

# PSYC 194: PSYCHOLOGY OF RIGHT AND WRONG

Fall 2017

Class: MWF 1:10-2:10, OLRI 370

Course website: <https://moodle.macalester.edu/course/view.php?id=441>

## **Instructor:**

Steve Guglielmo ([sgugliel@macalester.edu](mailto:sgugliel@macalester.edu))  
Office: OLRI 327  
Phone: 696-6112  
Office hours: Mon 2:30-3:30 and Tue 10-11 (and by appointment)

## **Course Assistant:**

Abby Fleeter ([afleeter@macalester.edu](mailto:afleeter@macalester.edu))  
Office hours: Sun 4-5:30 PM (and by appointment)  
Office hours location: OLRI 370

## **Required texts:**

*Against Empathy* (by Paul Bloom)

*They Say / I Say* (by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Welcome to Macalester and to your First Year Course!

This course will provide an interdisciplinary investigation of moral judgment and moral behavior. Drawing heavily from research in psychology, but also from fields like sociology, philosophy, and artificial intelligence, we will explore numerous questions about what morality is, how empathy and compassion relate to morality, how we think about and perpetuate various forms of social inequality, and how we morally evaluate our own and others' behavior.

I've designed this course to meet several goals:

- To help you get acclimated to the Macalester community and college life.
- To build your skills in examining moral behavior — and social behavior, more generally — from a social scientific perspective. This includes identifying research hypotheses, understanding the relationship between hypotheses and empirical data, considering alternative explanations, and connecting theories to applied or real-world patterns of behavior.
- To give you a space to engage deeply with course material, to discuss and defend your ideas, and to respectfully critique and debate others' ideas.
- To help you become a more effective argumentative writer. This includes learning how to read and understand primary scientific literature, to construct arguments that relate to prior literature, and to communicate your ideas to different audiences.
- To build your skills in communicating your ideas in different modes (online forums, verbal presentations) and in different formats or degrees of formality (personal reflection, scientific writing).

## MEETING TIMES AND OFFICE HOURS

Class meets on Mon, Wed, Fri from 1:10-2:10 PM in OLRI 370. You are expected to attend all classes.

I hold office hours Mondays 2:30-3:30 and Tuesdays 10-11 in OLRI 327, and Abby holds office hours Sundays 4-5:30 PM in OLRI 370. This is a time for you to talk with either of us about anything that is confusing, concerning, intriguing (etc.), whether related to our course material or not. We can talk about the class readings, assignments, writing strategies, and anything that might be on your mind outside of class. You can schedule an appointment to meet during my or Abby's office hours, or you can just drop by during this time. You can of course also schedule appointments to meet with either of us outside of our office hours too.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course grades are comprised of class participation (15%), weekly reading responses (15%), a writing portfolio (60%), a research presentation (5%), and “explorations” of Macalester and the Twin Cities (5%).

### Class participation (15%)

You will maximize your opportunity for learning by maintaining active, engaged participation in class and in our activities outside the classroom. Active participation includes not just speaking but also attentive listening. Our class meetings will often be heavily discussion-based, giving us a chance to dig deeply into the articles, to understand their results and claims, to offer critiques, to consider their implications for current events, and to consider new research questions. We'll also spend time on various group activities, including workshops where you will provide feedback on your peers' writing.

Macalester hosts an annual International Roundtable, which is a series of talks and panels (led by both the Macalester community and external speakers) related to a central theme. The theme of this year's International Roundtable is empathy. We'll go see the talk by Paul Bloom (author of *Against Empathy*) on **Fri 10/13 at 2:20 PM**. There are numerous other talks and student-led sessions throughout the roundtable, on Thu 10/12, Fri 10/13, and Sat 10/14. See the schedule [here](#). I'd like you to **attend at least one other talk/session** in addition to Bloom's talk. We'll have a discussion/debriefing of our roundtable experiences together in class on Mon 10/16.

We'll also take a site visit to a local community organization and assist with preparing and serving a meal. The [Jeremiah Program](#) in St. Paul (and other locations) provides services and housing for single mothers; [Our Saviour's](#) Community Services in Minneapolis provides shelter and housing primarily for immigrants and refugees. We'll visit Our Saviour's on **Wed 11/15** (~3:00-7:30 PM) and the Jeremiah Program on **Tue 11/28** (~4:30-9:00 PM). You'll **sign up for one of these visits** and we'll talk about our experiences together in class on Wed 11/29.

