



Overview

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of cognitive science. So what the heck is the philosophy of cognitive science? It is the field of philosophy that is concerned with foundational questions that arise in cognitive science --- the contemporary, interdisciplinary, scientific study of the mind. (Analogy: philosophy of cognitive science is to cognitive science as philosophy of physics/biology/chemistry is to physics/biology/chemistry). Our project, then, will be to grapple with some of the foundational questions that arise in the course of cognitive science. Slightly more specifically, we'll be asking about what kinds of explanations cognitive sciences give, and what kinds of states and processes they enlist to give those kinds of explanation. In the final section of the course we'll take up a more specific issue about explanation in one of the cognitive sciences in particular (linguistics): here we'll turn to the question of how much (if any) knowledge of language is innate as opposed to learned.

Though the topics chosen here by no means exhaust the subject, they connect quite widely to other issues in surrounding areas in both philosophy and the cognitive sciences. Consequently, I believe that focusing on these issues will permit a reasonably extensive view of the landscape.

When and where

The course will meet synchronously and in person (yay!) at MWF 12-12:50am in Ridge Walk Academic Complex 0426. There is no asynchronous option, classes will not be recorded (barring unforeseen need).

I'll hold office hours on Wednesdays at 2-3pm (and by appointment) in my office, Ridge Walk Academic Complex 0453.

Course Requirements

Regular attendance is expected and necessary to learn effectively (hence, to do well) in the course.

Students taking the course for credit will be expected to write three out of four possible in-class

exams for the course -- one will be given for each of our course segments, you choose which three to take. You'll need to show up with blue books for each one you're taking. Note the tentative dates of each exam on the schedule below, which will be firmed up as we proceed.

Grades will be determined on the basis of an equal weighting of the exams taken, and I'll use class participation as a way of deciding borderline cases.

Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated in this course; violators will receive an F on at least the relevant assignment and possibly the course, and will be subjected to UCSD's disciplinary procedures (which could result in penalties including permanent expulsion from the university).

You are responsible for knowing and adhering to the UCSD Policy on Integrity in all respects. In particular, you may not cause or allow your work for this course to resemble that of any other person, and all use of the ideas or words of anyone other than a paper's author must be acknowledged properly.

Tentative Schedule

The following is tentative, both in its content and the parenthetically indicated planned timing. My plan is to proceed in our discussion, allowing as much time as necessary for treating the topics responsibly, even if this means we fall behind the optimistically normative schedule. Note that the dates of exams given below are best guesses that should be treated as default plans, but I reserve the right to move the exam dates around a little depending on how our class discussions proceed.

All readings are available electronically through electronic reserve through canvas (which may require access from on campus/use of the university's vpn from off campus). There is no textbook to buy (yay!).

Segment 1 (weeks 1-2): Intentional Explanation?

Chomsky, "A Review of B. F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior" *Language*, 35:1 (1959), 26-58.

Fodor, *Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind*, MIT Press, 1987. Chapter 1 -- "Introduction: The Persistence of the Attitudes", pp1-26.

Churchland and Churchland, "Stalking the Wild Epistemic Engine" *Nous* 17(1): 5-18, 1983.

Exam: Monday 15 April

Segment 2 (weeks 3-4): Concepts

Katz, "On The General Character of Semantic Theory" in Margolis and Laurence (ed.) *Concepts: Core Readings* (MIT Press, 1999), ch4.

Rosch, E. 1978, "Principles of Categorization", pp. 27-48 in Rosch, E. & Lloyd, B.B. (eds), *Cognition and Categorization*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, (Hillsdale).

Rey, G. 1983, "Concepts and Stereotypes" *Cognition* 15:237-62.

Carey, S. 1991, "Knowledge Acquisition: Enrichment or Conceptual Change?" in S. Carey and R. Gelman (ed.), *The Epigenesis of Mind: Essays in Biology and Cognition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 257-291.

Exam: Monday 29 April

Segment 3 (weeks 5-7): Computationalism and its Critics

Pylyshyn, Z. 1984. *Computation and Cognition: Toward a Foundation for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press. Chapter 9. pp257-272.

Rumelhart, D.E. 1989. "The architecture of mind: A connectionist approach." In M.I. Posner (ed.), 1989, *Foundations of Cognitive Science*, pp133-160.

Fodor, J. & Pylyshyn, Z. 1988. "Connectionism and cognitive architecture: A critical analysis." *Cognition* 28: 3-71.

Van Gelder, T. 1992. "What might cognition be, if not computation." *The Journal of Philosophy* 92: 345-381.

Clark, A. & Chalmers, D, 1998. "The extended mind," *Analysis* 58(1): 7-19.

Aizawa, K. & Adams, F. 2009. "Embodied cognition and the extended mind", in Sarah Robins, Symons, J., & Calvo, P. *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Psychology*. New York: Routledge, 193-213.

Exam: Monday 13 May

Segment 4 (weeks 8-10): Linguistics and Linguistic Knowledge

Chomsky 1965, Chapter 1 -- "Methodological Preliminaries" in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. MIT Press. pp1-62.

Cowie. F. 1999. *What's Within?: Nativism Reconsidered*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 8-9 (i.e., pp176-237).

Laurence, S., & Margolis, E. 2001. "The poverty of the stimulus argument". *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 52: 217-276.

Pullum, G.K. and Scholz, B.C. 2002. "Empirical assessment of stimulus poverty arguments". *Linguistic Review* 19(1/2): 9-51.

Exam: Monday 10 June

Course Summary:

Date

Details

Due
