Research Opening in the Cushman Lab

Graduate student adviser: Justin Martin

Faculty adviser: Fiery Cushman

Description of research: In the Moral Psychology Research Lab, we are interested in understanding the cognitive processes that give rise to moral judgment, their development, and their evolutionary history. We ask questions like:

- What is the individual evolutionary benefit of engaging in punishment? How does understanding this help us explain peculiar features of moral judgment?
- What are the cognitive processes underlying decisions to punish others? How/Where do those computations occur in the brain?
- What sources of information matter when making a punishment decision? How are these factors integrated into a final punishment decision?

To provide answers, we use behavioral experiments - both online and in-lab – neuroimaging methods and modeling. We're looking for Harvard undergraduates to help us answer these questions. In the process, you will have the chance to work closely with a member of the lab, attend weekly lab meetings in William James Hall, and learn valuable skills in conducting research (study design, implementation, various methods of data analysis, etc.).

Responsibilities: Research assistants will work 10 or more hours per week. Duties include assisting in design of experimental stimuli, conducting experiments (online and in-lab, behavioral and neuroimaging) and assisting in data analysis. You may have the chance to help design future studies or present findings at an undergraduate conference. Ideal candidates will be enthusiastic, responsible and willing to learn, with an interest in moral psychology, decision-making and/or understanding how the mind and brain work. Experience with computer programming (especially Matlab or JavaScript) and/or data analysis would be helpful, but is not required. Preference will be given to those able to commit to the position for at least 2 semesters, while a commitment of 4 semesters (in conjunction with an Honors Thesis) is encouraged, but not required, to take full advantage of the training and experience provided.

Status: Volunteer or course credit through Psych 2560r.

Contact: Justin Martin (justinmartin@g.harvard.edu); Please include "Undergraduate RA position: [name]" in subject line and attach CV.