

PSY475: Collaborative Research in Moral Psychology

Fall 2016: Thursdays, 1:30-4:20pm, LSP 130

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 1:30-4:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description

Students will conduct experimental research on relevant theoretical issues within the field of moral psychology. Topics may include investigations of the scope of moral concern, perceptions of moral virtue, children's acquisition of moral beliefs, contributions of emotions to moral judgment, and other related areas that reflect student interest. Techniques for designing, conducting, analyzing, and presenting empirical research will be discussed, practiced, and implemented.

Course Objectives

This class is not about covering content or acquiring information. Instead of *learning* moral psychology, you will be *doing* moral psychology. This is similar to an apprenticeship, in which you are acquiring the requisite tools of the researcher's trade. Specifically, your task is to become a true scientist by broadening the field's knowledge about a question that has not yet been fully answered. In collaboration with 1–2 peers, you will spend the semester proposing a novel empirical hypothesis informed by the current literature, creatively designing a research methodology to test your hypothesis, and collecting data to yield answers about the veracity of your hypothesis. This will culminate in an oral or poster presentation to the Psychology Department and an APA-style manuscript detailing the motivation, procedures, results, and implications of your research project.

Course Requirements

As detailed below, you will be assessed by your performance on the following assignments (100 points total):

Participation & Teamwork	Lab Log	Hypothesis Brainstorm & Annotated Bibliography	HSR Protocol	Paper Drafts	Peer Reviews	Team Presentation	Final Paper
15 pts.	10 pts.	5 pts.	5 pts.	15 pts.	5 pts.	15 pts.	30 pts.

The hands-on, product-driven nature of this course necessitates that class meetings are structured somewhat differently than what you have become accustomed to in 300-level psychology courses. For this course to be most productive, most class meetings will involve working through specific issues tailored to each team's research project. In some cases, you will be helping other teams, and in other cases you will be collaborating with your teammate(s) to brainstorm, troubleshoot, and move forward in achieving goals at each step of the research process. Some weeks will involve more outside work than others, and Prof. Rottman reserves the right to require occasional team meetings outside of class to provide additional individualized feedback.

There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings are available as PDF files on the Canvas course website or will be distributed as hard copies. Unless otherwise noted, rubrics will be distributed to explain grading criteria for each assignment.

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned as follows (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number):

A 93–100	A- 90–92	B+ 87–89	B 83–86	B- 80–82	C+ 77–79
C 73–76	C- 70–72	D+ 67–69	D 63–66	D- 60–62	F 0–59

Participation & Teamwork

This class requires active engagement and consistently pulling your weight as part of a cooperative team. Therefore, attendance is mandatory, and it is absolutely crucial that you come to every class prepared to make progress on your research project. You are expected to be punctual and to bring all assigned readings to class with you. If you have a valid reason for being absent or late, it is your responsibility to immediately notify your teammate(s) and Prof. Rottman with some options for making up lost time. However, this will only be excused in exceptional circumstances, and written documentation must be provided.

This class requires a great deal of collaboration with your classmates. Please respect a diversity of opinions and questions, and remain constructive and considerate in your interactions. You and your teammate(s) are expected to contribute equally in all tasks. Neither free riding nor domineering will be tolerated.

Written and Oral Assignments

Lab Log

Conducting research requires meticulous attention to detail. In order to facilitate this, you will be required to keep a running log of decisions you make with respect to your research project. This will include your plans for participant recruitment, your plan for data analysis, and descriptions of stimuli that you develop for your research project, as well as records of daily activity and issues that arise when testing participants. You are allowed to work on this alongside your teammate(s), but you should keep an individual copy that is written in your own words. This should take the form of a Google Doc or Sheet that you will share with Prof. Rottman so that feedback can be continually provided throughout the semester. A template and set of requirements will be provided in class. This assignment will be graded on a three-point ($\sqrt{-}$, $\sqrt{}$, $\sqrt{+}$) scale.

Hypothesis Generation

In order to begin honing in on novel and interesting paths of research, you will generate 10 testable causal hypotheses relating to theoretical issues in moral psychology. These hypotheses should be worth pursuing because they shed light on a currently understudied or unknown facet of moral cognition or moral development, and (ideally) because the knowledge that they produce has the potential to meaningfully impact the world. The creative process of formulating hypotheses will be aided by reading the assigned paper by McGuire (1997), which identifies 49 hypothesis-generation heuristics. You should identify the heuristic(s) you used to generate at least five of your hypotheses. This assignment will be graded on a three-point ($\sqrt{-}$, $\sqrt{}$, $\sqrt{+}$) scale.

Annotated Bibliography

You should perform an initial literature review for three of your ten hypotheses (whichever seem most exciting and productive to pursue), and create an annotated bibliography of three peer-reviewed empirical sources for each of these three hypotheses (250–500 words per source), for a total of nine reputable and relevant sources. The description of each reading should include a summary of methods and findings and a reflection about how it informs your own hypothesis. This can be written informally and may take the form of bullet points. This assignment will be graded on a three-point ($\sqrt{-}$, $\sqrt{}$, $\sqrt{+}$) scale.

