

Psychology 1661

Citizens in the crib: Children's emerging sense of fairness and justice

Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Felix Warneken, Associate Professor
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Where? William James Hall, Room B4

When? Mondays 4-6pm

Office hours: By appointment (email); office: WJH 1320

Class Description

Is human nature selfish? How do we learn to tell right from wrong, good from evil, fair from unfair? Can we overcome prejudice and bias? Can we predict who will be a good citizen and who will become a psychopath? These are fundamental questions for all human societies, and also questions that have motivated recent research in the behavioral sciences investigating at the origins and the development of moral judgment and conduct. In this seminar, we will read state-of-the-art literature from developmental psychology and related fields that use empirical methods to address the roots of human nature. This course is discussion-based, with the goal of bringing new ideas (your ideas!) to bear on tricky questions that are still unresolved. Emphasis is put on reading the original literature, writing short weekly response papers in preparation for class, and engage in lively discussions.

The course is multidisciplinary in nature and relevant to students from different disciplines that can provide their unique perspectives, including Psychology, HEB, HGSE, Sociology, Economics, Philosophy, and other social sciences.

Enrollment

Maximum enrollment: 16 students

The Psychology Department requires completion of Science of Living Systems 20 (or equivalent) and at least one foundational course from PSY 14, PSY 15, PSY 16, PSY 18, or Science of Living Systems 15 before enrolling in this course.

Grading

You will be graded on your weekly response papers (60% of final grade) and your class participation (40% of final grade). No final papers. No exams.

Written assignments

All written assignments have to be uploaded to the canvas course website. No email attachments please. It's your responsibility to ensure that they are properly uploaded.

Response papers. Please summarize an argument or address a question based upon the readings for the class session. These response papers will be springboards for the discussion in class. Your response paper must be uploaded to canvas at least 24h before class, i.e. each **Sunday at 4pm**. Every day your paper is late costs you 10% of your grade on that assignment, starting at 4.01pm that day. Format: 2 pages, line spacing 1.5, 12 pt in Times New Roman or similar; please include your name, date, and session title in your header.

Class participation. The main goal is for class participants to discuss the readings and it is thus essential for everyone to express their ideas and discuss each other's viewpoints. It is expected that everyone is well-prepared and familiar with the readings so that we can get to the core questions of each topic. The response papers will help you in generating ideas and discussion questions beforehand that we can then discuss in depth during class.

Readings. PDFs of all articles can be downloaded from the canvas course site. Some articles have "Supplemental Online Material" or "Supplemental Information" linked to the article or as pdf. This is only for background information, you can focus on the main text in these case. You can order books from the Harvard COOP via the course website.

23-Jan	Introduction
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Presentation by instructor. No preparatory readings.

30-Jan	Are children naughty by nature? The origins of altruism
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Warneken, F. (2016). Insights into the biological foundation of human altruistic sentiments. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 7, 51-56.

Silk, J., Brosnan, S., Vonk, J., Henrich, J., Povinelli, D., Richardson, A. S., et al. (2005). Chimpanzees are indifferent to the welfare of unrelated group members. *Nature*, 437, 1357 - 1359.

6-Feb	Morality in evolution and development
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Tomasello, M. (2016). *A natural history of human morality*. Harvard University Press.

13-Feb	Movie time!
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Documentary: "Babies: Born to Be Good?"

A recent documentary on cutting edge research from developmental psychology laboratories around the world (especially Canada).

20-Feb	No class (Presidents Day)
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27-Feb	Morality: From babies to adults
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Bloom, P. (2013). *Just babies: The origins of good and evil*. Crown Publishing.

6-Mar	Moral judgment and conduct
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Kohlberg, L. (2008). The development of children's orientations toward a moral order. *Human Development*, 51(1), 8-20.

Killen, M., & Smetana, J. G. (2015). Origins and development of morality. *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science*.

13-Mar	No class (Spring Break)
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20-Mar	The human sense of fairness
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Children

Blake, P. R., & McAuliffe, K. (2011). "I had so much it didn't seem fair": Eight-year-olds reject two forms of inequity. *Cognition*, 120(2), 215-224.

Blake, P. R., McAuliffe, K., Corbit, J., Callaghan, T. C., Barry, O., Bowie, A., ... & Wrangham, R. (2015). The ontogeny of fairness in seven societies. *Nature*.

Fehr, E., Bernhard, H., & Rockenbach, B. (2008). Egalitarianism in young children. *Nature*, 454, 1079-1083.

Sloane, S., Baillargeon, R., & Premack, D. (2012). Do infants have a sense of fairness? *Psychological Science*, 23(2), 196 - 204.

Nonhuman primates

Brosnan, S. F., & de Waal, F. B. (2014). Evolution of responses to (un) fairness. *Science*, 346(6207), 1251776.

27-Mar	Are rules made to be broken? Children's understanding of ownership rights and other social conventions
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Review article

Rakoczy, H., & Schmidt, M. F. (2013). The early ontogeny of social norms. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7(1), 17-21.

Empirical studies

Gelman, S. A., Manczak, E. M., & Noles, N. S. (2012). The nonobvious basis of ownership: Preschool children trace the history and value of owned objects. *Child Development*, 83(5), 1732-1747.

Kanngiesser, P., Gjersoe, N., & Hood, B. M. (2010). The effect of creative labor on property-ownership transfer by preschool children and adults. *Psychological Science*, 21(9), 1236-1241.

Rossano, F., Rakoczy, H., & Tomasello, M. (2011). Young children's understanding of violations of property rights. *Cognition*, 121(2), 219-227.

3-Apr	Us and them: Intergroup bias and how to overcome it
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Review articles

Dunham, Y., Baron, A. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2008). The development of implicit intergroup cognition. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 12(7), 248-253.

Chapters by Bigler, Rhodes, and Rutland from: Banaji, M. R., & Gelman, S. A. (2013). *Navigating the social world: What infants, children, and other species can teach us*. Oxford University Press.

Empirical studies

Baron, A.S. & Banaji, M.R. (2006). The development of implicit attitudes: Evidence of race evaluations from ages 6 and 10 and adulthood. *Psychological Science*, 17(1), 53-58.

Rhodes, M., Leslie, S. J., & Tworek, C. M. (2012). Cultural transmission of social essentialism. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(34), 13526-13531.

10-Apr	The dark side of empathy: How groupishness limits morality
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Bloom, P. (2017). *Against empathy*. Bodley Head Limited.

17-Apr	The even darker side of no empathy: How to become a psychopath
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Baron-Cohen, S. (2012). *The science of evil: On empathy and the origins of cruelty*. Basic books.

24-Apr	Summary
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Final class discussion (no readings).

Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to present their letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, (specific date). Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation.

All written assignments must be your own work. Any portion of your writing which draws on an outside source must be cited appropriately, following APA guidelines (6th edition). Failure to document your sources or acknowledge collaboration is an ethical lapse that can have serious consequences. And remember, poor citation does not have to be intentional to be considered plagiarism.

For this course, the following paragraph from Harvard's "Guide to Using Sources" applies: "Collaboration permitted: Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard

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citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance." Please note that you are not permitted to share or divide up the work of reading and summarizing papers for your response papers.