NOT receive credit for late submissions regardless of the excuse. Students do NOT have to post discussion points on the week they are scheduled to lead an article discussion, and they can miss ONE other week of discussion points during the semester without losing credit toward this portion of their grade.

Midterm Exam (20%)

The midterm will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Any material from the assigned readings and class discussions during the first half of the semester is fair game for the exam. The midterm exam will be in class on Monday, February 27.

Final Paper (20%)

Each student must submit a final paper near the end of the semester. Students will select a topic of interest to them and then try to explain it using the principles we read about and discuss from moral psychology. There is wide latitude for students to pick a political phenomenon, issue, or current event to focus on, and they should talk with me in advance regarding their ideas for the paper.

Papers should be approximately 7 to 10 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins. I expect solid academic writing, accurate citations (APA or MLA are both acceptable), and proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Your paper grade will be based on the critical thinking you display, the overall quality of your writing, and how well you apply concepts from readings and lectures. More detailed instructions on the paper will be given during the first few weeks of class.

Paper Presentation (5%)

At the end of the semester, each student will present findings from his or her research paper to the class. The dates of the presentations are **April 17, 19, and 21**. Each presentation will be relatively short and will be followed by a brief time for Q&A. Presentation grades will be based on the accuracy of the content, application of class concepts, level of critical thinking, fluency of communication, and ability to answer follow-up questions. This requirement provides an opportunity for students to practice and strengthen their communication abilities. More detailed instructions on the presentation will be provided after the research paper is explained in more detail.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will include short answer and essay questions. It is cumulative, and any material from the assigned readings and class discussions during the semester is fair game to show up on the exam. The final exam will be in class on Monday, May 1, from 12:00-3:00 pm.

Grade Scale

A	94-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86	D+	67-69
B-	80-83	D	60-66

Course Expectations and Guidelines

Attendance

Class attendance is required and will influence your grade in this course. I expect all students to be on time to class, prepared to participate, and ready to contribute to a thriving learning environment for fellow students. As such, I will deduct points from your participation and attendance grade if you do not attend class. You are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty, after which your grade will be penalized unless you have a legitimate excuse for missing class. Please talk to me if you miss class for an excused reason and want to go over any material that you missed.

Civility and Respect

All conversation during class must be civil, reasoned, and respectful of others' opinions. An important component of this course is discussing ideas with, learning from, and working together with your peers. This type of engagement facilitates learning and sharpens critical thinking abilities, so I want to create an environment where you feel comfortable, confident, and excited about sharing your thoughts and applying what you have learned to issues we discuss.

Readings

We will be reading a selection of journal articles and book chapters from important texts that help comprise the moral and political psychology literatures. Reading assignments should be completed prior to the first day of class on the week for which they are assigned. There will be a fair amount of reading each week, but I will give you tips about what sections of the material to concentrate on, as well as what

days we will discuss different readings. If I sense that students are not reading the material, I reserve the right to introduce quizzes over the assigned material.

Grades

Grading standards are intended to be high, but fair. If you have any questions about your grade on an exam, you may set up an appointment with me to discuss the questions you missed. If you have any questions about your grade on the final paper, please re-read your paper, re-read my comments on your paper, email me a list of your specific concerns about your grade, and suggest an appointment time to meet and discuss your list of concerns. Please follow the same course of action if you have any questions about your grade on the final presentation.

Makeup Exams and Late Assignments

Makeup exams will NOT be allowed except in the case of an excused absence, such as a documented illness, family emergency, or travel for university activities. If you know you are unable to take an exam on the scheduled date, please contact me in advance to make alternative arrangements. If you miss an exam due to an emergency situation, please contact me as soon as possible after the event to schedule a makeup exam. Documentation of the excused absence is required, and I reserve the right to alter the format and content of the makeup exam. Late assignments will NOT be accepted unless you have an excused absence. In this case, you must follow the same policy of contacting me and showing documentation of your excused absence.

Extra Credit

Students are expected to put forth their best effort in the class and to communicate with the instructor if they are having trouble with the material. There is, however, the possibility that I will allow students to earn extra points toward the final exam by participating in a research study.

Student Disabilities

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with the UGA Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students with registered disabilities will be accommodated according to university policy. If you have documentation for accommodations from the DRC, please present it to me at the start of the semester and let me know if you need additional assistance. For more information, visit <https://drc.uga.edu> or call 706-542-8719.

Student Resources

You can increase your chance of success in this course by taking advantage of UGA's academic services. The Division of Academic Enhancement (<http://dae.uga.edu/student-resources/>) provides a range of resources, including study tips, tutoring, and workshops, to help students develop solid learning strategies. Also, the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.english.uga.edu>) and Miller Learning Center (<http://mlc.uga.edu/>) offer resources to assist students with their research and writing.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning, and it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. All course work must meet the standards established in the University of Georgia Academic Honesty Policy. You can access the policy here: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>.

