Prerequisites
An active interest in developing critical thinking about the ethics and morality of everyday life will be necessary. Class members will be expected to participate positively in class exercises, to think independently (i.e. for themselves), not to refer constantly to their iPhones, computers or other devices for ideas or answers and to be prepared to speak out about their uncertainty in relation to complex moral dilemmas. This will not be a class for those who wish to sit quietly and take notes!

Class Description
One hour lecture, a break and then class discussion/journal presentation/debate with active participation expected from all students. The MIC class will be limited to 18 students.

The course will consist of 13 academic sessions covering a wide range of issues (see below), plus a review session before the final exam at the end of term, making a total of 15 sessions overall.

Each course participant will have one academic paper to review, including a written summary of the paper which is then presented orally to other participants and the class instructor at their allocated Journal Club session. There will be a journal club after the session coffee break on 10 out of the 13 academic sessions.

On the first 9 journal clubs, 2 students will present a paper each and on the 10th journal club, there will be a review discussion of the usefulness of all 18 papers presented. The written summaries and paper presentations by students at Journal Clubs will be graded.

There will also be two class debates on recent moral dilemmas and active participation in these debates will count towards the grade for class attendance and participation.

There will be one group creative project to be undertaken by sub-groups of the participants and presented in one of the final sessions. The group creative projects will be graded.

There will be one field trip with the Instructor early on in the course, session 2 - this field trip will not be graded but is mandatory.

In addition to the Journal Club papers which will be read and reviewed, there will be required reading for the course, listed at the end of each session in this syllabus. The reading will include books covering some of the course topics.

The topics to be covered in this course will include the following:

The history of philosophy, morals and ethics; Evolution, animal ethology and morality; Child development and the moral compass; Neuroscience and moral decisions; Societal influences on moral development: Family and peers; Societal influences on moral development: Books, films and social media; Societal influences on moral development: Cultural and religious considerations; Morality and ethics in law and medicine: Practical perspectives including Critical Thinking.
Some of the questions to be addressed in this course on the morality in childhood will include these:

How do children come to know right from wrong? Do we enter the world as blank moral slates who must learn right and wrong, or are we born with an innate moral sense? If so how does this innate sense of morality relate to our evolutionary past and animal ethology. How do parents, peers, school, culture, and the media influence and shape our moral development? What is the role of neuroscience in shaping our ethical and moral judgments? How does our upbringing and cultural background affect our adult abilities to make moral judgments?

It is hoped that the theoretical models which will be covered in the course coupled with the skills learned in reviewing, evaluating and presenting academic papers to the other course participants will enhance and develop the skills of course attenders in critical thinking and debate participation.

The course also intends to link lessons from the theoretical papers read and the presentations given to practical applications in the world of work which course participants will eventually join. This is because, although the development of morality in childhood is of interest in itself, the course is also intended to show how childhood morality can progress into a mature moral and ethical perspective on adult life.

**Desired Outcomes**

1. Explore and evaluate theoretical perspectives on morality and its origins.
2. Compare and critically evaluate theories on the development of morality in childhood.
3. Evaluate the role of biological, social, and cultural influences on children’s moral development, including family, school, religion, peers, literature, and the media.
4. Start to apply the principles of critical thinking and reflection to other aspects of your studies, to everyday life and ultimately to your professional careers.
5. To start to understand how theories of morality and ethical considerations can be applied to everyday life and within the world of work.
EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES: PERCENTAGES OF FINAL GRADE:

Class attendance and participation (10%)
Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to actively participate in discussions, debates and class activities, and to demonstrate familiarity with the content of the assigned course materials. If you do not participate in class discussions, it has a negative effect on the other students.

Attendance will be taken. If you miss 2 classes without emailing the instructor in advance (or providing a medical note, on official headed notepaper) your final course grade starts at 95%, if you miss 3 or more classes without emailing the instructor in advance (or providing a medical note, on official headed notepaper), your final course grade starts at 90%.

Journal Club Written Summaries, Oral Presentations (40%)
Details of the Journal Club Written Summaries and Presentations will be given in the First Introduction to the Course session.

In outline, a journal club written summary is needed for each academic paper allocated and presented. The main body of the summary should be no longer than 1 single-spaced typed page. Headings for the summary of the paper should be as follows:

Reference for paper/chapter/book: Names of authors, date, title of paper or chapter in the book, journal in which paper is published or title of the book with its' editors, publisher or web link. For this reference, use the APA format.
Aims & Objectives of paper/chapter/book:
Literature review/Existing sources:
Methodology:
Results:
Conclusions/Discussion:
Recommendations:

The Journal Club Summaries are due to be submitted via NYU Classes by 5.00 pm on the Monday before the Thursday MIC Class in which the paper/chapter will be orally presented by the student. This allows the class instructor and class members time to read the summaries. Late submissions will not be accepted.

