MORAL SENTIMENTS
Undergraduate Seminar — Spring 2001

W1
[Apr 3] Introductory meeting: Topics and expectations

[Apr 5] Introductory lecture: Classic writings on responsibility and moral sentiments

W2
[Apr 10] Seminar: Classic writings on responsibility and moral sentiments

   The classic analysis of the folk psychology of intentionality, free will, and responsibility; probably wrong but an inevitable starting point.

   In this passage, Hume introduces his analysis of moral judgments as sentiments. This analysis is based on his analysis of causal judgments, which according to Hume are based on associations in the mind (and not necessarily about "real" causal connections between physical bodies). Likewise, moral judgments do not refer to anything "really moral" in the agent judged but to the psychological workings of the mind in the perceivers who forms the judgment. This is a "natural" analysis of morality because it places moral issues in the psychology of the perceivers, amenable to scientific study.

   Part I, section I (pp. 9-23); Part II, section I (pp. 67-78); Part IV (pp. 179-193).

W3
[Apr 12] Introductory lecture: Meanings of responsibility

W4
[Apr 17] Seminar: Meanings of responsibility

   From an overview article on research on intentionality. Focus on the last section, in which we try to clarify the relation of intentionality and responsibility, while distinguishing several meanings of responsibility.


[Apr 19] Introductory lecture: **Psychological research on responsibility**

**W4**

[Apr 24] Seminar: **Psychological research on responsibility**


   Examined causal and responsibility attributions for spouse behavior in 40 couples seeking therapy and in 40 age- and socioeconomic status (SES)-matched nondistressed community couples. Ss rated the causes of positive and negative partner behaviors, made attributions of responsibility for the behaviors, indicated their affective impact, and specified what they would do in response to each behavior. Distressed spouses saw the causes of negative partner behavior as more global and considered the behavior to be more negative in intent, selfishly motivated, and blameworthy than did nondistressed spouses. The inverse pattern of results was obtained for positive spouse behavior. Only responsibility attributions predicted the affective impact and intended responses to the behavior.


[Apr 26] Introductory lecture: **Interpersonal moral sentiments (anger, blame, and praise)**

**W5**

[May 1] Seminar: **Interpersonal moral sentiments (anger, blame, and praise)**


[May 3] Introductory lecture: **Retribution, revenge, and punishment**

**W6**

[May 8] Seminar: **Retribution, revenge, and punishment**


[May 10] Introductory lecture: **Intrapersonal moral sentiments (shame and guilt)**

**W7**

[May 15] Seminar: **Intrapersonal moral sentiments (shame and guilt)**


Examined whether the antecedents and facial expressions of embarrassment, shame, and guilt are distinct. In Study 1, 51 undergraduates wrote down events that had caused them to feel embarrassment, shame, and guilt. Coding of these events revealed that embarrassment was associated with transgressions of conventions that govern public interactions, shame with the failure to meet important personal standards, and guilt with actions that harm others or violate duties. Study 2 determined whether these 3 emotions are distinct in another domain of emotion, namely, facial expression. 263 introductory psychology students were presented with slides of 14 different facial expressions, including those of embarrassment, shame, and candidates of guilt (self-contempt, sympathy, and pain). Observers accurately identified the expressions of embarrassment and shame, but did not reliably label any expression as guilt.

[May 17] Introductory lecture: **Perspective-taking and empathy**

**W8**

[May 22] Seminar: **Perspective-taking and empathy**


[May 24] Introductory lecture: **Evolutionary origins of moral sentiments**

**W9**

[May 29] Seminar: **Evolutionary origins of moral sentiments**


[May 31] **Integrative Discussion: Functions and consequences of moral sentiments**

**W10**

[June 5] **Concluding meeting: Presentations**