### Reading responses (15%)

Every week you will submit a reading response (~300-400 words) to Moodle, in which you **discuss** (but **don't summarize**) the upcoming week's readings. This is *informal* writing. You don't need an introduction, a conclusion, or any overarching thesis. Rather, I want you to reflect on, integrate, or extend the readings. You might express your disagreement with particular ideas, connect ideas between multiple readings, identify links between the readings and “real world” issues or puzzles, or generate new hypotheses or next steps for research to take. It's okay to focus your response on just a single reading, but I encourage you to focus on a greater number whenever possible.

The first reading response is due for the week of 9/11, continuing through to the week of 11/20. You may skip one reading response (in any week of your choosing) throughout the semester.

**Reading responses are due by Tuesday at 10 PM** each week. So, for example, the very first reading response is due Tuesday 9/12 and should address readings from that week (9/11, 9/13, and/or 9/15).

### Writing portfolio (60%)

You will write three essays/papers throughout the semester. One essay a personal reflection (Moral Reflection essay), one is a response to a book that we'll read (*Against Empathy* essay), and one is a more typical research paper. For each paper, you'll go through the same sequence of feedback and revision: (1) submitting an initial draft; (2) meeting with me to get feedback; (3) getting feedback from your fellow students in a peer review workshop; and (4) submitting a revised version of your work based on the feedback you received.

Collectively, these three papers—as your writing portfolio—constitute 60% of your course grade. Here are the relevant dates for each essay. All drafts and revisions are due by 11:59 PM on the listed date.

**Moral Reflection essay**

Draft due Mon 9/18  
Feedback meetings Fri 9/22  
Peer review workshop Mon 9/25  
Revision due Fri 9/29

***Against Empathy* essay**

Draft due Mon 10/9  
Feedback meetings Fri 10/13  
Peer review workshop Wed 10/18  
Revision due Mon 10/23

**Research Paper**

Draft due Mon 11/20  
Feedback meetings Mon 11/27  
Peer review workshop Fri 12/1  
Revision due Fri 12/8

**Essay formatting and APA style**

Each essay should be 4-5 pages of double-spaced text, formatted with left alignment, 12-point Times New Roman font, and 1" margins on all sides.

In this and all other Psychology courses, our writing will follow APA style. We'll cover the basics of APA style together, but here is a handy online reference: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

**Contract for a B**

Your three essays — and thus your writing portfolio as a whole — will be evaluated using the “Contract for a B” model. Under this model, I will give you lots of feedback on your writing, both as written comments and during our scheduled feedback meetings, but I will not grade your writing until the end of the semester. If you fulfill various requirements for each paper (details below), you are guaranteed a grade of at least a B on your writing portfolio. The goal of this model is to help me deliver timely and helpful feedback, to help you revise and improve your writing, and to help all of us shift our focus away from *grades* and onto the *process* of good writing.

**Contract for a B requirements:**

- (1) Complete all assignments by their due date
- (2) Demonstrate obvious care and effort on each assignment, including using proper formatting and proofreading/spellchecking your work
- (3) Attend all feedback meetings ready to talk about your writing and take notes on how to improve it
- (4) Thoughtfully respond to and incorporate feedback (from instructor and peers) into your writing
- (5) Constructively evaluate and criticize your own and your peers' writing
- (6) Meet with Abby to discuss your writing at least once before 10/20

As described above, students who fulfill all these Contract for a B requirements for each essay are guaranteed to earn a grade of **at least a B** on their writing portfolio. From there, the quality of your writing will influence your specific grade. Portfolios containing all highest quality work will earn an A, and portfolios containing little to no very high quality work will earn a B, with the usual gradations in between (A- and B+).

Students who do not fulfill the Contract for a B requirements are “off contract” and can earn a grade **no higher than a B** on their writing portfolio. Again, writing quality will influence your specific grade. Off-contract portfolios containing all highest quality work will earn a B, and off-contract portfolios containing little to no adequate work will earn a D+, with the usual gradations in between.

**Note:** The Contract for a B model applies only to the writing portfolio portion of your final grade.

**Presentation (5%)**

You will give a short, ~10-minute, presentation of your final research project. Presentations will take place on the last three days of class (Fri 12/8, Mon 12/11, and Wed 12/13).

