

Honesty: The Philosophy and Psychology of a Neglected Virtue

2020 BAPT Summer Seminar

Moreau Seminary Campus of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN

June 15-19 (M-F), 2020

Seminar Director: Dr. Christian B. Miller (B.A., Princeton University; Ph.D., University of Notre Dame) is the A. C. Reid Professor of Philosophy at Wake Forest University and Director of the Honesty Project, funded by the John Templeton Foundation. He was the Director of the Character Project (www.thecharacterproject.com), which was funded by \$5.6 million in grants from the John Templeton Foundation and Templeton World Charity Foundation. His main areas of research are meta-ethics, moral psychology, moral character, action theory, and philosophy of religion. He is the author of over 90 papers as well as three books with Oxford University Press: *Moral Character: An Empirical Theory* (2013), *Character and Moral Psychology* (2014), and *The Character Gap: How Good Are We?* (2017). He is also the editor or co-editor of several books, including *Integrity, Honesty, and Truth Seeking* (Oxford University Press).

Seminar Theme: If you ask people today to name some of the virtues, honesty will often show up on their lists. It is a perfectly familiar virtue. It is also widely accepted as a virtue. Unlike some other traits such as chastity or humility, there is little controversy about whether honesty is a moral excellence that is worth cultivating. It seems clear enough, too, that honesty is a tremendously important virtue. Parents want to develop it in their children. Close relationships typically depend upon it. Employers value it in their employees.

Yet despite these observations, philosophers have almost completely neglected the virtue of honesty from their professional writing. The goal of this seminar is to think together about these and other fascinating questions about honesty which deserve increased attention:

- *What is the scope of honesty—does it pertain to lying, cheating, stealing, promise-breaking, and misleading?*
- *What is the nature of honesty—is it, for instance, a matter of not intentionally distorting the facts as the person sees them?*
- *Is there a motivational component to honesty, and if so, what kinds of motives count and what do not count?*
- *What are the related vices, and in particular is there a vice of excessive honesty?*
- *How should we think about honesty in Nazi-at-the-door cases? What about Huck Finn?*
- *In light of the best empirical research, are most people in fact honest, dishonest, or neither?*
- *How might honesty be cultivated? What practical strategies should be employed?*

Much of the seminar will be devoted to reading Dr. Miller's recent work on these questions as well as a few related articles in the contemporary literature.

Schedule and Format: The seminar will be held at Moreau Seminary beginning the evening of Monday, June 15, and concluding on Friday, June 19 after lunch. After Monday, afternoons and evenings are free. Participants will have access to both the Seminary's and the University's libraries, as well as the Notre Dame bookstore, golf course, and campus restaurants. The setting is ideally suited for fellowship, discussion, research, quiet-time, and wooded walks. Participants who would like may present papers of general interest after the main sessions.

Cost: \$550-650 (depending on number of participants), covering tuition, room, meals, and reading materials. Travel is additional and up to each participant.

Application: Send a curriculum vita and brief letter of interest to gpoore@shorter.edu by the application deadline of **May 1, 2020**. Participation is limited to 20. Applications from professors and graduate students will be given first priority. Any remaining spaces will be made available to advanced undergraduate students. You will be notified of acceptance by mid-May, at which time we request you submit a \$200 deposit to save your spot.

Contact: Please direct questions to Dr. Gregory Poore, Secretary-Treasurer of BAPT, at gpoore@shorter.edu.

For info on the Baptist Association of Philosophy Teachers, see www.baptistphilosophyteachers.wordpress.com.