

MBB 980R Psychopaths and Psychopathy: Psychological, Neuroscientific, Legal, and Policy Issues (spring 2018)

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Mind, Brain, and Behavior 980R, Wednesdays 3-5 p.m., Winthrop House B002 (lower level)

4 units of course credit, divisional distribution Social Sciences, course ID 207090, class # 21594

General Information. Psychopathy is often used to describe individuals who act in criminal even non-criminal predatory or conscience-less fashion. It is not, however, an official term in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, though antisocial personality disorder has in the past been described as encompassing psychopathy and sociopathy. Psychopathy was explored by Cleckley in his 1944 book *The Mask of Sanity*; and by Robert Hare in his 1999 book *Without Conscience*, and in his 2003 revision of his *Psychopathy Check-list*. My psychology department seminar on Psychopaths and Psychopathy in 2005-6 focused on research and case studies up to that time. By that time the American Psychiatric Association had issued a statement that psychopaths and those with antisocial personality disorder were not, for heuristic reasons, eligible for the insanity defense. Also, at that time, the determination that a convicted killer was a psychopath was often a strong indicator that the death penalty was warranted. In that seminar, the students prepared their research for inclusion in a workbook. It included answers to frequently asked questions and a series of case studies of both unsuccessful and successful white-collar and street psychopaths. Since then research has expanded to explore neuroscience and the disorder, and the related psychological, legal, and policy issues. In this seminar students will begin by examining the previous research, and then will examine and present and discuss more recent research. Each will lead some discussion, present a new case example, and write a final paper answering a question/investigating an issue of interest to the student.

This Interdisciplinary Seminar is discussion-based and meets once a week, during which students consider important readings and research on a topic or set of topics related to mind/brain/behavior. In lieu of exams, students usually prepare papers based on library or laboratory research, and grades are usually based on these papers and class participation.

Course Requirements

Participation and weekly responses (50%): Attend every seminar meeting and participate in discussions and in the ethics debate. In the class Google Docs folder, post brief weekly responses/questions to an assigned article. Be prepared to share your post each class.

Case Study (20%): Write a three to four page case study of an actual or purported psychopath/sociopath of your choice (after consultation). Present a brief summary to the class on March 13. [Schedule will be drawn by lot before all presentations].

Final Paper (30%): Choose one question/issue about psychopaths/psychopathy of special interest to you (after consultation) and write an eight to twelve page paper on that topic.

Present a brief summary to the class during one of the last three seminar meetings and provide thoughtful feedback on other students' presentations. [Schedule will be drawn by lot before all presentations].

Schedule [Readings available online]

1. Jan 30

Introduction and Definitions

Psychopathy; Antisocial Personality Disorder; Sociopathy

Seabrook, J. (2008). Suffering souls: The search for the roots of psychopathy.

The New Yorker, 11/10/08.

Raine, A. (2008). From genes to brain to antisocial behavior. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(5), 323-328

Sapolsky, R. M. (2018) Behave: The biology of humans at our best and worst. New York: Penguin Books [read various reviews]

2. Feb 6

Early examination of psychopathy and psychopaths

Cleckley and Hare and APA Diagnostic Manual

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5*. Arlington, VA : American Psychiatric Association, c2013. 5th ed.

Cleckley, H. (1976). The mask of sanity 5th edn. *St Louis: Mosby*. [optional]

Crego, C. & Widiger, T. A. (2016). Cleckley's psychopaths revisited.

Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 125(10), 75-87

Hare, R. D. (2016). Psychopathy, the PCL-R, and criminal justice: Some new findings and current issues. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 57(1), 21-34

Glenn, A. L., Johnson, A. K., & Raine, A. (2013). Antisocial personality disorder: A current review. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 15(12), 1-8

Introduction and characteristics (2006). [handouts from previous course workbook]

3. Feb 13

Media and popular portrayals of psychopaths

Conventional criminal psychopaths

Cases (2006) Bianchi; Bundy; Kaczynski and Murray; Capote and Hickock and Smith [handouts from previous course workbook]; Paddock; Tsarnaev

Eagleman, D. (2011). The brain on trial. *The Atlantic*, July/August 2011, 112-123.

4. Feb 20

*Unconventional criminal and non-criminal psychopaths
Doctors, business, and governmental leaders, often termed sociopaths
Psychopathic wisdom*

Case (2006). Stewart [handout from previous course workbook]

Aharoni, E., Sinnott-Armstrong, W., & Kiehl, K. A. (2012). Can psychopathic offenders discern moral wrongs?: A new look at the moral/conventional distinction. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 121*(2), 484-497.

Mathieu, C., Neumann, C. S., Hare, R. D., & Babiak, P. (2014). A dark side of leadership: Corporate psychopathy and its influence on employee well-being and job satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences, 59*, 83-88.

Gao, Y., & Raine, A. (2010). Successful and unsuccessful psychopaths: A neurobiological model. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 28*, 194-210.

Baskin-Sommers, A., Stuppy-Sullivan, A. M., & Buckholtz, J. W. (2016). Psychopathic individuals exhibit but do not avoid regret during counterfactual decision making. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 113*(50), 14438-14443. [optional]

5. Feb 27

Public Policy issues involving neuroimaging and psychopaths

Tobena, A. (2013). The wicked in court: a neuroscientific primer. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1299*, 1-10.