**Explorations (5%)**

I want you to get to know Macalester and your broader Twin Cities community. So, I ask you to take 4 “explorations” throughout the semester, and to email me a short (1 or 2 paragraph) description of what you did, saw, ate, thought about, etc. Two of these should be some type of performance or student org event at Macalester. For the other two, hop on a bus and take a trip to a new neighborhood — one in St. Paul and one in Minneapolis...go to a lake, hang out in a park, see a show, discover a new restaurant, or find your favorite ice cream shop. (That’s right, you’re basically earning points for eating ice cream).

**Macalester events**

- List of *all* events at Mac: [events.macalester.edu/](https://events.macalester.edu/)
- Mac Music events: [events.macalester.edu/browse.cfm?by=sponsor&select=1260](https://events.macalester.edu/browse.cfm?by=sponsor&select=1260)
- Mac Art events: [events.macalester.edu/browse.cfm?by=sponsor&select=1020](https://events.macalester.edu/browse.cfm?by=sponsor&select=1020)
- Mac Theater events: [www.macalester.edu/theatreanddance/performanceseason/currentseason/](http://www.macalester.edu/theatreanddance/performanceseason/currentseason/)

**Getting around the Twin Cities**

- The A Line and the 63 and 84 buses are easily accessible from Macalester’s campus. You can then transfer to several other bus lines and to the Green Line, a light rail that connects downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul.
- Find info about bus routes and schedules here: <https://www.metrotransit.org/>
- The campus center sells discounted bus passes: [www.macalester.edu/campuscenter/informationdesk/](http://www.macalester.edu/campuscenter/informationdesk/)

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

You are expected to meet the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty, which includes submitting your own original work and properly citing any other work (ideas/quotes) that you have incorporated into your work. See Macalester’s detailed definitions and policies concerning forgery, cheating, and plagiarism: <https://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>. If you have any uncertainties about academic honesty/dishonesty as it might relate to your work in the course, please talk with me. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Director of Academic Programs.

**COURSE ACCOMMODATIONS**

I am committed to supporting the learning of all students. If you are encountering barriers to your learning that I can mitigate, please bring them to my attention. If you think you need accommodations based on the impact of a disability, please contact Allie Quinn, Director of Disability Services ([aquinn2@macalester.edu](mailto:aquinn2@macalester.edu), 651-696-6874) early in the semester to schedule an accommodations meeting. Further information about disability services and accommodations can be found at: <http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices>

**CLASS SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Date	Reading or Activity	Assignment
W 9/6	First class!	
F 9/8	Skitka, L. J. (2010). The psychology of moral conviction. <i>Social and Personality Psychology Compass</i> , 4, 267-281.	
M 9/11	Peter Singer essays on altruism and utilitarianism	
W 9/13	Greene, J. D., et al. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. <i>Science</i> , 293, 2105-2108. Bartels, D. M. & Pizarro, D. A. (2011). The mismeasure of morals: Antisocial personality traits predict utilitarian responses to moral dilemmas. <i>Cognition</i> , 121, 154-161.	
F 9/15	Van Kleef, G. A., et al. (2008). Power, distress, and compassion: Turning a blind eye to the suffering of others. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 19, 1315-1322. Cikara, M., et al. (2011). Us and them: Intergroup failures of empathy. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 20, 149-153.	
M 9/18	Haidt, J., Graham, J., & Joseph, C. (2009). Above and below left–right: Ideological narratives and moral foundations. <i>Psychological Inquiry</i> , 20, 110-119.	Moral Reflection draft due
W 9/20	Sleep Ed. Visit #1 NYT articles on art and cultural appropriation	
F 9/22	Feedback meetings	
M 9/25	Peer review workshop	
W 9/27	<i>Against Empathy</i> (Chapter 1)	
F 9/29	Library session (meet in Library room 206)	Moral Reflection revision due
M 10/2	<i>Against Empathy</i> (Chapters 2 and 3)	
W 10/4	<i>Against Empathy</i> (Interlude, Chapter 4, Interlude)	
F 10/6	<i>Against Empathy</i> (Chapters 5 and 6)	
M 10/9	NYT articles on free speech	<i>Against Empathy</i> draft due
W 10/11	White, M. H. & Crandall, C. S. (2017). Freedom of racist speech: Ego and expressive threats. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> .	
F 10/13	Feedback meetings International Roundtable talk by Paul Bloom in JBD at 2:20	Attend Roundtable session on 10/12, 10/13, or 10/14
M 10/16	International Roundtable discussion/debriefing	
W 10/18	Peer review workshop	