Human Subjects Research Protocol

Because you will be recruiting human subjects as participants, an external board of reviewers will need to ensure that your testing procedures are ethical. In this application, which you will write and submit as a team, you will describe your research protocol in sufficient detail for others to evaluate its ethical soundness. It is not permissible to recruit or test human subjects until the ethics committee has approved your application, so it is crucial that this protocol is well written and thorough in order to avoid delays in the research process. This assignment will be graded on a three-point ($\sqrt{-}$, $\sqrt{}$, $\sqrt{+}$) scale. Barring exceptional circumstances, all members of a team will receive the same grade.

Peer Review

A major component of the research process involves submitting one's work to be assessed by colleagues. Nearly all articles that are published in reputable academic journals undergo a rigorous process of peer review. Reviewers are expected to evaluate manuscripts at multiple levels, from basic mechanics (e.g., grammar, clarity) to more essential points (e.g., interpretation of data, novelty of hypotheses, exhaustiveness of literature review). You will be given two opportunities during the semester to review manuscripts written by members of other teams: the initial draft of the Introduction and the final draft of the full paper. Each of these peer reviews will be worth 2.5 points and will be graded on a three-point ($\sqrt{-}$, $\sqrt{}$, $\sqrt{+}$) scale.

Talk or Poster Presentation

Presenting work in talk or poster format is a crucial element of disseminating research to broad audiences. In order to provide you with practice with this component of the research process, you will be required to present your findings at the Psychology Research Symposium during the evening of December 6. A rubric will be distributed to explain specific expectations and grading criteria. Barring exceptional circumstances, all members of a team will receive the same grade.

Empirical Paper

Your primary assignment in this course is to produce a manuscript presenting your empirical study. This will be submitted in several stages (for details, see the Semester Schedule). Even though you will be designing and conducting the research collaboratively, **the entirety of your paper should be written independently**. The Introduction and Discussion sections should each be a minimum of 1,000 words. The Methods and Results will vary in length depending on the study you choose to conduct, and should be sufficiently long to provide readers with a complete understanding of the procedure and analyses (such that an independent researcher could replicate your work). Rubrics will be distributed to explain specific expectations and grading criteria for each section of the paper. The final version of the paper will be due during the exam period (date T.B.A.).

Course Policies

Grading Policy

The main objective of this course is to train you as a scientist, not to constantly put you the test. In order to ensure that you are acquiring the requisite skills, you will have the opportunity to submit assignments multiple times. You may submit a draft of any written assignment 72 hours in advance in order to receive feedback and a preliminary grade. Additionally, you may submit one rewrite of any assignment up to two weeks after receiving a grade and comments. Your grade on the assignment will then be updated in accordance with the quality of the final submission.

If you receive a grade that is inconsistent with what you believe you should have earned, you have a week to set up an appointment to appeal your grade. When scheduling this appointment, you must submit a written statement explaining your case. After one week has passed, all grades are considered final (unless you decide to submit a rewrite the following week).

Policy on Late Assignments

You will lose one point for every day that an assignment is late. This late penalty will carry over to the final grade on rewrites. In extreme cases when unexpected and unavoidable circumstances prevent you from completing an assignment on time, please inform Prof. Rottman as soon as possible, and he will use his discretion to determine whether to waive the grade deduction.

Policy on Electronic Devices

This class will require frequent use of laptops (e.g., when you are working with data, conducting online literature searches, or otherwise engaged in work requiring specialized software or internet access). In order to maximize your success and minimize the possibility for distractions, you should only use electronic devices during times when they are necessary. Exceptions will be granted for students with compelling reasons for using a laptop to take notes (if this is the case, please speak with me privately).

Academic Integrity

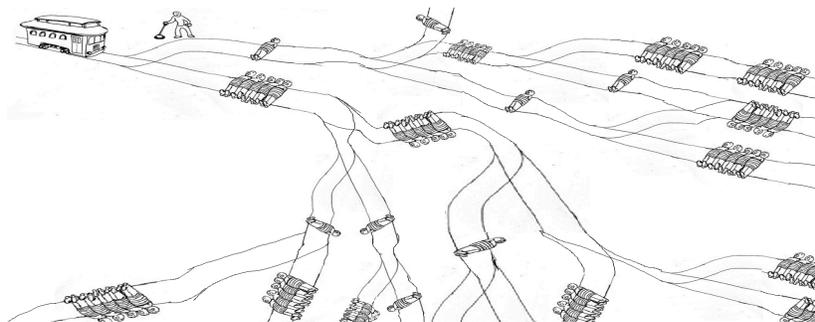
I take academic honesty **very** seriously. (After all, you're taking a class on morality – you should know that dishonesty is wrong!) You risk severe consequences by committing acts of plagiarism (i.e., representing someone else's work as your own), cheating, falsification, impersonating, or other similar offenses, including facilitating another student in committing an act of academic dishonesty. Penalties for these offenses will be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis, and may include receiving a failing grade in the course or expulsion from F&M. Please refer to the Franklin & Marshall College Catalog for additional details.