Jones, O. D., Buckholtz, J. W., Schall, J. D., & Marois, R. (2009). Brain imaging for legal thinkers: A guide for the perplexed. *Stanford Technology Law Review, 5*.

Glenn, A. L., Yang, Y., & Raine, A. (2012). Neuroimaging in psychopathy and antisocial personality disorder: Functional significance and a neurodevelopmental hypothesis. In J. R. Simpson (Ed.), *Neuroimaging in forensic psychiatry: From the clinic to the courtroom*, First Edition (pp. 81-98). Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Treadway, M. T., & Buckholtz, J. W. (2011). On the use and misuse of genomic and neuroimaging science in forensic psychiatry: current roles and future directions. *Child and adolescent psychiatric clinics of North America, 20*(3), 533-546. [optional]

Brown, T. & Murphy, E. (2010). Through a scanner darkly: Functional neuroimaging as evidence of a criminal defendant's past mental state. *Stanford Law Review, 62*(4), 1119-1208. [optional]

6. Mar 6

Goldwater rule debate: Diagnosing the President and others, and related ethical issues

Begley, S. (2017). Experts challenge the science behind ban on psychiatrists discussing politicians' mental health. *Stat*, 12/6/17.

Lee, B. X. (2017). *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 27 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books [read various reviews]

7. Mar 13

*Neuroscientific findings; brain structure and psychopaths
Presentations of case study papers*

Blair, R. J. R. (2013). The neurobiology of psychopathic traits in youths. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 14(11), 786-798.

Darby, R. R., Horn, A., Cushman, F., & Fox, M.D. (2017) Lesion network localization of criminal behavior. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, doi: 10.1073/pnas.1706587115 [optional]

Glenn, A. L. & Yang, Y. (2012). The potential role of the striatum in antisocial behavior and psychopathy. *Biological Psychiatry*, 72, 817-822. [optional]

8. Mar 27

Neuroscientific findings; brain function and psychopaths

Gao, Y., Glenn, A. L., Peskin, M., Rudo-Huff, A., Schub, R. A. et al. (2012). Neurocriminological Approaches. In D. Gadd, S. Karstedt, & S. F. Messner (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of criminological research methods*. UK, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Gunter, T. D., Vaughn, M. G., & Philibert, R. A. (2010). Behavioral genetics in antisocial spectrum disorders and psychopathy: A review of the recent literature. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 28, 148-173.

Garrett, N., Lazzaro, S. C., Ariely, D., & Sharot, T. (2016). The brain adapts to dishonesty. *Nature Neuroscience*, 19(12), 1727-1732. [optional]

Dadds, M. R., Moul, C., Cauchi, A., Dobson-Stone, C., Hawes, D. J. et al. (2014). Polymorphisms in the oxytocin receptor gene are associated with the development of psychopathy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 26(1), 21-31. [optional]

9. Apr 3

Social and philosophical considerations

Psychopaths and the legal system: mitigating, aggravating factors

Buckholtz, J. W. & Faigman, D. L. (2014). Promises, promises for neuroscience and law. *Current Biology*, 24(29), R861-R867

Aspinwall, L. G., Brown, T. R., & Tabery, J. (2012). The double-edged sword: Does biomechanism increase or decrease judges' sentencing of psychopaths? *Science*, 337, 846-849.

Cox, J., DeMatteo, D. S., & Foster, E. E. (2010). The effect of the Psychopathy Checklist--Revised in capital cases: mock jurors' responses to the label of psychopath. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 28(6), 878-891. [optional]

Saks, M. J., Schweitzer, N. J., Aharoni, E. & Kiehl, K. A. (2014) The impact of neuroimages in the sentencing phase of capital trials. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 11(1), 105-131. [optional]

10. Apr 10

Controversies: psychopathy in DSM, insanity defense, behavior vs. brain, genes, mandatory interventions, screening

Focquaert, F. (2014). Mandatory neurotechnological treatment: ethical issues. *Theoretical medicine and bioethics*, 35(1), 59-72.

Focquaert, F., Glenn, A. & Raine, A. (2013) Free will, responsibility, and the punishment of criminals. In Nadelhoffer, T. *The Future of Punishment*. Oxford Scholarship Online

Neuroscience nuance: Dissecting the relevance of neuroscience in adjudicating criminal culpability (n.d.) at lawneuro.org

[**Presentation schedules** below will be drawn by lot at end of today's class meeting.]

11, 12, 13. Apr 17, Apr 34, May 1

Presentations of term paper question/issue and research addressing it, with discussion led by presenter

14. May 5 **ALL papers due** by 3 p.m.

No late papers will be accepted for any reason, so it is important to begin early on the off chance that personal, computer, or other problems later arise. Plan ahead.

Important: Read the following statement as you undertake your work:

The Harvard College Honor Code

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

Then, **before** you hand in your papers, at the end of **each** of the two papers **add** and **sign** and **date** the following statement:

“I attest to the honesty of my academic work and affirm that it conforms to the standards of the Harvard College Honor Code.”