Attention!

This is a representative syllabus.

The syllabus for the course when you enroll may be different.

Use the syllabus provided by your instructor for the most up-to-date information. Please refer to your instructor for more information for the specific requirements for a given semester.

Feel free to contact the Psychology Advising Office for any questions regarding psychology courses either by email (psychadvising@osu.edu) or phone (614.292.5750).

Thank you!
Objective
The objective of this course is to enable participants to gain an understanding of the major theories, findings, issues, and ontological implications entailed in the literature on lifespan sociomoral (and to some extent identity) development, and to gain particular sophistication with respect to selected topics in the pertinent literature.

Plan for Achieving the Objective
Participants will gain this understanding and sophistication through: completion and discussion of assigned readings (featuring discussions of questions as provided mainly by class members); development and completion of a paper relating to a selected topic pertaining to one or another of the readings; a class presentation of one's in-progress treatment of that paper topic; and discussions of the class presentations.

Reading Assignments
The common required reading for the course will consist of: (a) the instructor's (Gibbs, 2019) *Moral development and reality* (4th edition, Oxford University Press; ISBN 978-0-19-087821-4); and (b) a packet of readings (to be posted on Canvas). The Gibbs book can be purchased at the University Barnes & Noble (or online; make sure to get the fourth edition). Recommended is Martin Hoffman’s (2000) *Empathy and moral development: Implications for caring and justice.* New York: Cambridge University Press; ISBN 0-521-01299-X.) Of course, students will also be reading pertinent literature as they prepare their paper (see below).

Determinants of Grades
Grades for the course will be determined by performance on: (1) the paper; (2) midterm and final exams; and (3) class participation (see "Details Regarding Class Participation," below). These three factors will each count about one-third of the grade.

Details Regarding the Exams and Question Lists
Whereas the paper and class presentation/discussions provide an opportunity for individual synthesis and expression, the exams provide an opportunity for demonstrating mastery of knowledge and theory in moral development, that is, the field's "meat and potatoes." The “exams” will be more like exercises than examinations, since all of the questions will be drawn verbatim from the study questions. These questions will be embedded in PowerPoint presentations to be posted on Canvas by the instructor for the review of each reading assignment. There will be 12 short-answer questions on each of the 2 midterm exams, and 12 on the final exam (with two questions on each exam being "throw-away" items). The final exam will cover the post-midterm assignments only. Of course, the instructor is required to report to the Committee on Academic Misconduct any instances of student academic misconduct wherever committed (for example,
plagiarism or other dishonest practices in connection with examinations; see Code of Student Conduct [http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/](http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/).

Students with disabilities certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services (098 Baker Hall, 113 West 12th Avenue; [http://www.slds.osu.edu](http://www.slds.osu.edu)) will be appropriately accommodated, and should notify the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. Students seeking help to improve their academic skills should contact the Dennis Learning Center ([https://dennislearningcenter.osu.edu](https://dennislearningcenter.osu.edu)).

Details Regarding the Paper
Students will each prepare and write one paper for the class. Paper topics will be selected from the list of paper topic areas provided later in this syllabus. The areas pertain to those addressed in the course readings, and are arranged in at least rough correspondence with the sequence of reading assignments.

As noted, the objective of students as they develop their papers will be to gain particular sophistication with respect to their chosen topic. Accordingly, the paper should reflect diligent and comprehensive library work (helpful in this connection are consultations with reference librarians as well as on-line services such as PsycInfo, Oscar, and OhioLink). The [GoogleScholar.com](https://www.google.com/scholar) data base can be useful but does not include proprietary resources such as PsycInfo; other web sources may be suspect and are not encouraged. In addition to its scholarly substance, the paper should entail organization, coherence, and reflective thought. Specific requirements are that the papers: (a) make reference at some point to the pertinent required reading; (b) utilize and cite at least 5 references; and (c) are typed double-spaced for a total length of between five and fifteen pages. Papers are due on the last regular class session before the final examination period.

Details Regarding Class Participation
Class participation entails: (a) attendance; (b) of course, reading each assignment (and working with the associated study questions by the assignment due date); (c) contribution of questions (based on the required reading) for class discussion; and (d) a class presentation based on what one has been learning in working on one's paper. The paper presentations will be graded highly satisfactory, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory by the criteria indicated above. Regarding discussion question contributions, students are encouraged (but not required) to prepare at least one question per assignment. The question should be typed if possible, with one's name and the assignment/date at the top of the page and submitted at the end of the class session. Ideal class participation would entail, then: perfect or near-perfect attendance; a highly satisfactory class presentation; prompt attention to the assignment questions; and a contribution of at least one discussion question (asked in class) for most assignments. Class members are invited to consider how the readings relate to research projects in which they are or have been involved.