<b>F 10/20</b>	Brandt, M. J. (2011). Sexism and gender inequality across 57 societies. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 22, 1413-1418. Napier, J. L. & Jost, J. T. (2008). Why are conservatives happier than liberals? <i>Psychological Science</i> , 19, 565-572.	
<b>M 10/23</b>	Starmans, C., et al. (2017). Why people prefer unequal societies. <i>Nature Human Behaviour</i> , 1, 0082.	<i>Against Empathy</i> revision due
<b>W 10/25</b>	Sleep Ed. Visit #2 Nichols, S. (2011). Experimental philosophy and the problem of free will. <i>Science</i> , 331, 1401-1403. Nichols, S., & Knobe, J. (2007). Moral responsibility and determinism: The cognitive science of folk intuitions. <i>Nous</i> , 41, 663-685.	
<b>M 10/30</b>	Clark, C. J., et al. (2014). Free to punish: a motivated account of free will belief. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 106, 501-513.	
<b>W 11/1</b>	Aspinwall, L. G., et al. (2012). The double-edged sword: Does biomechanism increase or decrease judges' sentencing of psychopaths? <i>Science</i> , 337, 846-849. Shariff, A. F., et al. (2014). Free will and punishment: A mechanistic view of human nature reduces retribution. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 25, 1563-1570.	
<b>F 11/3</b>	Mazar, N., et al. (2008). The dishonesty of honest people: A theory of self-concept maintenance. <i>Journal of Marketing Research</i> , 45, 633-644.	
<b>M 11/6</b>	<a href="#">Library session (meet in Library room 206)</a>	
<b>W 11/8</b>	Kraus, M. W., et al. (2011). Social class as culture: The convergence of resources and rank in the social realm. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 20, 246-250. Piff, P. K., et al. (2012). Higher social class predicts increased unethical behavior. <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i> , 109, 4086-4091.	
<b>F 11/10</b>	Trawalter, S., et al. (2012). Racial bias in perceptions of others' pain. <i>PLoS ONE</i> , 7(11), e48546.	
<b>M 11/13</b>	<a href="#">Visit from Jayne Niemi</a>	
<b>W 11/15</b>	Sleep Ed. Visit #3 <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (Chapter 3)	<b>Our Saviour's visit:</b> Wed 11/15
<b>F 11/17</b>	<i>The New Jim Crow</i> (Chapter 5)	
<b>M 11/20</b>	Bastian, B., et al. (2012). Don't mind meat? The denial of mind to animals used for human consumption. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> , 38, 247-256. Loughnan, S., et al. (2014). The psychology of eating animals. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 23, 104-108.	<b>Research Paper</b> draft due
<b>M 11/27</b>	<a href="#">Feedback meetings</a>	<b>Jeremiah Program</b> visit: Tue 11/28
<b>W 11/29</b>	<a href="#">Our Saviour's and Jeremiah Program discussion/debriefing</a>	
<b>F 12/1</b>	<a href="#">Peer review workshop</a>	
<b>M 12/4</b>	<a href="#">Presentation workshop</a>	
<b>W 12/6</b>	Bonnefon, J. F., et al. (2016). The social dilemma of autonomous vehicles. <i>Science</i> , 352, 1573-1576.	

	Waytz, A., et al. (2014). The mind in the machine: Anthropomorphism increases trust in an autonomous vehicle. <i>Journal of Experimental Social Psychology</i> , 52, 113-117.	
<b>F 12/8</b>	Student presentations	Research Paper revision due
<b>M 12/11</b>	Student presentations	
<b>W 12/13</b>	Student presentations	

### ESSAY PROMPTS

#### **Moral Reflection essay**

Discuss a moral stance that you have (it could be related to your own behavior or to a broader issue/topic). Why is this your stance, and why do you see it as a *moral* one? Should other people hold this same moral stance (why/why not)? What, if anything, would lead you to change your stance (why/why not)?

#### ***Against Empathy* essay**

Provide a challenge or counterargument to some aspect of *Against Empathy* with which you disagree. It could be a claim that you think is wholly incorrect, that is only partially true, that relies on weak or problematic assumptions, or that leads to problematic implications.

#### **Research paper**

[I'll give you the specific prompt for this paper later in the semester]