Psych 612. Seminar in Advanced Social Psychology: Ideology and Morality
Fall 2010; Thursdays, noon-3:50pm; SGM807

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30am-11:30am; or by appointment (email me)

Course Description:
This course covers empirical approaches to ideology and morality, two areas currently undergoing a resurgence of interest in social psychology. Rather than try to cover the entire history of these two considerable fields, the class will focus on getting to know the current state of the science: ongoing debates and unanswered questions. We will also get to know the people who are at the forefront of this science, focusing each week on a particular person’s line of research and interacting with them in class via skype. The primary goal of the course is for students to develop their own research programs that bridge their existing interests with current work on the psychology of ideology and morality.

Course Assignments:
(1) Discussion Questions: Each week students will submit a discussion question or critique on the week’s readings (12 total), to be submitted to session organizer (via Blackboard) by Tuesday at midnight. These should be between 300 and 600 words. These questions, plus class participation, make up 30% of the total grade.

(2) Leading Discussion: Each student in the class will be session organizer for one week. Session organizer will compile the week’s discussion questions, organize the questions to promote class discussion (putting questions to be asked of the skype guest stars first), and lead off class discussion. A word document with the organized questions should be sent out to the class by 10pm Wednesday night. This task is worth 10% of the total grade.

(3) Research proposal and presentation: The research proposal should raise a question/problem inspired by the class content and propose an empirical study to address that question or problem. The paper should be presented as an empirical report in APA format, and be 15 pages or less (double-spaced; 1" margins; 11-12 point font). In addition to the introduction and methods, a brief results section should report the expected result (hypothetical data), and a discussion should present the implications of the expected finding. Proposals will be presented in class November 18 and December 2. Each student will give a 15-minute powerpoint presentation of the idea, methods, expected results, and implications, followed by 15 minutes of feedback from the class. Feedback should be incorporated into the paper, which will be due at midnight December 15. The paper will count for 40% of the total grade, and the presentation will count for 20% of the total grade.
Course Schedule:
*Note: Readings not hyperlinked below (or linked with restricted access) will be available on Blackboard.

SECTION 1: IDEOLOGY

Week 1 (8/26): Introduction to course and researchers
Readings:
None

Week 2 (9/2): A Brief History of the Psychology of Ideology
Readings:


Week 3 (9/9): Motivated Social Cognition and System Justification
Skype Guest Star: John Jost, NYU

Readings:


Week 4 (9/16): Ideology and Political Expertise
Skype Guest Star: Christopher Federico, UMN
Readings:


Week 5 (9/23): Motivation and Self-Regulation
Skype Guest Star: Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, UMass-Amherst

Readings:


*Also read the “authors respond to two questions” section of Psychological Inquiry’s special issue on ideology.

SECTION 2: MORALITY

Week 6 (9/30): Moral Neuroscience
Skype Guest Star: Josh Greene, Harvard

Readings:


[supporting information is optional]

Week 7 (10/7): Morality and Development
Skype Guest Star:
**Paul Bloom**, Yale

Readings:


Week 8 (10/14): Embodied Morality
Skype Guest Star:
**Simone Schnall**, Cambridge

Readings:


Week 9 (10/21): Experimental Moral Philosophy
Skype Guest Star:
Joshua Knobe, Yale

Readings:


SECTION 3: IDEOLOGY AND MORALITY

Week 10 (10/28): Moral Foundations Theory
Skype Guest Star:
Jon Haidt, UVA

Readings:


Week 11 (11/4): Ideology and Moral Conviction
Skype Guest Star:
Linda Skitka, UIC

Readings:


Week 12 (11/11): Character, Emotion, and Motivated Moral Reasoning
Skype Guest Star: 
David Pizarro, Cornell

Readings:


SECTION 4: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Week 13 (11/18): Research Project Presentations
Guest Stars: 
A randomly-selected half of the class.

Week 14 (11/25): NO CLASS
Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 15 (12/2): Research Project Presentations
Guest Stars: 
A randomly-selected half of the class.