

Philosophy 640 – Evolution and Morality

Winter 2006. Mondays, 7:00-9:00 p.m., 2271 Angell Hall

Allan Gibbard gibbard@umich.edu Thu. 3–3:30 and by appointment, AH 2187

Peter Railton prailton@umich.edu Wed. 2–3:30

Chandra Sripada sripada@umich.edu Mon. 6–7

Books and articles may be available as Electronic Journals [EJ], on Electronic Reserve [ER], on Tanner Library Reserve [TR], or in other ways. Links are provided below, but some of them may not work or may work only from the campus network, because of permissions problems.

Lecture series

Evolution and Culture Colloquium Series Talks ([ECCS](#)) are normally Fridays, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall (exceptions indicated). These are sponsored jointly by the Evolution and Human Adaptation Program (EHAP) and the Culture and Cognition Program.

The “Explore Evolution” Theme Semester Public Lecture Series ([PLS](#)) is normally on Wednesdays in chemistry 1800 (exceptions indicated).

For updates, see:

<http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/ehap/current.htm>

Syllabus (in progress)

Jan 9 – First meeting

Organizational matters. General introduction plus some basic concepts. Adaptation and functional explanation: general structure, typical explanandum, and some pitfalls and fallacies. How might evolution bear on moral questions, e.g., moral psychology, the content or character of moral language? What bearing does it *not* have? “Neo-Darwinian” picture of natural selection and the diversity of selection mechanisms. Propensities or conditional rules: interaction between genetic and environmental factors in the explanation of phenotypic characteristics and behaviors, and some pitfalls and fallacies. Some ideas: “modules” vs. capacities, strategies, exaptations, spandrels, redeployment. Some examples of evolutionary approaches to moral emotion, affect, or cognition.

Readings: (no required reading, but here is some background, which need not be in advance of the session)

1. Allan Gibbard (1993). “Sociobiology”, in R.E. Goodin and P. Pettit (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*.

2. David Buss, et al. (1998). "Adaptations, Exaptations, and Spandrels", *American Psychologist*, 53.
3. Richard Dawkins (1989). *The Selfish Gene*

[ECCS](#) Friday Jan 13, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall:
Douglas Medin, "Gamefish Culture: Intergroup Conflict and Environment"

[PLS](#) Friday Jan 13, 8 pm, Chemistry 1800:
[Svante Paabo](#), Max-Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany
The quest for the genes that make us human

Jan 16 – No meeting, MLK Day

[ECCS](#) Friday, January 20th, 10:30 am, **Rackham Amphitheater**:
Frans de Waal, "Our Inner Ape: Human Nature as Seen by a Primatologist", Rackham Amphitheatre

Part I: Evolutionary mechanisms and models

Jan 23 – Pre-human morality

What sorts of observations have been made of behaviors in animals that might be interesting precursors to morality, i.e., proto-moral. Diversity of patterns of primate sociability – controversies and possible explanations. Forms of mating, bonding, signaling, hierarchy, daily life. Proto-moral emotions, communication, and social cognition.

Readings:

1. M.L. Wilson & R.W. Wrangham (2003), "Intergroup Relations in Chimpanzees". *Annual Review of Anthropology* **32**: 363–92. [EJ]
2. [Open referee discussion](#) (2000) of target article by J.C. Flack and F. de Waal (2000), "[Any Animal Whatever](#): Darwinian Building Blocks of Morality In Monkeys and Apes". *Journal of Consciousness Studies* **7**:1-2, 1–29. [EJ]
3. M. Tomasello (2000), "Two Hypotheses about Primate Cognition", in C. Heyes and L. Huber (eds.), [The Evolution of Cognition](#). [ER]

[PLS](#) Wednesday, January 25th, 7 pm, Chemistry 1800
[Eugenie Scott](#), National Center for Science Education
Intelligent Design and the Creationism/Evolution Controversy

[ECCS](#) Friday, January 27, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall
Jesse **Bering**, "The Folk Psychology of Souls"

Jan 30 – Reciprocal altruism, evolutionary modeling and human psychology

The concept of an ESS and its uses and limits. Evolutionary modeling of strategies in the repeated Prisoner's Dilemma. How might reciprocal altruism, and social exchange more broadly, helped to shape human psychology?

