**GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION**

1. **Name(s)** and **Academic Title(s)** of Principal Investigator(s)

   Jason M. Stephens, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology

2. **Email** Address: **jason.stephens@uconn.edu**

3. Tentative **title and course number of the proposed/enhanced course** and name of the sponsoring **department or program**.

   EPSY 3XXX *Why be "good"? The psychology of morality* (Dept of Educational Psychology)

4. Describe **your project** and the **work that will be done during the grant period** on **course content, course design, and/or teaching approach**.

   *Why be "good"? The psychology of morality* is a course I have wanted to develop and teach for many years. As an educational psychologist interested in students' moral development and functioning, I have conducted numerous studies and published books, chapters and empirical articles on the these phenomena (see Appendix A). Yet, despite over ten years of such scholarly work, I have never taught on course on the topics. Thus, the primary goal of this project to develop and teach a course that focuses on moral development and functioning. Accordingly, the primary work to be done during the grant period would involve the gathering of needed resources, the creation of a complete syllabus, and securing of all needed approvals to the course.

   The content of this course is organized around an adapted version of the four-component model (FCM) of moral functioning (Rest et al., 1999). The four components – perception, judgment, motivation, and character – are seen as critical psychological processes that govern behavior in the moral domain. The content of this course offers an in-depth exploration of each of these components. While primarily focused on the theoretical and empirical work from the field of psychology, questions concerning morality (what it is, which actions are right and wrong, why one should behave morally, etc.) are framed broadly in this course and include perspectives from philosophy, religion, anthropology and cultural studies. In doing so, and as detailed below (question 6), the content of this course meets criteria specified in Content Areas One, Two and Four of UConn's General Education.

   The design and teaching approach used in the course are intertwined. It is designed around the four components of moral functioning in the form of four questions/discussions: *What's "moral"?* (perception), *What's "right"?* (judgment), *Why be moral?* (motivation), and *How do I be good?* (character). Each question is used to launch and anchor a three- to four-week series of explorations and discussions. As such, the design and teaching approach employed in this course are in the spirit of inquiry-based learning. With its epistemological roots in constructivism, inquiry-based learning is a pedagogical approach that is initiated with questions (not statements) and empowers students to be active agents in their own learning (as opposed to passive recipients of another's knowledge). It is close cousin of other constructivist-based pedagogies, such as discovery, problem- and project-based learning. And like its cousins, it is best suited for complex, "ill-structured" problems (Simon, 1973), such as human morality and individual moral functioning.

   Inquiry-based learning, and the solving of ill-structured problems, requires students not only to develop relevant domain knowledge but also to apply that knowledge in a meaningful way (e.g., White & Frederiksen, 1998). Because, by definition, ill-structured problems are complex and do not have single, straight-forward solutions (Meacham & Emont, 1989), they require and enhance the use of higher order cognitive and metacognitive skills (e.g., Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, & Campione, 1983; Flavell, 1987) as well as strong communication/argumentation skills (e.g., Voss & Post, 1988; Jonassen, 1997). Accordingly, the learning objectives of this course encompass all six of the cognitive outcomes in Bloom's taxonomy as well as important communication skills. These objectives are described in the below (see Question 5) in terms of learning outcomes.

5. How do you intend to evaluate project objectives once the course, as proposed, is offered? Please identify intended **learning outcomes** and **assessment tools** (see also 4.)

   The learning outcomes of this course encompass all six of the cognitive outcomes in Bloom's taxonomy as well as important communication skills. For the sake of brevity, these learning outcomes are grouped as "lower-order" and "higher-order" below, and the assessment tools used to evaluate them are described below each grouping.

A. Lower-Order Cognitive Outcomes (Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application):
Students will come to know (e.g., be able to name and define), comprehend (e.g., understand and explain), and apply (e.g., construct and utilize): 1) competing conceptions of the "good" (from philosophy, religion, cultural studies, and psychology); 2) differing perspectives on moral judgment formation (e.g., behavioral, cognitive-developmental, and social-intuitionist); 3) various components of moral motivation and commitment (e.g., values, goals, beliefs, identity and efficacy); and 4) two broad types of character (i.e., moral and performance) important to moral functioning.

