Philosophy of Psychology  
PHIL 4093/PSYC 409V  
Science Engineering 408, TR 9:30–10:50am

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Introduction:

The philosophy of psychology is concerned primarily with philosophical issues involving the foundations and methodology of psychology. Some of these issues are strictly philosophical (e.g., what is psychology? how can it be constrained by, yet independent of, neuroscience?), though some are actually high level theoretical issues in empirical psychology (e.g., to what extent are mental capacities the product of natural selection? what are the mechanisms by which humans form judgments about the mental states of others?). We will address both kinds of questions here.

This class is cross-listed with psychology because the topics have to do with fundamental issues in psychology, but it is, as the title suggests, a philosophy class. Most of the readings are by philosophers, and all are “philosophical” in a sufficiently broad sense of the term.

The readings:

It is expected, though not required, that all students have taken an introductory philosophy class. The more philosophical readings may be rather difficult for students without a philosophy background, but I am available to help with any troubles you might have. In reading philosophy, especially if you have little experience with it, it is very helpful to skim once quickly before reading in earnest. For each topic listed below, you should have skimmed all of the readings by the scheduled beginning of that topic.

Requirements:

Two in-class exams, a final, and class participation. The first exam will be on Feb 20th and is worth 20% of the final grade; the second exam (Apr 10) is worth 35%, as is the final (May 8, 12:30–2:30, in the normal room). The remaining 10% is based on thoughtful participation in classroom discussions, as well as performance on several short, unannounced quizzes. The quizzes (mainly designed to ensure you are keeping up with the reading) will be given at the beginning of the class period; be on time if you want to take them.

Graduate students will also write a 7–10-page paper, due April 19. There may also be extra readings and a few extra meetings, TBA. Grade breakdown for graduate students is: exam 1: 15%; exam 2: 30%, paper: 25%; final: 30%.
Tentative schedule of events (subject to change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and background</td>
<td>B&amp;C: Ch. 1; Pinker: Ch. 1–4, 6</td>
<td>Jan 16–Feb 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>Feb. 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computation and cognition</td>
<td>Pylyshyn</td>
<td>Feb 22</td>
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<td>Theory of mind</td>
<td>B&amp;C: Ch. 4, Goldman</td>
<td>Feb 27–Mar 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folk psychology</td>
<td>Ramsey, et al.; Horgan &amp; Woodward; B&amp;C: Ch. 2</td>
<td>Mar 8–13</td>
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<td>Modularity and innateness</td>
<td>Fodor (1981); Prinz; B&amp;C: Ch. 3</td>
<td>Mar 15–29</td>
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<td>Content in psychology</td>
<td>Fodor (1980); Burge; B&amp;C: Ch. 6</td>
<td>Apr 3–5</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td>Apr 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connectionism</td>
<td>B&amp;C: Ch. 8; Smolensky; Fodor &amp; McLaughlin; Cummins</td>
<td>Apr 12–24</td>
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<td>Evolution of cognition</td>
<td>Lewontin</td>
<td>Apr 26</td>
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<td>Alternative approaches</td>
<td>van Gelder; Clark</td>
<td>May 1–3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>May 8, 12:30pm</td>
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Required texts:

Optional text:

Assigned readings (available as reserve material):

1 Presented here are standard bibliographical entries; actual pagination will differ, as the course reserve packet has been cobbled together from whatever anthologized copies were handy.

Some suggested readings:

**General:**
(out of print: if you can find it anywhere, get it, though copies of the relevant portions will be made available)

**Computation and cognition:**

**Theory of mind:**

**Modularity:**

**Innateness:**
Content in psychology:

Connectionism:

Evolution of cognition: