

# Phil 149

## Philosophy of Psychology

### Fall 2010, Tues. Thurs., 11:00am-12:20 pm

Professor: William Bechtel

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:30-4:00, and by appointment

Email: [phil149@mechanism.ucsd.edu](mailto:phil149@mechanism.ucsd.edu)

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#### 1. Course Description

How do scientists explain mental activities such as thinking, imagining, and remembering? Are the explanations offered in psychology similar to or different from those found in the natural sciences? How do psychological explanations relate to those of other disciplines, especially those included in cognitive science? The course will focus on major research traditions in psychology, with a special focus on contemporary cognitive psychology. Research on memory will provide a focus for the latter portion of the course.

Given the nature of the class, substantial material will be presented in lectures that goes beyond what is included in the readings. Also, philosophy is an activity, and learning activities requires active engagement. Accordingly, class attendance and discussion is critical. Although we will have discussions on other occasions as well, several classes are designated as discussion classes.

#### 2. Course Requirements

Class attendance is mandatory. Missing classes more than very occasionally will result in a reduction in your grade. To get the most out of the class, it is absolutely essential that every one comes to class prepared to discuss the readings. To ensure that this happens and to foster subsequent discussions in class, you will be required to turn in a very short (one paragraph) comments or questions on reading assigned during each week of the quarter, except when there is an exam. You can write about anything in the readings you find interesting, puzzling, strange, clearly wrong, obviously right, etc. These will be graded as acceptable or unacceptable. To ensure that your submission is acceptable, your comment or question must demonstrate that you have read and thought about the assigned material. (Your paragraph may focus on one specific part of the reading--do not try to discuss everything.) These must be submitted as email (as plain text, *not as attachments*) to [phil149@mechanism.ucsd.edu](mailto:phil149@mechanism.ucsd.edu) by 7 AM on the classes preceded by an asterisk in the schedule below. You must turn in six acceptable assignments (out of seven possible) to receive a passing grade for the course.

Your grade in the course will be based on two examinations and one 3-5 page paper. The two examinations and the paper will each count equally toward your grade. The paper, due by the

beginning of class on November 18, must be on one of the topics that will be assigned in class. If possible, the paper should be submitted in Word by email attachment sent to [papers@mechanism.ucsd.edu](mailto:papers@mechanism.ucsd.edu) (please be sure to check for viruses before submitting your file!). Above average or below average participation in class discussions can result in a raising or lowering of your final grade from what is determined by the above percentages on these other assignments.

### 3. Texts

All assigned readings for the course are available on the internet through links from this syllabus. Those items that are on license to UCSD may only be available if you are on campus or set up a virtual private network (directions on doing so are available through [Academic Computing Services](#)).

### 4. Email List

There is an email distribution lists for this course. It is required that you subscribe to this list. Do it IMMEDIATELY. You can always unsubscribe later if you drop the course. The purpose of the list is to allow me to distribute information regarding due dates for assignments, changes of schedule, etc. Some of this information is crucial, and some of it may be distributed early on. To subscribe, you simply need to send an email message to the following address: [philpsych-subscribe@mechanism.ucsd.edu](mailto:philpsych-subscribe@mechanism.ucsd.edu). After you send the subscribe request, you will receive a reply from [philpsych-subscribe@mechanism.ucsd.edu](mailto:philpsych-subscribe@mechanism.ucsd.edu) that will ask you to confirm your request. Follow the directions in this message to confirm you subscription. If you later want to remove yourself from this list, send email to [philpsych-unsubscribe@mechanism.ucsd.edu](mailto:philpsych-unsubscribe@mechanism.ucsd.edu).

Only I have authorization to send mail to this list. There should be no spam. If you receive mail from this list that is not from me, be assured that I will as well and will take measures to block further abuse. (The welcome message you receive suggests that you can send email to the list. Sorry, but you cannot. If there is interest in setting up a voluntary discussion list for the class to which anyone can submit, I am happy to do so, but participation will not make it required.)

### 5. Schedule of Classes and Readings

Note: This schedule of reading assignments is tentative and subject to revision. Dates with asterisks are dates on which comments/question paragraphs on the reading are due. These comments/questions must be sent to [phil149@mechanism.ucsd.edu](mailto:phil149@mechanism.ucsd.edu) by 7 AM on the dates indicated.

**September 23: [Psychology as a Science](#)**

**September 28: [Roots: Aristotle and Descartes](#)**

**Shields, Christopher** (2010). [Aristotle's psychology](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**Descartes, Rene** (1641) [Meditation II](#).

**Robinson, Howard** (2007). [Dualism](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Parts 1-3

**Recommended: Aristotle, [De Anima, Book 2](#)** (recommended)

**\*September 30: Roots of Experimental Psychology: Psychophysics and Memory**

**Ebbinghaus, Hermann.** (1913). *Memory: A contribution to experimental psychology* (Henry A. Ruger & Clara E. Bussenius, Trans.). Originally published in New York by Teachers College, Columbia University. (Original German work *Über das Gedächtnis* published 1885). Chapters 3 and 8.

**Fechner, Gustav Theodor** (1860). *Elements of psychophysics, Sections VII* ("Measurement of sensation") and *XVI* ("The fundamental formula and the measurement formula") (Trans. by Herbert S. Langfeld, first appearing in B. Rand (Ed.) (1912), *The classical psychologists*).