    Assessment Tools for Lower-Order Cognitive Outcomes
    The lower-order cognitive outcomes will be assessed both informally (real-time, in situ checks for understanding during class discussion) and formally (through quizzes and exams). Specifically, the latter will include a range of recognition and production tasks (e.g., identification, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple choice items) that assess students' ability to define, describe and apply the core concepts and theories discussed in the course. I anticipate developing quizzes for each of the four components and possibly a cumulative final exam.

B. Higher-Order Cognitive Outcomes (Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation):
Students will be able to analyze (e.g., compare and contrast), synthesis (e.g., combine and summarize), and evaluate (e.g., critique and conclude): 1) competing conceptions of the "good"; 2) differing perspectives on moral judgment formation; 3) various components of moral motivation and commitment; and 4) two broad types of character important to moral functioning.

    Assessment Tools for Higher-Order Cognitive Outcomes
    By definition, higher-order cognitive outcomes are more complex than lower-order cognitive and thus require more the use of more open-ended assessment tools. In the proposed course, students' capacities to analyze, synthesize and evaluate will assessed through formal writing activities (for details, see response to question 7 below) and oral presentations.

6. Describe how the course will **fit into UConn's General Education** curriculum. How will the course serve the **broad goals of UConn's General Education program** (flexibility in thinking, foundations for learning at UConn and later in life, critical analytical skills, etc.)?

As described above, and detailed more specifically below, the content of *Why be "good"?* fits into three of the four content areas of UConn's General Education: Group One, Two and Four. It also serves the broad goals of our General Education program by fostering students' moral development (awareness, judgment, motivation and character) and their critical thinking and perspective taking skills. All of these capacities are important to a rich and successful life, not only as students but as human beings and citizens of a pluralistic society.

Group One - Arts and Humanities
The proposed course meets the criteria related Arts and Humanities by providing students with the opportunity to explore and understand a wide range of philosophical, religious and cultural traditions related to human morality. In doing so, this course offers an historical perspective of human beings quest to both ascertain and live the "good" life. More specifically, the course not only uses seminal philosophical texts (such as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Dialects of Confucius*), but also the visual arts (paintings and sculpture), dramatic performance (film and theatre) and contemporary music (folk to hip hop) to explore differing conceptions and expressions of human morality over time and across place.

Group Two - Social Sciences
Being offered through the Department of Educational Psychology, the proposed course is most definitively a social science course. Specifically, the proposed course meets all four of the criteria specified in this Group by: 1) introducing students to theories and concepts of the social sciences; 2) introducing students to methods used in the social sciences, including consideration of the ethical problems social scientists face; 3) introducing students to ways in which individuals, groups, institutions, or societies behave and influence one another and the natural environment; and 4) providing students with tools to analyze social groups (particularly ethnic, religious and political communities), and to examine social issues and problems at the individual, cultural, societal, national, and international level.

Group Four - Diversity and Multiculturalism
One of the most important aspects and contributions of the proposed course is the diversity of perspectives it offers on what is a universal phenomenon: human moral functioning (from perception to action). The diversity explored in the proposed is philosophical, religious and cultural, as we will explore "the varieties of human

experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity" in the Western and Eastern worlds (past and present) and among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus as well as the non-religious (e.g., atheists, Utilitarians and secular humanists). In addition to exploring the aforementioned varieties in human morality, the proposed course also emphasizes understanding how moral beliefs and values affect "the interpretive systems and/or social structures" of various cultural groups, and "the similarities that may exist among diverse groups."

7. For **which content areas and/or competencies** (W, Q) will the course be proposed and how will it address the **specific criteria for courses in these content areas and/or competencies**?

The proposed course is designed to the meet the criteria specifications of a W course. Specifically, students in this course will be required to engage in extensive amounts of informal and formal writing: Informal writing exercises will include in-class and weekly reflections on course topics, while formal written work will consist of four short papers (3 to 5 pages on each of the four components of the FCM) and a final paper (15 to 20 pages). The latter will actually be a revision and aggregation of the four short papers. Throughout the course, the importance of writing as a process will be emphasized. While I, as the instructor, will be the most important supervisor of the process (reviewing, editing and evaluating all four short papers and the final paper), peer review processes will also be used. Peer review doesn't simply afford the opportunity for feedback to the writer, but can also be an important learning experience for the reviewer (in terms of not only learning a different perspective from the content of the writing but also use of writing style and voice). In short, multiple pedagogical structures will be used to develop and assess students written work, including required individual consultations with me (online and in office hours) and in-class workshops on writing and peer review processes. Given the time (and energy) needed to meet these supervisory demands, the proposed course will be limited to an enrollment of 16 students. Finally, students must pass the writing components in order to pass the course. This stipulation is justified because writing is the primary mode by which students will learn in the proposed course. Specifically, while inquiry-based discussions (and some direct instruction) are the essential "anchors" of the learning experiences in the proposed course, it is the individual reflection and writing that radiates around those anchors that provide the depth of thinking, understanding and expression of thought consistent with this course's learning objectives and intended outcomes.

