

IB258-15 Foundations of Human Sociality and Cooperation

21/22

Department

Warwick Business School

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Redzo Mujcic

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This is an elective module available for WBS and Non-WBS students.

The principal module aims are: 1. To give a rigorous grounding in the key perspectives and theories of human sociality and cooperation, as well as the experimental evidence that underpins the field. 2. To allow students to critically read and evaluate major papers on the topics studied. 3. Understand the major strengths and weaknesses of human cooperation to improve decision making in public policy and business.

[Module web page](#)

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Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The module will explore the origins and basis of human sociality and cooperation using an interdisciplinary approach that will include theories and empirical findings from psychology, economics, sociology, biology and anthropology. It will address evolutionary mechanisms, psychological mechanisms (from a developmental and comparative perspective) and societal mechanisms underlying human social and cooperative interactions. The module will address a variety of topics and questions such as: How does prosocial behaviour develop in life (ontogeny)? What are the evolutionary roots of human cooperation and morality? What is the role of social norms in societies? How can our knowledge about human sociality improve decisions in business and public policy? There will be nine key topics, which will align with the nine lectures:

- Cooperation in small-scale and large-scale societies
- Strategic Interactions and experimental economics
- Evolutionary Biology and Anthropology
- Evolution of cooperation
- Evolution of human cooperation
- Psychological mechanisms of cooperation I: Cognition a. Coordination & Communication
- Psychological mechanisms of cooperation II: Motivation, empathy and altruism
- Moral psychology
- Origins of Morality
- Modern approaches to moral psychology
- Societal mechanisms: norms and institutions
- Property and public goods
- Implications for Public Policy and Business.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand and be able to explain the cooperative structure of all human societies.
- Understand the puzzle of cooperation and altruism from an evolutionary perspective.
- Understand and be able to outline the major theories explaining (human) cooperation.
- Understand and articulate the psychological requirements for human social interactions, including coordination and communication.
- Critically evaluate the experimental evidence that underpins the development of human cooperative skills.
- Critically evaluate the experimental evidence that suggests similar psychological processes in other species, with special focus to closely related species (primates).
- Apply critical thinking in developing potential alternative explanations for empirical findings.
- Apply creativeness to think about potential new experimental designs that may help to tear apart alternative explanations.
- Evaluate and critically analyse the role of culture and social norms in human societies.
- Use the knowledge on the strengths and limitations of human sociality and cooperation to

identify ways to improve decisions in public policy and business.

Indicative reading list

(selection of some of the readings). For each lecture and seminar there will be a list of relevant papers, reviews and/or chapters.

Bicchieri, C. (2006). *The grammar of society: the nature and dynamic of social norms*. Cambridge University Press.

Boyd, R., Gintis, H., Bowles, S. & Richerson, P.J. (2003). The evolution of altruistic punishment. *PNAS*, 100, 3531-3535.

Choi & Bowles, 2007. "The Coevolution of Parochial Altruism and War", *Science* 318,

Camerer, C. F. (2007). Progress in behavioural game theory. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 11, 167-188.

Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. (2006). Evolutionary psychology, moral heuristics, and the law. In G. Gigerenzer & C. Engel (Eds.), *Heuristics and the law*. (pp. 175-205). Cambridge, MA , MIT Press.

Earle, T. & Johnson, A. (2000). *The evolution of human societies: from forager group to agrarian state*. Stanford University Press.

Fehr, E. & Fischbacher, U. (2003). The nature of human altruism. *Nature*, 425,785-791.

Gurven, M. (2004). To give or not to give: an evolutionary ecology of human food transfers. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*. 27 (4): 543-58.

Haidt, J. & Kesebir, S. (2010). Morality. In: *Handbook of Social Psychology*.

Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162, 1243-1248.

Hoffman, M. L. (1981). Is altruism part of human nature? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40(1), 121-137.

Marlowe, F. (2005). Hunter-gatherers and human evolution. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 14(2): 54-67.

Nowak, M.A. (2006). Five rules for the evolution of cooperation. *Science*, 314: 1560-1563.

Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, J. (2005). What is an institution? *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 1: 1-22.

Tomasello, M., Carpenter, M., Call, J., Behne, T.& Moll, H. (2005). Understanding and sharing intentions: The origins of cultural cognition. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 28, 675-735.

Subject specific skills

Develop an understanding for the main functional advantages of cooperation, coordination and prosociality.

Develop an understanding for the main contextual variables that influence levels of prosociality and cooperation among humans.

Be aware of the limitations of human cooperation and the mechanisms that help to enforce and maintain social interactions and coordination between individuals.

Transferable skills

Written and verbal skills to communicate knowledge and ideas.

Critical analysis of theories and experimental studies.

Research skills: learning to search for relevant literature, citing correctly other studies and ideas.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	10 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	48 hours (32%)
Assessment	73 hours (49%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Private Study.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Individual Assignment (15 CATS)	90%	65 hours
Participation (15 CATS)	10%	8 hours

Assessment group R

	Weighting	Study time
Individual Assignment	100%	

Feedback on assessment

Detailed written and verbal feedback will be provided to students during the lectures and seminars, as well as during office hours.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
 - Year 2 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
 - Year 2 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
 - Year 2 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
 - Year 2 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)

This module is Optional for:

- UIBA-MN34 Law and Business Four Year (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of MN34 Law and Business Studies Four Year (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 4 of MN34 Law and Business Studies Four Year (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 2 of UIPA-L8N1 Undergraduate Global Sustainable Development and Business
- Year 2 of UIPA-L8N2 Undergraduate Global Sustainable Development and Business Studies (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UIBA-MN31 Undergraduate Law and Business Studies
- Year 3 of UIBA-MN32 Undergraduate Law and Business Studies
- UIBA-MN35 Undergraduate Law and Business Studies with Intercalated Year (3+1)
 - Year 3 of MN35 Law and Business Studies with Intercalated Year (3+1)
 - Year 4 of MN35 Law and Business Studies with Intercalated Year (3+1)

This module is Unusual option for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)

This module is Option list G for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)