

MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

MA course, Philosophy

University of Tromsø

Autumn Semester, 2017

Course Overview

Moral psychology is a very broad church. Since it brings together moral philosophy and psychology it is also strongly interdisciplinary. Many topics belong here (from the basics of the free will debate to empirically infused philosophy of psychiatry) and this course therefore inevitably has to restrict itself only to some issues. (For a good historical as well as contemporary overview, see Nadelhoffer, Nahmias, Nichols (eds): *Moral Psychology*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). Since I prefer to focus in some depths on what we study, I chose two areas. The first, *motivation*, is a standard topic in moral psychology; in fact, it is one of its leading areas. We will discuss the nature of motivation (what motivates and why: desires, beliefs, else?) and the connection of motivation to morality (in particular, the internalism/externalism debate: are there truly amoral or immoral people?). The second topic is more on the fringe of moral psychology: *moral incapacity* (also called 'necessity'). Luther famously said (if he said it): "Here I stand, I can no others". Recently, Bernard Williams has turned this claim into a theoretical position grounded in his thinking about reasons and motivation and used it in his attack on the 'morality system'. Both topics – motivation and incapacity – are not restricted to morality and have connection to other philosophical areas (such as philosophy of action and practical philosophy in general). We will spend several weeks on each and this should give us a fairly detailed picture of what goes on in the relevant debates.

Form of instruction

The course will be taught through weekly 2-hour long seminars. Each seminar will discuss one piece of writing presented by one or more students.

Course Schedule

I. MOTIVATION

1. THE HUMEAN THEORY

Michael Smith "The Humean Theory of Motivation", *Mind* 96: 381 (1987), pp. 36-61

2. MOTIVATIONAL COGNITIVISM

R. Jay Wallace "How to Argue About Practical Reason", *Mind* 99: 395 (1990), pp. 355-

385.

3. COGNITIVISM, VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE

John McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 50-73. This is the essay "Virtue and Reason," originally published in *The Monist* 62 (1979): 331-50.

4. ANTI-PSYCHOLOGISM ABOUT REASONS FOR ACTION

Jonathan Dancy "Why There Is Really No Such Thing as the Theory of Motivation", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. xcv, (1994-5), pp. 1-18. Reprinted in R. J. Wallace ed. *Practical Reason* (Ashgate).

5. INTERNALISM VS. EXTERNALISM ABOUT MOTIVATION

Stephen Darwall "Internalism and Agency" *Philosophical Perspectives (Ethics)*, 6 (1992), pp. 155-174

6. THE AMORALIST CHALLENGE

Sigrun Svavarsdóttir "Moral Cognitivism and Moral Motivation" *Philosophical Review* 108: 2 (1999), pp. 161-219

7. EMOTION, MOTIVATION, MORAL JUDGMENT

Linda Zagzebski "Emotion and Moral Judgment" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 66: 1 (2003), pp. 104-124

II. MORAL INCAPACITY

8. WILLIAMS'S ON MORAL INCAPACITY

Bernard Williams "Practical Necessity" in. his *Moral Luck*, 1981, Cambridge UP, pp. 124-31 and "Moral Incapacity" in. his *Making Sense of Humanity*, 1995, CUP, pp. 46-56

9. WHAT IS MORAL INCAPACITY?

Robert J. Gay "Bernard Williams on Practical Necessity", *Mind* 98: 392 (1989), pp. 551-569

10. MORAL INCAPACITY AND SUPEREROGATION

Alfred Archer "Saints, Heroes and Moral Necessity", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 77 (2015), pp. 105-124

11. MORAL INCAPACITY AND REASONS

Christopher Corder "Ethical Necessity and Internal Reasons", *Philosophy* 76: 298 (2001), pp. 541-560

12. MORAL INCAPACITY AND META-ETHICS

Christopher Cowley "Moral Necessity and the Personal", *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 4: 10 (2004), pp. 123-138