Readings:

1. Maynard Smith, John (1976), "Evolution and the Theory of Games". *American Scientist* **64**: 41–45. [not EJ]
2. Axelrod, Robert (1984) *The evolution of cooperation*. Chaps. 1–2. [not EJ, Shapiro reserves.]
3. Cosmides L. and Tooby J. (1992). Adaptations for social exchange. In J. Barkow, L. Cosmides, and J. Tooby (Eds.), *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press. 163–228

[PLS](#) Wednesday, February 1st, 7 pm, Chemistry 1800
[David Pilbeam](#), Harvard University

Forty years of thinking about the origins of the human lineage

[ECCS](#) Feb 3, Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in **Rackham Amphitheatre**:
Daniel Dennett, "Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon",

Feb 6 – Commitment, costly signaling and sexual selection

Possible evolutionary explanations of *commitment* and their strengths and weaknesses. The concept of a costly signal. How does sexual selection differ from other selective forces, and what distinctive contributions might it have made to human psychology?

Readings (in Tanner, and may be on Electronic Reserve):

1. Frank, Robert "Cooperation through emotional commitment", in R. Nesse, et al., *The Evolution of Commitment*, pp. 57–76.
2. A. and A. Zahavi, *The Handicap Principle*, Chaps. 1–5.
3. Geoffrey Miller, *The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature*, Chaps. 4 and 9.
4. Buss, David (1994). *The Evolution of Desire*. Chaps. 2–3 (pp. 19–72).
5. Symons, Donald (optional, 1992). "On the use and misuse of Darwinism in the study of human behavior". Barkow, Cosmides, & Tooby, *The Adapted Mind*, 137–159.

[PLS](#) Wednesday, February 8th, 7 pm, Chemistry 1800
[Richard Wrangham](#), Harvard University

Primate and human society

[ECCS](#) Feb 10, Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall:
Joseph Henrich, "The Cultural Origins of Human Sociability: Phylogenetic, Ontogenetic, and Cross-Cultural Phenomena"

Feb 13 – Fairness and the social contract – models and critiques

How might evolution have shaped a “sense of fairness”? The notion of a mixed strategy. Criticisms of evolutionary modeling.

Readings:

1. Brian Skyrms (1996). *The Evolution of the Social Contract*. Chaps. 1–3 (pp. 1–79, on reserve in Tanner Philosophy Library)
2. D’Arms, Batterman, and Górný (1998). “[Game Theoretic Explanations and the Evolution Of Justice](#)”, *Philosophy of Science* 65: 76–102
3. D’Arms, Justin, “[When Evolutionary Game Theory Explains Morality, What does it Explain?](#)” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7:1–2 (2000), 296–99.

[ECCS](#) Feb 17, Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall:
Tatiana Karafet, “Native Peoples of Siberia: Genetics, Language, and Archaeology”

Feb 20 – Norms, rituals and punishment

What are some limits of reciprocity-based explanations of moral behavior? What are *norms* and *rituals*, and how might they structure human social life? What is punishment, and what role does it play in supporting moral behavior? How do norms change and evolve over time?

Readings:

1. Gibbard, Allan (1990). “[Norms, Discussion, and Ritual: Evolutionary Puzzles](#)”. *Ethics* 100, 787–802.
2. Chandra Sripada (2005). “[Punishment and the strategic structure of moral systems](#)”, *Biology and Philosophy*, 20:767–789
3. [We will postpone: Nichols, S. (2002). “[On the genealogy of norms: a case for the role of emotion in cultural evolution](#)”. *Philosophy of Science*, 69: 234-255.]
4. Rosaldo, Renato (1980), *Ilongot Headhunting* (38–54). Lowest priority, but fascinating. To be on reserve in Tanner.

Feb 27 – “Spring” Break

Mar 6 – The role of groups – history and current theories

At what levels of organization does natural selection operate? What is “group selection”? Under what conditions might it have occurred? What are some models of the role that group behavior has played in evolutionary processes?

Readings:

1. Elliot Sober and D.S. Wilson (2000), [“Are we really altruists?”](#), *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7:1–2, 185–206. Read Parts I and II, pp. 185–196. Reprinted in Leonard Katz ed. *Evolutionary Origins of Morality*, pp.196–204. Optionally, see also: [Open referee discussion](#) (207–256) with [reply](#), (257–268), but that’s low priority.
2. Boyd, Gintis, Bowles, and Richerson (2003), [“The evolution of altruistic punishment”](#). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (USA)* 100:6 (March 18) 3531–3535.
3. Boyd and Richerson (2002), “Group beneficial norms can spread rapidly in a structured population”. *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 215:3 (April 7), 287–296.

