

Syllabus

Summary

What makes humans moral beings? This question can be understood either as a proximate “how” question or as an ultimate “why” question. The “how” question, which is about the mental and social mechanisms that produce moral judgments and interactions, has been investigated by psychologists and social scientists. The “why” question, which is about the fitness consequences that explain why humans have morality, has been discussed by evolutionary biologists in the context of the evolution of cooperation. The goal of this summer school is to contribute to a fruitful articulation of such proximate and ultimate explanations of human morality.

More generally, morality is a central topic in wide range of disciplines, both in natural sciences – biology, psychology, and social sciences – philosophy, anthropology, law, or economics. Yet, each discipline pursues a different agenda and uses different concepts, hindering the exchange of data and the circulation of ideas. This summer school on the evolution of morality aims at putting forward evolutionary theory as a common conceptual framework.

Brief overview of the course

Evolutionary Biology

From an evolutionary perspective, morality is a puzzling phenomenon: Why are people fair with each other? Why do they help people they will never see? Why are they being honest when they could be cheating?

Evolutionary Psychology

How does evolution help explaining moral psychology? How can we relate reciprocity and cooperation with concepts such as rights and duties? How can we explain the condemnation of harmless behaviors like homosexuality or drug consumption?

Comparative Psychology

Is morality a uniquely human phenomenon? What is the difference between human cooperation and primate cooperation? Is partner choice at work in human societies?

Cognitive Neuroscience

What are the neuronal bases of morality? How emotions influence moral judgments? Are there different networks for consequentialist and deontological judgments? How do humans integrate different types of information?

Cognitive Psychology

What are the principles of morality? Is empathy a moral emotion? Why do humans depart from utilitarianism? Is moral cognition defective?

Developmental Psychology

If morality is a cognitive adaptation, humans should be prepared to develop moral intuitions. To what degree is morality encoded in human nature? If morality is innate, what do children learn throughout their development?

Tentative course schedule:

1. Jean-Baptiste André: Partner choice and cooperation: A theoretical approach (3h)

1. Why is reciprocity so rare?
2. The evolution of cooperation by partner choice and the emergence of fairness

References:

- André, J. B. & Baumard, N. (2011) Social opportunities and the evolution of fairness, *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 289, 128-135.
- André, J. B. (2014). Mechanistic constraints and the unlikely evolution of reciprocal cooperation. *Journal of evolutionary biology*, 27(4), 784-795.

2.Redouan Bshary: (Partner choice and cooperation: An empirical approach 3h)

1. Partner choice among animals
2. Partner choice among humans

References:

- Bshary R & Bronstein JS (2011) A general scheme to predict partner control mechanisms in pairwise cooperative interactions between unrelated individuals. *Ethology* 117, 271-283.
- Raihani NJ, Thornton A & Bshary R (2012) Punishment and cooperation in nature. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 27, 288-295.
- Raihani NJ & Bshary R (2011) The evolution of punishment in n-player games: a volunteer's dilemma. *Evolution* 65, 2725 – 2728.

3. Nicolas Baumard: The evolution of fairness by partner choice (3h)

1. Deontological morality: Cognitive bias or genuine adaptation?
2. Morality: One, two or many domains?

References:

- Baumard, N., André, J. B., & Sperber, D. (2013). A mutualistic approach to morality, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36 (2)
- Baumard, N. & Sheskin, M. (forthcoming) Partner Choice and the Evolution of a Contractualist Morality, in Decety, J. and Wheatley, T. *The Moral Brain*, M.I.T. Press.

4. Leda Cosmides and John Tooby: Cognitive adaptations for cooperation (3h)

1. Emotions and motivations as psychological adaptation (Leda Cosmides)

References:

- Lieberman, D., Tooby, J. & Cosmides, L. (2007). The architecture of human kin detection. *Nature*, 445, 727-731.
- Cosmides, L. & Tooby, J. (2013). Evolutionary psychology: New perspectives on cognition and motivation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, 201-229.

2. Morality and coalition (John Tooby)

References:

Tooby, J., and Cosmides, L. (2010) Groups in Mind: The Coalitional Roots of War and Morality, from *Human Morality & Sociality: Evolutionary & Comparative Perspectives*, Henrik Høgh-Olesen (Ed.), Palgrave MacMillan, New York, pp. 91-234.

5. Molly Crockett: The neural basis of morality (3h)

1. Neural decision systems and morality
2. Neuromodulation of moral cognition

References:

Crockett, MJ (2013). Models of morality. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*

Siegel, J. Z., & Crockett, M. J. (2013). How serotonin shapes moral judgment and behavior. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1299(1), 42-51.

6. Keith Jensen: Cooperation and morality in non human animals (3h)

1. The light side: Primate origins of prosociality
- 2: The dark side: Primate origins of fairness, punishment and spite

References:

Jensen, K (2012). Social regard: Evolving a psychology of cooperation. In Mitani, J., Call, J., Kappeler, P., Palombit, R. & Silk, J. (Ed.), *The Evolution of Primate Societies*. Chicago, USA: Chicago University Press.

Riedl, K., Jensen, K., Call, J., & Tomasello, M. (2012). No third-party punishment in chimpanzees. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(37), 14824-14829.

7. Paul Bloom: Moral cognition (3h)

1. The Moral Emotions
2. Theories of moral progress

References:

Bloom, P. (2013) *The Case Against Empathy*, The New Yorker

Bloom, P. (2013). *Just Babies: The Origins of Good and Evil*. The Crown Publishing Group.

8. Fiery Cushman: Moral rules (3h)

1. The dual process model of moral psychology
2. Morality and responsibility

References:

Cushman, F. A. (2013). Action, outcome and value: A dual-system framework for morality. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 17(3), 273-292.

Cushman, F.A. (in press) Should the law depend on luck? *M. Brockman (ed.), Future Science: 19 Essay from the Cutting Edge*

9. Karen Wynn: Moral development (3h)

1. "The Moral Infant"
2. "The Discriminating Infant"

References:

- Hamlin, J. K., Wynn, K., Bloom, P., & Mahajan, N. (2011). How infants and toddlers react to antisocial others. *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences*, 108(50), 19931-19936.
- Mahajan, N., & Wynn, K. (2012). Origins of “us” versus “them”: Prelinguistic infants prefer similar others. *Cognition*, 124(2), 227-233.

10. Gergely Csibra: Moral development (1,5h)

Infants' interpretation of third-party social relations

References:

- Mascaro O, Csibra G. Representation of stable social dominance relations by human infants. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. 2012;109(18):6862-7.
- Mascaro, O., & Csibra, G. (2014). Human Infants' Learning of Social Structures The Case of Dominance Hierarchy. *Psychological science*, 25(1), 250-255.
- Tatone, D., Geraci, A., Csibra, G. Giving and taking: Representational building blocks of resource-transfer events in human infants!

11. Dan Sperber: Morality and reputation (1,5h)

Moral cooperation versus Machiavellian cooperation: Costs and benefits

References:

- Sperber, D. & Baumard, N. (2012) Morality and reputation in an evolutionary perspective, *Mind and language*, 27 (5), 495-518.
- Dan Sperber. 2000. Metarepresentations in an evolutionary perspective. In Dan Sperber ed. *Metarepresentations: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*. Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.117-137