

Course Description:

In the course of the course, we will, of course, discuss what is sometimes neglected in the cognitive sciences: recognizing philosophical issues that frame contemporary cognitive sciences. Many of the philosophical issues are at least 2,500 years old.

Learning Objectives:

The main aims and objectives of the course are to investigate the philosophical underpinnings of the cognitive sciences and enable students to achieve an understanding of how philosophy is integral to the cognitive sciences and vice versa.

- Identify the main questions asked in the cognitive sciences
- Identify issues in the philosophy of the cognitive sciences that frame the cognitive sciences
- Be cognizant of answers to the questions asked in the cognitive sciences arrived at by philosophers
- Recognize open questions and potential avenues of exploration to provide answers

Pedagogy:

- Readings and discussing their content.
- Each student will present an issue about the course topic to the other students and discussions will ensue.
- Each student will write an essay on an issue about the course topic.

Syllabus:

(10 sessions, each for 1.5 hours for a total of 15 hours)

Meeting 1

Course presentation. Discussions of some issues that will appear in the course.

ASSIGNMENT: Read the Thagard article.

Meeting 2

Discussion of the Thagard article.

ASSIGNMENT: Read the Dennett article.

Meeting 3

Discussion of the Dennett article.

Student discussions and decisions about what each tentatively wants to present in a future meeting.

ASSIGNMENT: Read the Searle article.

Meeting 4

Discussion of the Searle article.

Student discussions and decisions about what each will be presenting in a future meeting.

ASSIGNMENT: Students begin preparing the topic they chose to present

Meeting 5

Student discussions and decisions about what each will present in a future meeting.

ASSIGNMENT: Students create an outline of the topic they chose to present

Meeting 6

Students present their outline of the topic they chose to present.

Meeting 7

Two students present their topic with a 15-minute presentation, allowing for 25 minutes of discussion, questions, and answers.

Meeting 8

Two students present their topic with a 15-minute presentation, allowing for 25 minutes of discussion, questions, and answers.

Meeting 9

Two students present their topic with a 15-minute presentation, allowing for 25 minutes of discussion, questions, and answers.

Meeting 10

Group discussion summarizing the course.

References:

FIRST READING (Between our first and second meetings)

Thagard, P. (2009). Why cognitive science needs philosophy and vice versa. *Topics in Cognitive Science, 1*, 237–254. DOI: 10.1111/j.1756-8765.2009.01016.x

SECOND READING (Between our second and third meetings)

Dennett, D. C. (2009). The part of cognitive science that is philosophy. *Topics in Cognitive Science, 1*, 231–236. DOI: 10.1111/j.1756-8765.2009.01015.x

THIRD READING (Between our third and fourth meetings)

Searle, J. D. (2004). Minds, brains and programs. In J. Heil (Ed.), *Philosophy of mind: A guide and anthology* (pp. 239-252). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

<http://faculty.las.illinois.edu/rrushing/395/ewExternalFiles/Searle.pdf>

Course Outcome:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

CO1:

Understand why theories and research in the cognitive sciences are not independent of philosophical issues.

CO2:

Recognize questions in the cognitive sciences and their philosophical underpinnings.

CO3:

Have a working acquaintance with various solutions in philosophy that have been offered for issues in the cognitive sciences.

Evaluation Pattern:

- Class participation
- Each student will give an oral presentation of an issue in the philosophy of the cognitive sciences. The presentation will be based on professional literature in addition to the course's compulsory readings.
- Each student will write a paper on an issue in the philosophy of the cognitive sciences.

Assessment Weightings:

Components	
Class participation	10%
Class oral presentation	40%
A paper about philosophical assumptions regarding research studies in a particular area.	50%
	100%

Employability:

The course content will be helpful for students to recognize and ask deep questions about philosophy that are often neglected in the cognitive sciences. This way of thinking is transportable, i.e., searching for deeper, philosophical aspects of problems in the cognitive sciences, but not only there.