In the 10th Journal Club on 10.5.18, a review of the main learning points from each of the preceding 18 presentations will occur. Each student will present a 1 or 2 paragraph summary (bullet point style) of the main learning points from each paper presented. These 1 or 2 paragraph summaries will be made available for all MIC students on NYU classes and will be a valuable aid to revision for the forthcoming final exam on session 15 on 17.5.18.

As part of the Journal Club, there will be 2 MIC class Debates during the Spring Semester 2018 in Session 5 on 1.3.18 and in Session 10 on 12.4.18. These class Debates will be on the topic of ‘A Recent Moral Dilemma’, to be chosen and agreed by the whole MIC class. For the purposes of these Debates, the class will be divided into Teams A. & B. with 9 students in each Team. Students will be allocated to each Team in Session 1., the Introductory Session on 1.2.18. Each Debating Team will take opposing sides to argue the case for and against the chosen topic (the Motion) under discussion in ‘the House’ (the MIC class). Teams A. & B. will produce a written, agreed ‘Motion before the House’ which will be circulated to the whole class before the debate.

Examples of Debate topics could be: ‘This house believes that the death penalty is justified for children over the age of 10 years old who commit murder’. Or ‘This house believes that seriously ill anorexic children who refuse to eat should be tube fed against their will, if necessary’. During this Semester, there will be multiple topical examples of ethical and moral dilemmas discussed in class, reported in the press and also online. There should be no problem for Teams A. & B. in choosing 2 moral dilemmas for debate!

The format for the debates will be as follows:
Teams A. & B. will each have chosen a Team Leader. Dr Vizard will chair the debate. *The Motion before the House* will be written on the whiteboard for all to see during the debate. There will be a preliminary show of hands by the whole class with their personal opinion (not their Team position) about whether or not they support/do not support the motion.

Each Team leader will start by making an evidence based statement about why they support/do not support the motion.

The debate will continue with all members of the 2 teams contributing points for or against the motion. *It is expected that all members of each Team will make at least one contribution to the debate.* Contributions will be more effective if Team members can back up their opinions with direct reference to the academic evidence on morality and ethics which has been covered in the MIC class or evidence from elsewhere. At the end of the debate, there will be another show of hands by the whole class with their personal opinion (not their Team position) about whether or not they now support/do not support the motion. There may or may not be a difference between the 1st and 2nd show of hands, depending upon the persuasiveness of the various arguments put forward.

The winning Team will not necessarily achieve higher grading but quality and evidence based backing for individual contributions will be taken into account.

**Creative Project (25%)**

Students will work in small groups of 5 or 6 to devise “moral modules” - ways to encourage moral decision-making and actions among either children (grade school) or teens (high school).

For example, a moral module could focus on ways to promote cooperation and collaboration, empathy, or moral decision-making, on parenting or peer influence, or on ways to reduce bullying, antisocial behavior, or prejudice – any of the other moral domains covered in class. The project will be assessed by means of a group presentation during Session 12 (26.4.18).

The format of the moral module can take any form you like, as long as it can be demonstrated/presented in 10 minutes. At the end of the presentations of the moral modules, there will be 15 minutes for discussion and reflection of the main points arising from the presentations. Some example formats for these modules are: a podcast, a buzzfeed article, a newspaper or magazine column, a short movie, play or skit.

Each group must also submit a one-page summary of their project, both digitally and as a hard-copy to accompany the presentation. The summary should include the following information:

- Project title
- Group members
- The target audience
- A brief, one-paragraph summary of your project including how your "moral module" relates to the material you've learned in this class (i.e., the primary theoretical frameworks you relied on in devising the module).
- A list of the sources used, in APA format

Examples of the projects include:
Increasing empathy in social media by changing how comments are made and read in platforms like Facebook. A skit aimed at decreasing moral disengagement in teens by illustrating how it occurs and how to overcome it.

**Final Exam (25%)**

Students will complete an in-class (on 17.5.18), closed-book final examination lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes, and comprising multiple choice, short-answer and longer (paragraph-length) format questions to assess students’ knowledge of and ability to synthesize the material covered in class, on the slides, and in the readings.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Excellent work showing thorough knowledge and understanding of the various philosophical, moral, ethical and psychological concepts, with excellent use of scientific language and clear logical
explanations of their meaning. Course assignments should reveal a considerable degree of independent reading and research and use of primary reference material.

