



PHIL2026

The Moral Psychology of Good and Evil

Session 1, Weekday attendance, North Ryde 2020

Department of Philosophy

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	4
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	5
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	8

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Kelly Hamilton

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Is morality more a matter of reason or of passion? While we often think of strong emotions and desires as a threat to virtue, recent work in psychology and neuroscience has tended to support affect-based accounts of morality. This evidence suggests that moral judgments are intuitive, emotional judgments and that paradigmatically evil individuals such as psychopaths are deficient in empathy not in reason. Empathy or sympathy is commonly thought essential to the development of conscience, moral understanding, and morally good action. Yet most evil actions are not performed by psychopaths. We will critically examine philosophical and psychological literature on the contribution of a range of cognitive processes -e.g., memory, emotion, mindreading, planning and imagination - to moral competence and moral motivation. We will also examine the influence of social roles, identity, and disease or disorder in explaining both ordinary and extreme cases of wrongdoing.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of important philosophical moral concepts, which may include conscience, sympathy, duty, evil, or character.

ULO2: demonstrate a good general understanding of how contemporary philosophical and psychological research each contribute to our knowledge of the cognitive and affective capacities that underpin moral judgment and moral motivation

ULO3: analyse and critically evaluate relevant competing philosophical theories and arguments.

ULO4: manage study projects effectively and communicate clearly and courteously a personal perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit.

ULO5: apply the theoretical knowledge gained to analysis and evaluation of case studies of evil.

Assessment Tasks

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Assessment details are no longer provided here as a result of changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Students should consult [iLearn](#) for revised unit information.

[Find out more about the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and potential impacts on staff and students](#)

General Assessment Information

Assessing Active Participation

Active participation is assessed by a student's engagement in activities such as: discussions facilitated by the lecturer/tutor, contributions to online discussion forums, or general questions asked during lectures or tutorials and involvement in set activities. Participation is expected to be well considered and relevant to the unit of study.

Assignment Submission

The written assignments will be submitted electronically via Turnitin. This unit uses anonymous marking. A link to the Turnitin submission page will be provided on iLearn in the Assessments tab. Written assessments will be run through the Turnitin software which detects unoriginal work.

The online quizzes will be available on iLearn. Each quiz can only be undertaken once and has a time limit.

Extensions and Penalties for Late Submission

All assessments must be submitted on time unless an extension has been granted. Requests for extensions must be made in writing before the due date and will only be considered on serious grounds. To obtain an extension, you must submit a [Special Consideration application](#).

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply - two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for written assignments submitted after the due date - and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments - e.g. online quizzes. For the oral tutorial presentation, the student must contact the tutor with the details of the outcome of the Special Consideration request within

seven (7) days of the scheduled date of the presentation, in order to reschedule the presentation.

Special Consideration Policy

The University classifies a disruption to study as serious and unavoidable if it:

- could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided, or guarded against by the student; and
- was beyond the student's control; and
- caused substantial disruption to the student's capacity for effective study and/or completion of required work; and
- occurred during an event critical study period and was at least three (3) consecutive days duration; and/or
- prevented completion of a final examination.

Students with a pre-existing disability/health condition, or prolonged adverse circumstances may be eligible for ongoing assistance and support. Such support is governed by other policies and may be sought and coordinated through [Student Wellbeing and Support Services](#).

To submit a Special Consideration request, go to ask.mq.edu.au.

Delivery and Resources

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19.

Please check here for updated delivery information: https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status

Required Readings

All required readings and most supplementary readings are available from the library via Leganto, which should be accessed via the link on iLearn. There is no reader for this unit. A schedule of required readings and supplementary readings can be found on the PHIL2026 iLearn homepage. The student is responsible for gaining access to the readings. It is expected that you will have done the relevant reading before class.

Technology Used and Required

This unit has an online presence on iLearn. Lectures are recorded and are available via Echo (on iLearn). Lecture slides and any other material you need will be available through the iLearn website. The student is expected to have access to a reliable internet connection throughout semester.

Contacting the Teaching Staff

If the student has an inquiry, the first point of contact is the tutor. If the tutor is unable to assist,

the tutor will forward the inquiry to the convenor.

Unit Schedule

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

The unit schedule/topics and any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19. Please consult [iLearn](#) for latest details, and check here for updated delivery information: https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status

The lectures will take place on Mondays (12:00) and Fridays (12:00). Tutorials are scheduled for Monday and Fridays.

NB! This course is designed to develop independent research skills, and so students are required to read the required readings before the lectures. This means the quizzes are set before the lectures, and the tutorials will be concerned with the same material as the lectures. The schedule is arranged so that students can prepare for the following week's classes by reading the required readings over the weekend, completing the quiz that weekend, and then attending lectures and tutorials (or forum discussions for online students) to discuss the readings further.