[PLS](#) Wednesday, March 8, 7 pm, Chemistry 1800
[W. Ford Doolittle](#), Dalhousie University
The Tree of Life: Is it really a web?

Part II: Controversies in metaethics and moral psychology**Mar 13** – The role of emotions in moral judgment

Do moral judgments ultimately arise from one’s emotions and feelings or from processes of reasoning and rationality? How might evolutionary considerations shed light on this question? If emotions do in fact play a central role in moral judgment, what implications might this have for philosophical views concerning the nature of moral motivation and the meaning of moral terms?

Readings:

1. A. Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, 36–45, 126–140. (On [CTOOLS](#). On the Phil. 640 tab, click “Resources” at left, and then the folder “Articles”. Also on Tanner reserve.)
2. Haidt, Jonathan (2001). [“The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgments”](#). *Psychological Review* 108:4, 814–834.
3. J. D’Arms and D. Jacobson, [“The Significance of Recalcitrant Emotions; Or Anti-Quasijudgmentalism”](#). *Philosophy*, suppl. vol.: *Proceedings of the Royal Institute of Philosophy* (2003):127–146.

[ECCS](#) Mar 17, Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall:
Harvey Whitehouse, "Explaining Religion"

Mar 20 – Altruism versus egoism

Does evolutionary theory predict that humans will invariably be selfish? Do humans ever in fact act with "genuine" altruistic motivation? What kind of arguments and evidence, both evolutionary and psychological, are relevant to this question?

Readings:

1. Elliot Sober and D.S. Wilson, "[Are we really altruists?](#)", *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7:1-2 (2000), 185-206. Read Part III (pp. 196-206). Optionally, see also: [Open referee discussion](#) (207-256) with [reply](#), (257-268). Reprinted in Leonard Katz ed. *Evolutionary Origins of Morality*, pp.196-204.
2. Stich, Stephen "[Evolution, Altruism, and Cognitive Architecture](#)", unpublished manuscript. Also on [CTOOLS](#) ("Resources" – "Articles").

[PLS](#) Wednesday, March 22nd, 7 pm, Chemistry 1800
[Linda Partridge](#), University College London
Ageing and evolutionary medicine

[ECCS](#) Mar 24: Stephen Stich, "Evolution, Altruism, and Ethics"
Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall

March 27 – Moral diversity and moral realism

What are some general models that have been proposed to analyze the diverse forms of normative regulation across human groups? Does the existence of cross-cultural diversity of this sort have implications for metaethical theory, and if so, what theories does it support or weigh against?

Readings:

1. Fiske, Alan P. (1992). "[The Four Elementary Forms of Sociality](#): Framework for a Unified Theory of Social Relations". *Psychological Review*, **99**:689-723.
2. Loeb, Don (1998). "[Moral realism and the argument from disagreement](#)". *Philosophical Studies*, **90**, 281-303
3. Doris, John and Plakias, Alexendra (forthcoming). "[How to argue about disagreement](#): Evaluative diversity and moral realism". If the link doesn't work, go to [CTOOLS](#) and in the Phil. 640 tab, click "Resources" at left; then click "Articles" to get link.

[ECCS](#) Mar 31, Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall:
Beverly Strassman, "Does Evolutionary Theory Explain Dogon Culture?"

April 3 – Evolution and Metaethics**Readings:**

1. Gibbard, A. (1990). *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, pp. 55–80. Go to [CTOOLS](#) and in the Phil. 640 tab, click “Resources” at left; then click “Articles” to get link.
2. Gibbard, A. (forthcoming). “[Moral Feelings and Moral Concepts](#)”. *Oxford Studies in Metaethics I*
3. Railton, “[Objectivity, Realism, and Aesthetic Value](#)” (draft).
4. Railton, [outline of above](#).
5. Optional: Trehub, Sandra (2003). “The developmental origins of musicality”. *Nature Neuroscience* 6:7, 669–673. Go to [CTOOLS](#) and in the Phil. 640 tab, click “Resources” at left; then click “Articles” to get link.
6. Optional: Maess, Koelsch, Gunter, & Friederici (2001). “Musical syntax is processed in Broca’s area: an MEG study”. *Nature Neuroscience* 4:5, 540–545. In [CTOOLS](#) too.