**Grade B:** Good work with good general knowledge and understanding of the various concepts, accurate use of scientific language and ability to describe what they mean in a clear manner. Coursework should display ability to use primary reference material.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory work, broadly correct both factually and analytically, with some explanation and reasoning: the work will typically demonstrate a basic understanding of the topic.

**Grade D:** Passable work, showing a general, superficial knowledge and understanding of the topic, but lacking satisfactory use of scientific language or adequate analysis or reasoned explanations.

**Grade F:** Unsatisfactory work in assessed criteria.

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### Required Text(s)

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<th>Required Text(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Required readings are in the Session folders, on NYU Classes. Texts and Other Media sources are also listed below, under each of the course sessions, for ease of reference. Books to <strong>purchase</strong> are marked P. Books to <strong>borrow</strong> are marked B.</td>
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### Internet Research Guidelines

When quoting an Internet source for a reference such as a podcast, newspaper article, video, TED talk etc, please include the following: date on which you retrieved the item, the website from which it was retrieved, name(s) of authors, date on which the article was originally published (different from the date on which you retrieved it), title of article, page number from which a quote was taken or the time point on the video when it occurred. This allows the reader of your paper to identify accurately exactly where and in what format your source reference can be found.

### Additional Required Equipment

| N/A |

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### Session 1

**INTRODUCTION TO THE MORALITY IN CHILDHOOD (MIC) COURSE:**

This introductory session will explain the format for the MIC course and the topics which will be covered. Specific course expectations will also be covered as follows:

The journal papers, chapters or books to be presented will be discussed with a brief outline of the methodology for writing a journal club paper summary. Course members will be allocated one paper, chapter or book to read and present on a designated course day.

Journal Club papers will be identified as follows in the list of required reading: **JC**

The marking system will be explained. Briefly, each piece of course work written or presented by course members will be marked using the A – F/100 – below 65 system described at the end of this Syllabus. This marking system will also be applied to the group creative projects with each member of the small groups receiving the same overall grade.

Debates on a recent moral dilemma will occur twice during the MIC course. Course participants will debate in the same small teams which have worked together on the group creative projects. The ‘recent moral dilemma’ topics for debate can be suggested by any member of the course but the whole class must agree on which team will support which side of the motion to debate. Active participation from all course members is expected and will contribute to the course attendance and participation grading.

Homework on this course will consist of reading the required papers, chapters, online material and books. Each course participant will have only one written journal club paper summary to prepare during the course.
A review session just before the final exam will go over the main points of the course, will give suggestions about approaches to revision and will remind participants about the format for the exam, types of questions etc.

**Session 2**

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, MORALS AND ETHICS – Lecture from 2.00 pm – 3.15 pm
- 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm am Visit to Bentham Project, UCL

South Cloisters**

What is morality? How do we become moral? This class and the presentation given will provide an overview of the history of the study of morality and moral development, tracking its transition from the armchair, where it was pondered by philosophers and theologians, to the laboratory, where it is studied by growing numbers of developmental, social and evolutionary psychologists and neuroscientists.

Some of the main psychological theories of moral development will be outlined. These include: Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham); Deontology (Immanuel Kant); The Rationalist (Stage and Domain) theories, i.e. Piaget’s and Kohlberg’s cognitive stage theories of moral development (rationalist theories) and Elliot Turiel’s (Domain theory), which evolved from Kohlberg’s work; Nativist and Evolutionary Theories, i.e. Jonathan Haidt & Paul Bloom. More recent theories, e.g. neuroscience based theories will be covered in session 6. Students will consider the strengths and limitations of the various theories discussed.

*After the coffee break, the class will walk to UCL, South Cloisters where we will visit the Bentham Auto-Icon and hear a short lecture from the Bentham Project academic staff, on Bentham’s life and work.*

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session: None

**Required Reading for this session:**


**Other media:**

**PLEASE LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST BEFORE THE CLASS VISIT TO THE BENTHAM PROJECT IN UCL.**

1. Audio: Melvyn Bragg & guests on ‘In our Time’ discuss Utilitarianism. Radio 4 audio podcast: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05xhwqf#play

2. Please visit the interesting podcasts by the Bentham Project, notably the sequence on making a prison pie......... Not for the very squeamish! Available from: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Bentham-Project/about/videos
Session 3

EVOLUTION, ANIMAL ETHOLOGY AND MORALITY:
JOURNAL CLUB 1.