8. How will the course **add to and/or enhance existing course offerings**? Which of the areas targeted by **this year's competition** does it address? Does it fill important **gaps**? How does it **compare to current offerings or pedagogy**? What will be **distinctive** about the course?

With its unique emphasis on human morality and moral functioning, the proposed course offers an important enhancement to existing course offerings. Quite simply, there is no other course in the University curriculum that offers such an exploration – an exploration that is at once, and equally, abstract (philosophical) and concrete (personal) about something that is quintessentially human (morality) and all-important (moral functioning). By meeting the criteria of three content groups in UConn's General Education program, the proposed course also speaks to one of the areas targeted in this year's competition. Finally, by offering this course as a "blended course" (i.e., "live," face-to-face meetings Mondays and Wednesday and online discussions on Fridays), the proposed speaks to the on-going budget crisis by reducing the costly use of University space and resources associated with "live" meetings.

9. How will your course serve as **a model to assist others in their efforts to improve the general education curriculum**?

I hadn't considered this a goal when I conceived the idea for course. Perhaps on a conceptual level the design and teaching approach employed in this course could be a model for others; inquiry-based learning and organizing a course around a fundamental question, challenge or problem. In this case, I poise the question, *Why be "good"?* and then engage students in a 16-week journey that explores four important components of moral development and functioning. This approach may be more amenable to some disciples and topics than others but I hope that some might find it useful.

10. Is **your proposal linked to any others submitted in this competition**? No.

11. Complete the **budget form**: See Appendix B.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Dr. Stephens's Publications related to Moral Development and Functioning**

<u>**Journal Articles**</u>

**Stephens, J. M.,** Romakin, V. & Yukhymenko, M. (2010). Academic motivation and misconduct in two cultures: A comparative analysis of U.S. and Ukrainian undergraduates. *International Journal of Educational Integrity, 6*(1), 47-60.

**Stephens, J. M.** & Nicholson, H. (2008). Cases of incongruity: Exploring the divide between adolescents' beliefs and behaviors related to academic cheating. *Educational Studies, 34*(4), 361-376.

**Stephens, J. M.,** Young, M. F., & Calabrese, T. H. (2007). Does moral judgment go offline when students are online? A comparative analysis of undergraduates' beliefs and behaviors related to conventional and digital cheating. *Ethics & Behavior, 17*(3), 233-254.

McCabe D. L. & **Stephens, J. M.** (2006). "Epidemic" as opportunity: Internet plagiarism as a lever for cultural change. *Teachers College Record* ([www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=12860](www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=12860)).

Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & **Stephens, J.** (2003). Educating citizens for responsible citizenship. *Change, 35*(6), 40-48.

Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & **Stephens, J.** (2002). Moral and civic development during college. *Peer Review, 4*(4), 23-26.

<u>**Books**</u>

Wangaard, D. B. & **Stephens, J. M.** (in press, expect May, 2011). *Creating a culture of academic integrity: A tool kit for secondary schools.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & **Stephens, J.** (2003). *Educating citizens: Preparing America's undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

<u>**Book Chapters**</u>

Litton, E. F. & **Stephens, J. M.** (2009). Justice and care in secondary Catholic schools: The importance of student-teacher relationships. In E. F. Litton and S. Martin (Eds.), *Justice, care, and diversity: Addressing the needs of all students in Catholic secondary schools* (pp. 7-15)*.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

**Stephens, J. M.** & Gehlbach, H. (2007). Under pressure and under-engaged: Motivational profiles and academic cheating in high school. In E. Anderman and T. Murdock (Eds.), *The psychology of academic cheating* (pp. 107-139). Amsterdam: Academic Press.