- There are 10 online quizzes, which are each open for one week and will close on the Sunday 11:59pm BEFORE the Monday lecture.
- There are 10 tutorials/forum discussions.

Week 1 (24 Feb): Introduction: Moral judgement and moral motivation

1. Introduction: evil and the amoralist challenge
 2. Evil and psychopathy
- No tutorial
 - Quiz 0 – sample quiz (on week 1's readings): ungraded
 - Quiz 1 (on week 2's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 2 (2 Mar): What is evil?

1. Theories of evil
 2. Ordinary evildoers
- Tutorial 1 (on week 2's readings)
 - Quiz 2 (on week 3's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 3 (9 Mar): Evil and bad morality: The role of reason and sympathy

1. Evil and bad morality: principles and sympathy
2. Egoism and altruism

- Tutorial 2 (on week 3's readings)
- Quiz 3 (on week 4's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 4 (16 Mar): Emotion-based accounts of moral judgement and motivation in philosophy and psychology

1. Philosophical accounts: Hume's sentimentalism
 2. Contemporary sentimentalism: Accounts from developmental and experimental psychology
- Tutorial 3 (on week 4's readings)
 - Quiz 4 (on week 5's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 5 (23 Mar): Reason-based accounts of moral judgement and motivation in philosophy and psychology

1. Philosophical accounts: Kant's moral rationalism
 2. Rationalism and moral development
- Tutorial 4 (on week 5's readings)
 - Quiz 5 (on week 6's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 6 (30 Mar): Testing the accounts: Psychopathy

1. Rationalism and psychopathy
 2. Empirical rationalism
- Tutorial 5 (on week 6's readings)
 - No quiz.

Deadline: Short Essay due on Sunday 5 April.

Week 7 (6 Apr): Testing the accounts: Autism

1. Autism, empathy and moral agency
 2. *No lecture on Friday 10 April (public holiday)*
- No tutorial
 - Quiz 6 (on week 8's readings): closes Sunday 26 April 11:59pm

Semester break: 13 - 24 April

Week 8 (27 Apr): Mad or bad?

1. Disease and disorder
 2. Psychopathy: Bad character or psychological incapacity?
- Tutorial 6 (on week 8's readings)

- Quiz 7 (on week 9's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 9 (4 May): What do we lack when we lack conscience?

1. What is conscience?
 2. Conscience and moral agency
- Tutorial 7 (on week 9's readings)
 - Quiz 8 (on week 10's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 10 (11 May): Moral identity

1. Moral motivation and the mediating role of moral identity
 2. Motivation by principle
- Tutorial 8 (on week 10's readings)
 - Quiz 9 (on week 11's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 11 (18 May): Moral Responsibility and Moral Motivation

1. Moral emotions and responsibility
 2. Responsibility and moral impairment
- Tutorial 9 (on week 11's readings)
 - Quiz 10 (on week 12's readings): closes Sunday 11:59pm

Week 12 (25 May): Evil and Responsibility: Can someone be evil but not responsible?

1. Psychopathy and responsibility
 2. Evil and responsibility
- Tutorial 10 (on week 10's readings)
 - No quiz

Week 13 (1 Jun): Writing week

- No lectures
- No tutorials
- No quiz

Deadline: Major Essay due on Sunday 7 June.

Unit Schedule Summary

Week	Topic	Tutorial/ Forum	Quiz	Assessment

1. 24 Feb	Introduction: moral judgement and moral motivation	-	Quiz 0 Quiz 1	
2. 2 Mar	What is evil?	Tutorial 1	Quiz 2	
3. 9 Mar	Evil and bad morality	Tutorial 2	Quiz 3	
4. 16 Mar	Emotion-based accounts of moral judgement and moral motivation	Tutorial 3	Quiz 4	
5. 23 Mar	Reason-based accounts of moral judgement and moral motivation	Tutorial 4	Quiz 5	
6. 30 Mar	Testing the accounts: Psychopathy	Tutorial 5	-	Short Essay due 5 Apr
7. 6 Apr	Testing the accounts: Autism	-	Quiz 6	
<i>Recess: 13 – 23 April</i>				
8. 27 Apr	Mad or bad?	Tutorial 6	Quiz 7	
9. 4 May	What do we do when we lack conscience?	Tutorial 7	Quiz 8	
10. 11 May	Moral identity	Tutorial 8	Quiz 9	
11. 18 May	Moral responsibility and moral motivation	Tutorial 9	Quiz 10	
12. 25 May	Evil and responsibility	Tutorial 10	-	
13. 1 Jun	<i>Writing Week</i>	-	-	Major Essay due 7 Jun

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)

- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide

appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.