Contact

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have over the course of the semester. Email is the best way to reach me. If you are struggling to understand the course material, please come talk to me early in the semester so that we can work together to get things on track.

eLearning Commons

Additional reading assignments and other documents that are helpful for the course will be posted to the eLearning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>), so you should check in to the course site throughout the semester. You can sign into the eLC using your UGA MyId and password.

Summary

In this class we will work hard, and we will hopefully have fun in the process.

Tentative Course Schedule*

Introduction: January 6

- Topics: Course Introduction and Overview
- Readings: NA

Week 1: January 9 and 11 (NO CLASS January 13 – SPSA Conference)

- Topics: The Limitations of Rationality and Self-Interest
- Readings: Burns and Roszkowska 2016 (parts). Sears and Funk 1991 (parts). Lau and Heldman 2009. Ginges et al. 2007.

Week 2: January 18 and 20 (NO CLASS January 16 – MLK, Jr. Day)

- Topics: Morality as an Issue Classification Versus Psychological Response
- Readings: Mooney 2001. Mooney and Schuldt 2008. Grummel 2008 (skim). Ryan 2014.

Week 3: January 23, 25, and 27

- Topics: Cognitive and Psychological Foundations of Morality
- Readings: Haidt 2008. Haidt 2012, Chapters 1-3. Greene 2009 (parts).

Week 4: January 30, February 1 and 3

- Topics: Moral Foundations Theory and Politics (Part 1: Basics)
- Readings: Haidt 2012, Chapters 5-8. Iyer et al. 2010 (skim). Koleva et al. 2012 (skim).

Week 5: February 6, 8, 10

- Topics: Moral Foundations Theory and Politics (Part 2: Effects and Limitations)
- Readings: Clifford and Jerit 2013. Day et al. 2014. Clifford et al. 2015 (skim). Feinberg and Willer 2015 (skim). Feingberg et al. 2012. Smith et al. 2015 (skim).

Week 6: February 13, 15, and 17

- Topics: Moral Conviction and Politics (Part 1: Basics)
- Readings: Skitka and Morgan 2014. Skitka, Bauman, and Sargis 2005. Skitka, Morgan, and Wisneski 2015. Morgan, Skitka, and Wisneski 2010 (skim). Garrett draft 1 (skim).

Week 7: February 20, 22, and 24

- Topics: Moral Conviction and Politics (Part 2: Political Courage and Compromise)
- Readings: Ryan 2016. Skitka 2012. Aramovich, Lytle, and Skitka 2012. Hornsey, Smith, and Begg 2007 (skim). Skitka, Bauman, and Lytle 2009.

MIDTERM EXAM: Monday, February 27

Week 8: March 1 and 3

- Topics: Sacred Values and Devoted Actors
- Readings: Tetlock 2003. Ginges and Atran 2013. Atran and Ginges 2015. Garrett draft 2.

NO CLASS March 6, 8, 10 – Spring Break

Week 9: March 13, 15, 17

- Topics: Morality Binds and Blinds
- Readings: Haidt 2012, Chapters 4 and 10. Ditto and Liu 2012 (parts). Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto 2007 (skim). Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears 2012 (skim). Brambilla, Hewstone, and Colucci 2013 (skim).

Week 10: March 20, 22, 24

- Topics: The Family Model of Moral Politics
- Readings: Lakoff 2002, Chapters 2, 5, 6, and 9 (parts). Ohl et al. 2013.

Week 11: March 27, 29, 31

- Topics: Ideological Differences in Moral Perceptions
- Readings: Hetherington and Weiler 2009. Jost et al. 2003 (parts). Talhelm et al. 2014 (skim). Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi 2014. Brandt et al. 2014.

Week 12: April 3 and 5 (NO CLASS April 7 – MPSA Conference)

- Topics: The Moralization of Politics
- Readings: Bloom 2012. Garrett 2017. Brandt, Wisneski, and Skitka 2015. Luttrell et al. 2016.

Week 13: April 10, 12, and 14

- Topics: Hope for Cooperation and Compromise?
- Readings: Haidt 2012, Chapter 12. Greene 2013, Chapters 11 and 12. Lakoff 2002, Chapter 19.

Week 14: April 17, 19, and 21

- Topic: Presentations
- Readings: NA

Week 15 April 24 and 26

- Topic: Fun Topics, Wrap Up, and Review
- Readings: TBA

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 1, 12:00-3:00 pm

* I reserve the right to modify this syllabus and the tentative course schedule over the course of the semester. All changes to the syllabus will be clearly communicated in class and posted on eLC.

** A more detailed description of the required course readings, including specifications of what sections to read and how to skim, along with fun recommended readings will be posted on eLC.