**Discussion Agenda for Required Readings**  (Note: A separate agenda will be provided for dates of seminar presentations.)
August 24 (Tues.). Preliminary, introductory, and organizational. Study questions (embedded in a PowerPoint-based handout) for the first assignment (to be posted).

I. Overview and Basic Themes (see paper topic areas 1-10)

A. Sociomoral development and behavior (including methods)


B. Identity development


Sept. 16 (Thurs.). Midterm Exam I.

II. Topics in Sociomoral Development and Behavior (generally, see paper topic areas 11-20)

A. Cognitive developmental approach to morality


B. Empathy development and moral internalization


Oct. 14 (Thurs.). **NO CLASSES (AU break).**


Oct. 21 (Thurs.). Midterm Exam II.


C. Moral development and social behavior (prosocial, antisocial)


III Larger Issues (see paper topic areas 21-25)
A. Moral development and reality, Conclusion


B. Moral quandaries and cross-cultural issues

Nov. 23 (Tues). CLASS CANCELLED.

Nov. 25 (Thurs.). No classes; Have a happy Thanksgiving!


Dec. 15 (Wednesday), 4:00 p.m.-5:45 p.m.: Final exam.
I. Overview and Basic Themes (topic areas 1-10)

1. Comparison of basic theoretical approaches to morality/moral development/human social behavior
2. Haidt’s social intuitionist or moral foundations theory; Haidt’s proposed new synthesis in the study of morality; neo-nativism; sociobiology; evolutionary moral psychology
3. Sandel’s communitarian perspective or approach
4. Morality of early childhood; Wynn’s/Bloom’s baby morality; Dunne’s morality of early childhood
5. Nature/nurture issues in morality/moral development
7. Methodological approaches/issues in the study of morality/moral emotions/moral cognition/sociomoral development/social behavior
8. Approaches to “the moral” in history of philosophy; relations of moral philosophy to moral psychology; emotivism vs. constructivism; social domain theory
9. Conceptualization/evaluation of the stage construct; schema theory; processes and stages of moral development
10. Relations between cognitive development, moral development and identity development; identity development during adolescence, the college years

II. Topics in Sociomoral Development and Behavior (topic areas 11-20)

11. Cognitive-developmental approach to moral development/social behavior; social perspective-taking; theory of mind
12. Evaluating Kohlberg's stages of moral judgment development
13. Nature of empathy, development of the empathic predisposition; moral emotions and cognition; Bloom’s “against empathy” challenge
14. Children's developing conceptions of distributive justice, friendship, authority
15. Parenting, disciplinary practices (role of empathy), moral socialization or internalization; family systems and moral development; parents and adolescents
16. Moral, character, civic, social studies, or values education (including prevention programs)
17. Empathy and altruistic behavior; justice and social causes; role of moral identity/moral self-relevance, moral exemplars, whistle blowers, or individual differences in prosocial behavior; field independence, self-efficacy, ego strength
18. Information-processing models of social behavior; automaticity, schema activation
19. Understanding aggression or antisocial behavior (delinquency, school or Internet bullies, callous and unemotional traits, psychopathy, sexual offenders); role of biological factors, child abuse, neglect; role of the family, peer group; role of cognitive distortions or deviant modes of social information processing; media influences
20. Treating or preventing antisocial behavior; intervention programs for the psychopathic, violent, or sexual offender; moral (values, civic, character, etc.) or cognitive-behavioral/psycheducational curricula/intervention programs for bullies or delinquents, adult offenders

III Larger Issues (topic areas 21-25)

21. Relations of moral development to existential or spiritual development, flourishing (eudamonia), deeper reality; contribution of the near-death experience to moral development/behavior
22. The multiple-claimant question, in-group (here-and-now, familiarity-similarity) bias; communitarian moral identity; evolutionary/other approaches and altruism beyond one’s local community (see also moral examplars in topic area 17)
23. Gender differences, care-versus justice issues in morality/moral development/social behavior
24. Cross-cultural universality vs. moral relativism or pluralism issues, e.g., in Kohlberg’s or Hoffman’s theory vis a vis Haidt’s.
25. Issues in moral motivation (as conceptualized by Rest, Kohlberg, Hoffman, Haidt, Bloom, others)