**October 5: Characterizing the Conscious Mind: Brentano and James**

**Huemer, Wolfgang** (2010). *Brentano*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**James, William** (1892). *The stream of consciousness*. From *Psychology* (chapter XI). Cleveland & New York, World.

**James, William** (1879). *Are we automata?* *Mind*, 4, 1-22.

**October 7: The Behaviorist Revolution**

**Pavlov, Ivan P.** (1927). *Conditioned reflexes: An investigation of the physiological activity of the cerebral cortex* (G. V. Anrep, Trans.). **Required:** Lecture I.

**Recommended:** Lectures II, and III.

**Watson, John B.** (1913). *Psychology as the behaviorist views it*. *Psychological Review*, 20, 158-177.

**Recommended: Watson, John B. & Rayner, Rosalie** (1920). *Conditioned emotional reactions*. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 3, 1-14.

**\*October 12: Discussion**

**October 14: Behaviorism: Philosophical and Psychological**

**Skinner, B. F.** (1950). *Are theories of learning necessary?* *Psychological Review*, 57, 193-216

**Tolman, Edward, C.** (1948). *Cognitive maps in rats and men*. *Psychological Review*, 55(4), 189-208.

**Graham, George** (2010). *Behaviorism*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**Recommended: Hauser, Larry** (2006), *Behaviorism*. *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

**Jastrow, Joseph.** (1935). *Has psychology failed?* *American Scholar*, 4, 261-269.

**October 19: The Cognitive Revolution in Psychology**

**Bruner, Jerome S. & Goodman, Cecile C.** (1947). *Value and need as organizing factors in perception*. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 42, 33-44.

**Miller, George A.** (1956). [The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information](#). *Psychological Review*, 63, 81-97 (especially the section entitled "The span of immediate memory")

**Smith, Edward E.** (2001). [Cognitive psychology: History](#). *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. New York: Elsevier, pp. 2140-2147.

**\*October 21: Discussion**

**October 26: FIRST EXAM**

**October 28: [From the Cognitive Revolution to Cognitive Science](#)**

**Thagard, Paul** (2010). [Cognitive science](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**Bechtel, W., Abrahamsen, A., and Graham, G.** (2001). [Cognitive science: History](#). *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. New York: Elsevier, pp. 2154-2158.

**Bradley, Peter** (2002). [Turing Machine, Online](#). The Mind Project

**On line modules from the Mind Project:** [The Turing Test](#), [Searle and his Chinese Room Argument](#), [Searle and the Robot Reply](#)

**\*November 2: [Stances on the Relation of Psychology to the Brain](#)**

**Schneider, Steven** (2009). [Identity Theory](#). Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**Polger, Thomas** (2008). [Functionalism](#). Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

**Ramsey, William** (2007). [Eliminative materialism](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**On-line module from the Mind Project:** [Introduction to Functionalism](#)

**November 4: [Multiple Realizability and Reduction](#)**

**Fodor, Jerry** (1974). [Special sciences, or the disunity of science as a working hypothesis](#). *Synthese*, 28, 97-115.

**Bechtel, W. and Mundale, J.** (1999). [Multiple realizability revisited: Linking cognitive and neural states](#). *Philosophy of Science*, 66, 175-207.

**Bickle, John** (2006). [Multiple realizability](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**November 9: [Representation and Computation](#)**

**Horst, Steven** (2009). [The computational theory of mind](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**Katz, Matthew** (2009). [The language of thought](#). Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**Recommended:**

**Pitt, David** (2008). [Mental representation](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

**Aydede, Murat** (2004). [The language of thought hypothesis](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**November 11: No Class--University Holiday**

**\*November 16: Discussion****November 18: [Psychology and Brain Mechanisms of Memory](#)**

**Sutton, J.** (2010). [Memory](#). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

**Squire, L.** (2004). [Memory systems of the brain: A brief history and current perspective](#). *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory* 82, 171–177

**Corkin, S.** (2002). [What's new with the amnesic patient H.M.?](#) *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 3 (2), 153-160.

**Recommended:**

**Roediger, H.L. and Goff, L. M.** (1998). Memory. In W. Bechtel and G. Graham (eds.) *A companion to cognitive science*, pp. 250-164. Oxford, Blackwell.

**Craver, C.** (2003). [The making of a memory mechanism](#). *Journal of the History of Biology*, 36, 153-195

**Short paper due!****\*November 23: [Memory and Personal Identity](#)**

**Wilson, A., & Ross, M.** (2003). [The identity function of autobiographical memory: Time is on our side](#). *Memory*, 11 (2), 137 - 149.

**Aoki, C. R. A.** (2008). [Rewriting My Autobiography](#). *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 28 (4), 349-359.

**November 25: No Class: Thanksgiving****November 30: [The Fragility of Memory](#)**

**Loftus, Elizabeth F.** (1997). [Creating false memories](#). *Scientific American*, 277, number 3, 70-75.

**Loftus, E. F.** (2005). [A 30-year investigation of the malleability of memory](#). *Learning and Memory*, 12, 361-366.

**Roediger, Henry L. & McDermott, Kathleen B.** (2000) . [Tricks of memory](#). *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9, 123-127.

**Recommended: Bruck, M., Ceci, S. J., & Hembrooke, H.** (2002). [The Nature of children's true and false narratives](#). *Developmental Review*, 22, 520-554.

**\*December 2 : Discussion****December 8, 11:30-2:39: Final Exam**