

Spring 2020

“The Righteous Mind”

With your coordinator Mike Wood

Monday 11:00 til 12:45, Paradise Campus Room 512

- Feb 3 Where Does Morality Come From?
- Feb 10 Intuitions Come First, Strategic Reasoning Second
- Feb 17 No Class
- Feb 24 The Intuitive Dog and Its Rational Tail
- Mar 2 There’s More to Morality than Harm and Fairness
- Mar 9 Beyond WEIRD Morality
- Mar 16 The Moral Foundations of Politics
- Mar 23 Morality Binds and Blinds – Why Are We So Groupish?
- Mar 30 Religion Is A Team Sport
- Apr 7 Can’t We All Disagree More Constructively?

“The Righteous Mind”

Excerpt from the introduction to *The Righteous Mind – Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt (2012)

People who devote their lives to studying something often come to believe that the object of their fascination is the key to understanding everything. Books have been published in recent years on the transformative role in human history played by cooking, mothering, war ... even salt. This is one of those books. I study moral psychology, and I'm going to make the case that morality is the extraordinary human capacity that made civilization possible. I don't mean to imply that cooking, mothering, war, and salt were not also necessary, but in this book I'm going to take you on a tour of human nature and history from the perspective of moral psychology.

By the end of the tour, I hope to have given you a new way to think about two of the most important, vexing, and divisive topics in human life: politics and religion. Etiquette books tell us not to discuss these topics in polite company, but I say go ahead. Politics and religion are both expressions of our underlying moral psychology, and an understanding of that psychology can help to bring people together. My goal in this book is to drain some of the heat, anger, and divisiveness out of these topics and replace them with awe, wonder, and curiosity. We are downright lucky that we evolved this complex moral psychology that allowed our species to burst out of the forests and savannas and into the delights, comforts, and extraordinary peacefulness of modern societies in just a few thousand years. My hope is that this book will make conversations about morality, politics, and religion more common, more civil, and more fun, even in mixed company. My hope is that it will help us to get along.