Disability Accommodations

Academic accommodations are available for students who require them. Please schedule an appointment with Prof. Rottman immediately to discuss any accommodations for this course that have been supported by appropriate documentation and approved by the Office of Disability Services. All information will be kept confidential.

Other Tips

This class will be intensive. You will be expected to consistently keep up with the required work, which may require extensive outside time during certain points in the semester (e.g., data collection). However, Prof. Rottman is here to help you succeed. He will be available to talk in his office during the times listed at the top of the syllabus, by appointment, and anytime when his door is open. If any issues arise that have the potential to interfere with your success in the course, please be in touch with him as soon as possible. Additionally, please feel free to take advantage of the many other resources that Franklin & Marshall has to offer! For example, the Writing Center (located on the second level of Diagonothian Hall) can assist you with writing and other academic skills, and Counseling Services (located in College Square) offers free initial consultations and emergency visits to support your wellbeing, with walk-ins every afternoon after 3pm. Librarians will also be a crucial resource for this course.



Semester Schedule

Components of this schedule are subject to change in order to best suit the needs of specific research projects.

Date	Class Topic	Assignments (to be completed before each class)
9/1	Conducting research in moral psychology	Assigned Reading: Class syllabus.
9/8	Narrowing down study hypotheses; Literature searches	Assigned Reading: McGuire, W. J. (1997). Creative hypothesis generating in psychology: Some useful heuristics. <i>Annual Review of Psychology</i> , 48, 1–30. Assignment Submission: Brainstorm of ten testable causal hypotheses
9/15	Operationalizing study variables; Experimental design	Assigned Reading: Stanovich, K. (2013). <i>How to think straight about psychology</i> (pp. 37–52, 107–121). Assignment Submission: Annotated bibliography for three hypotheses
9/22	Ethical issues in conducting human subjects research	Assigned Reading: T.B.A., depending on class study populations Assignment Submission: Draft of study methods
9/29	QALMRI; Constructive critiques of research designs	Assigned Reading: Excerpt from Kosslyn, S. M., & Rosenberg, R. S. (2001). <i>Psychology: The brain, the person, the world</i> . Assignment Submission: Draft of human subjects research protocol
10/6	Data collection procedures	Assigned Reading: T.B.A., depending on class study designs Assignment Submission: Final human subjects research protocol
10/13	Writing introductions for empirical papers	Assigned Reading: Bem, D. J. (2004). Writing the empirical journal article. In <i>The Compleat Academic</i> (pp. 185–219). Assignment Submission: Plans for participant recruitment
10/20	Tips and techniques for scientific writing; Peer review	Assigned Reading: Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. (2000). <i>The elements of style</i> (pp. 66–85). Assignment Submission: Draft of paper introduction
10/27	Participant recruiting and scheduling	Assigned Reading: Roberts, L. W., et al. (2004). How to review a manuscript: A “down-to-earth” approach. <i>Academic Psychiatry</i> , 28, 81–87. Assignment Submission: Peer review of introductions
11/3	Troubleshooting; Data entry and statistical analysis	Assigned Reading: Pelham, B. W., & Blanton, H. (2003). <i>Conducting research in psychology: Measuring the weight of smoke</i> , 2 nd ed. (pp. 286–309). Assignment Submission: Updated draft of introduction and draft of methods
11/10	Writing results and discussion sections; APA format	Assigned Reading: <i>APA Publication Manual</i> , 6 th ed. (pp. 169–224). Assignment Submission: SPSS data file and data analysis plan
11/17	Presenting scientific research	Assigned Reading: Pelham, B. W., & Blanton, H. (2003). <i>Conducting research in psychology: Measuring the weight of smoke</i> , 2 nd ed. (pp. 310–329). Assignment Submission: Draft of results, discussion, and bibliography
12/1	Constructive feedback on practice presentations	Assigned Video: Saxe, R. (2009, July). How we read each other’s minds. <i>TED</i> . [http://bit.ly/1EUk3ro] Assignment Submission: Talk or poster presentation (submitted as a PPT file)
12/6	*** PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM: 7:00pm – 10:00pm ***	
12/8	Celebration at Prof. Rottman’s house	Assignment Submission: Completed lab log and peer review of full paper drafts <i>The final research paper will be due during the exam period (date/time T.B.A.).</i>

Other Important Dates

September 14	September 28	November 24	December 2
Last day to add classes or withdraw (without record)	Last day to elect P/NP option	Happy Thanksgiving! No class.	Last day to withdraw (with record)