The evidence that humans possess innate prosocial tendencies, will be discussed. Research suggesting that developing childhood morality and adult human morality are partly products of evolution will be presented. Evidence from animal ethology will show that other species also exhibit the building blocks of moral behavior. Religion and its influence on morality will be noted from an evolutionary perspective. However, religion and cultural considerations will be covered in more detail in later Sessions.

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:


Required Reading for this session:

Other media:
1. Capuchin Monkeys reject unequal pay YouTube Video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKhAd0Tyny0
2. The Feelings of animals (reconciliation/empathy/mirror neurons) You Tube Video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXNjojTZU6U
3. Moral behaviour in animals. TED talk: Frans de Waal retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcJxRqTs5nk

Session 4

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND THE MORAL COMPASS:
JOURNAL CLUB 2.

A framework for normal child development will be presented to set the scene for recent research into children’s developing physical, cognitive, emotional and social abilities over their childhoods. Emerging experimental evidence that babies and young children possess an innate moral sense will be presented and discussed. Young children appear to have an ability to make judgments about the fairness or otherwise of people’s behavior and also to show empathy towards those in distress at a very young, even pre-verbal stage of development. The development of emotions associated with morality, such as a sense of guilt or shame, will also be discussed in this session.

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:


Required Reading for this session:

Other media:
2. Harry Potter fighting the forces of evil etc......(2012) Trailers of all 8 Movies available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8-e_VdwAME

**JOURNAL CLUB 3.**

**DEBATE 1. ON A RECENT MORAL DILEMMA**

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:


Required Reading for this session:


Other media:

If morality evolved, the moral circuitry within our brains should be identifiable. In this session, the brain bases of moral cognition and emotion and their development throughout childhood will be presented and discussed. While consideration of a neurobiological basis for morality might inspire concerns about biological determinism, neurobiology provides evidence for both nature and nurture.

Neurodevelopmental disorders associated with moral deficits, particularly psychopathy will be presented. Behavioral and neurobiological evidence suggests that psychopathic individuals exhibit very different physiological and neural responses when making moral judgments and in situations requiring empathy. The interplay between 'hard wired', brain based differences in individuals with psychopathy (callous unemotional traits) and the effects of their upbringing and environment will be discussed.

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:


Required Reading for this session:

Other Media:

In this session the role of family and peers in moral development will be covered. Many social and environmental factors contribute to the moral trajectories of children, but parents represent the primary and strongest influence, at least in earlier childhood. In adolescence the role of peers becomes much more predominant. In early life, it is the parents who instruct, model, encourage, and facilitate pro-social behavior and the development of empathy. Aspects of parent-child interactions, such as the quality of the child’s attachment to the parents, discipline styles etc. are all relevant for the child’s continuing moral development.
Peer relationships also play an important role in the continuing development of conscience and moral understanding. The manner in which peer and parental influences continue to interact and evolve into young adulthood will be discussed.

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:

Required Reading for this session:

Other Media:
1. Ethics of Animal Experimentation in ‘These Experiments will Break Your Heart’: Harlow Wire Cloth Monkey Experiment & others. Videos available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CU9jKlNK1Qc

SOCIETAL INFLUENCES ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT: BOOKS, FILMS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Children and adolescents are strongly influenced by the celebrities they see on TV, the music they listen to, and the video games they play. How do these media affect children’s moral development, and is there a critical window during which time its influence is most strongly felt? With increasing media coverage of morally dubious behavior by celebrities and violent or sexist themes in games and music, parents often struggle to shield their children from these influences. On the other hand, overly sheltering children may not be helpful. Children who experience age-appropriate and measured exposure to media with monitoring and guidance from caretakers may learn better how to modulate their own negative impulses. In this session, we will discuss the ramifications of cultural icons and media on moral development.

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:

Required Reading for this session:

Other Media:

Session 9

MORAL INTUITION, CULTURE AND RELIGION

JOURNAL CLUB 7.

In this session, we will consider Jonathan Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory, to describe the different building blocks (foundations) that make up a culture’s morality and to explain cultural differences in morality. His theory also emphasizes the role of intuition (gut feelings) and emotion over reason and controlled cognitive processes in moral judgments. Using this framework, we will discuss differences in moral principles between cultures, and whether religion makes us “good”.

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:

Required reading for this session:

Other Media:
Joshua Greene talks at Google (May 2014). Moral tribes: Emotion, Reason and the Gap between Us and Them. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaoTKurm_1k

Session 10

MORALITY AND ETHICS IN LAW & MEDICINE: PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES:

1.00 pm – 2.30 pm **VISITING SPEAKER**
DR AYESHA AHMAD, Lecturer in Medical Ethics and Law, St George’s University of London.