Murdock, T. B. & **Stephens, J. M.** (2007). Is cheating wrong? Students' reasoning about academic dishonesty. In E. Anderman and T. Murdock (Eds.), *The psychology of academic cheating* (pp. 229-251). Amsterdam: Academic Press.

**Stephens, J. M.** (2005). Justice or just us? What to do about cheating. In A. Lathrop and K. Foss (Eds.), *Guiding students from cheating and plagiarism to honesty and integrity: Strategies for change* (pp. 32-34). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. [Originally published online in *Carnegie Perspectives: A Different Way to Think about Teaching and Learning.*]

Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & **Stephens, J.** (2004). The role of higher education in preparing undergraduates for lives of civic responsibility. In K. Ferraiolo (Ed.), *New directions in civic engagement: University Avenue meets Main Street* (pp. 51-58). Charlottesville, VA: Pew Partnership for Civic Change and The University of Richmond Press.

Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., Rosner, J., & **Stephens, J.** (2000). Higher education and the development of civic responsibility. In T. Ehrlich (Ed.), *Civic responsibility and higher education* (pp. xxi-xliii). Phoenix, AZ: The American Council on Education and The Oryx Press.

<u>**Encyclopedia Entries**</u>

**Stephens, J. M.** & Garcia, G. (2008). Moral development. In E. Anderman (Ed.), *Psychology of classroom learning: An encyclopedia*. Detroit: Macmillan Reference.

**Stephens, J. M.** (2008). Cheating. In N. J. Salkind (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational psychology.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

**Stephens, J. M.** (2008). Internalization. In F.C. Power, R.J. Nuzzi, D. Narvaez, D.K. Lapsley, & T.C. Hunt (Eds.), *Moral education: A handbook* (Vol. 1, pp. 232-234). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

**2011 GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION**

Proposer's name: **Jason M. Stephens**

Proposal Title: ***Why be "good"? The psychology of morality***

The maximum amount available for each proposal is $10,000, payable in two installments at the beginning of fiscal years 2012 (July 1, 2011- June 30, 2012) and 2013 (July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013).  A maximum of $5,000 will be distributed per year for each proposal. Funds can be used at any time during the fiscal year for purposes that support the activities of the proposal and conform to University of Connecticut guidelines.

| Fiscal 2011 | Amount budgeted | Fringe * | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Summer salary | 3,500 | 700 | 4,200 |
| Supplies | 500 | None | 500 |
| Travel | | None | |
| Research | | | |
| Other | | | |
| Total | 4,000 | 7,000 | **4,700** |

| Fiscal 2012 | Amount budgeted | Fringe * | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Summer salary | 2,500 | 500 | 3,000 |
| Supplies | | None | |
| Research | | | |
| Travel | | None | |
| Other | | | |
| Total | 2,500 | 500 | **3,000** |

* Please check the Accounting Office website for summer fringe rates. www.accountingoffice.uconn.edu. As following year fringe rates are not posted until July, estimate 20% fringe for regular faculty.

**Justification:**

*Briefly explain how the expenditure of funds will support this proposal.*

The primary expenditure is summer salary as the primary resource needed is my time.  The $4,200 for the first summer pays for approximately two weeks of summer salary, a conservative estimate of the time needed to gather resources and develop the course syllabus.  Additional time will be needed during the 2011-12 academic year to prepare the needed forms for departmental, school, and university Course and Curriculum Committees. This time, and the time needed to make final revisions and refinements to the syllabus, explains the $3,000 for summer salary in the 2012 fiscal year. Finally, the $500 for "supplies" will be used to purchase books and any additional media to develop the syllabus and teach the course effectively.

**Department Head's statement**

Please arrange for your department head to send a message to GEOC@uconn.edu containing the following statement:

*"I support the enhancement/development of this course. Upon completion of the project, I will make every effort for the course to be offered every, or every other, year at the typical class size for the duration of at least five years."*

**From:** Swaminathan, Hariharan
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2011 3:25 PM
**To:** Provost's Office - Geoc
**Cc:** Stephens, Jason
**Subject:** RE: Provost's General Education Course Enhancement Grant

Dear Committee:

I support the enhancement/development of this course. Upon completion of the project, I will make every effort for the course to be offered every, or every other, year at the typical class size for the duration of at least five years.

Thank you

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