[PLS](#) Wednesday, April 5th, 7 pm, Chemistry 1800
[Peter Grant](#) and [Rosemary Grant](#), Princeton University
Exploring evolution of Darwin's Finches

ECCS Apr 7, Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall:
 Peter Richerson, “Not By Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution”

April 10 – Psychopathy

What are some of the behavioral characteristics of psychopathic individuals, i.e. individuals who violate the rights of others without guilt or remorse? Are such individuals a product of biology of learning? How might evolutionary theory shed light on this question? What sorts of psychological deficits do psychopaths exhibit? What relevance might the existence of psychopathic individuals have for meta-ethical theory?

Readings:

7. Mealey, Linda (1995) “[The sociobiology of sociopathy](#): an integrated evolutionary model”. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 18:523–99. Reprinted in Baron-Cohen, Simon, ed., *The Maladapted Mind*.
8. Blair, Robert James 1995 “A Cognitive Developmental Approach to Morality: Investigating the Psychopath,” *Cognition* 57, 1–29
9. Nichols, Shaun (2002). “[How Psychopaths Threaten Moral Rationalism](#), or Is it Irrational to Be Amoral?” *The Monist*, 85:2, 285–304.
10. Roskies, A.L. (2003) “[Are ethical judgments intrinsically motivational?](#) Lessons from acquired sociopathy.” *Philosophical Psychology* 16: 51-66

[ECCS](#) Apr 14, Friday, 10:30-12:00 am, in 4448 East Hall:
Rita Astuti, “Death and Ancestors in Madagascar: A Cognitive Developmental Approach”

Apr 17 – Additional topics in moral psychology

What is the role of empathetic simulation in moral behavior and moral development? Are guilt and shame universally present across human groups? How do guilt and shame differ from each other? How should we understand the various pathologies of belief and decision that undermine proper moral conduct, including self-deception and weakness of the will?

Readings (also assigned April 3, except for the new Sripada mss.):

1. Gibbard, A. (forthcoming). “[Moral Feelings and Moral Concepts](#)”. *Oxford Studies in Metaethics I*
2. C. Sripada, “Weakness of the will and the divided mind”, manuscript, in [CTOOLS](#).
3. Railton, “[Objectivity, Realism, and Aesthetic Value](#)” (draft).
4. Railton, [outline of above](#).
5. Optional: Trehub, Sandra (2003). “The developmental origins of musicality”. *Nature Neuroscience* 6:7, 669–673. Go to [CTOOLS](#) and in the Phil. 640 tab, click “Resources” at left; then click “Articles” to get link.
6. Optional: Maess, Koelsch, Gunter, & Friederici (2001). “Musical syntax is processed in Broca’s area: an MEG study”. *Nature Neuroscience* 4:5, 540–545. In [CTOOLS](#) too.

[PLS](#) Wednesday, April 19th, 7 pm, Chemistry 1800
[Richard Lewontin](#), Harvard University
Gene, organism and environment

Apr 24 – Reprise and Implications

Return to the most general questions of moral theory and moral psychology. What bearings have we found evolutionary ways of thinking to have on these questions? What is the upshot, if any, for our own *normative* thought and practice?

Readings:

1. C. Sripada (forthcoming), “Weakness of the will and the divided mind” (cont.). Manuscript, in [CTOOLS](#).
2. Nagel, T., 1978, Ethics as an Autonomous Theoretical Subject, in Stent, G. S., ed., *Morality as a Biological Phenomenon*: Berlin, p. 221–232, 1977. [Electronic reserve](#) and Tanner.
3. Kitcher, P. (1994) “Four Ways of ‘Biologizing’ Ethics.” In: Sober, E. (ed.) *Conceptual Issues in Evolutionary Biology*. [Electronic reserve](#) and Tanner.

Apr 28 – Papers due.

Further reading – Some optional, some to go into syllabus for specific sessions.

Readings:

1. Sripada, Chandra and Stich, Stephen (mss). [“A framework for the psychology of norms”](#).