Session Outline:
In this session, I will bring together a discussion about culture, religion, and medicine in the context of ethical dilemmas faced in the clinical setting. I will introduce the role of culture and religion in conceptualizations of illness and how this impacts on decision-making. The session will explore and critically analyze case scenarios where ethical principles, cultural explanations and religious reasons for treatment and illness perceptions are in the context of the patient being a child. I will bring to the forefront the meaning of culture and religious beliefs in child development and some of the ethical issues that doctors face in responding to cultural, and cross-cultural, and religious aspects of clinical decision-making from an ethics perspective.

2.45– 4.00 pm DEBATE 2. ON A RECENT MORAL DILEMMA

Required Reading for this session:
3. BMA Ethics Toolkit for Students: Children and Young People. Available at:
Session 11

SOCIETAL INFLUENCES ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT: CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

JOURNAL CLUB

‘Men never do evil sent completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.’ Blaise Pascal (Pensees, 1670). Jonathan Sacks discussed this phenomenon, observed in all religions over millennia, in his seminal book ‘Not in God’s name. Confronting Religious Violence’. Sacks has named the phenomenon ‘Altruistic Evil’. He is keen to make the point that religions themselves are not responsible for the ‘religious violence’ which occurs internationally, rather it is the extreme interpretations of various religious texts which allows certain individuals and groups to commit genocides and terrorist acts. Sacks believes that religious believers and atheists can and should live together peacefully and that history shows that this can be done.

In contrast, Richard Dawkins, a renowned scientist and atheist, pins the blame for many religious wars and conflicts upon belief in an all knowing god which results in abrogation of an individual’s moral responsibilities for his/her actions. His online and written debates on these religious and philosophical issues with leaders from all religious faiths have continued over three decades with no sign of a compromise being reached.

The different cultural contexts in which debates between believers and non believers take place across the world will be discussed throughout this course of lectures and in the two debates which will address recent moral dilemmas.

Books to purchase (P) or borrow (B) for this session:


Required Reading for this session:


Required Reading for this session:


Other Media:

Session 12
GROUP CREATIVE PROJECT PRESENTATION:

JOURNAL CLUB 9.

Books to purchase (*) or borrow for this session:
None

Required Reading for this session:

Session 13
2.00 pm – 4.00 pm
JOURNAL CLUB 10: REVIEW OF ALL PAPERS PRESENTED
For this Review of All Papers read session, course participants should have read the relevant books for this final session as well as the required reading, so that their contributions to the discussions are well informed.

4.30 pm – 5.00 pm
MIC Class observations and discussion of a film showing a young child’s behavioural responses to separation from her parents. The implications of separation and disruption of attachment for children’s development will be discussed
Robertson, J. (1953). A Two year old Goes to Hospital. DVD

Required Reading for this session:

Session 14
EXAM REVIEW SESSION
The main theoretical learning points from the course will be briefly reviewed. The structure of the exam will be explained again and any questions arising will be addressed.

Session 15
FINAL EXAM
2.00 pm – 3.45 pm

Classroom Etiquette
Punctuality, attentiveness and mutual respect expected. While opposing or controversial viewpoints and arguments are actively encouraged during discussions, a respectful and open environment must be maintained for all students. Use of laptops to take notes during a session is permitted. However, students
are expected to concentrate on the lecture being given at the time. Hence, taking concurrent photographs of the lecturer’s slides with iPads or phones, is not permitted unless the student is registered with special needs or has prior agreement from the lecturer.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

A Mandatory Class Outing will be arranged to visit the ‘Auto-Icon’ of Jeremy Bentham in UCL on 8.2.18 at 3.30 pm. A short talk on Jeremy Bentham will be given by a member of the Bentham Project team.

**Your Instructor**

Dr Vizard is an Honorary Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist in Great Ormond Street Hospital for children, an Honorary Senior Lecturer at UCL Institute of Child Health and a Visiting Professor at NYUL. She is also a retired Psychoanalyst, she is in Independent clinical practice and is an active academic.

Dr Vizard has specialized for 38 years in work with abused and maltreated children, juveniles and adults who offend sexually and violently as well as children and adolescents with emerging personality disorder traits which may lead to adult psychopathy.

One of her special interests is the application of ethical principles to professional practice.

**NYU GLOBAL ACADEMIC POLICIES**

Policies and procedures for Global Academic Centres, including policies on academic integrity and the Study Away Standard, can be found here: https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/student-services.html

**Absences:** Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html

**NYU London work submission policies** can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html