

Conceptual Issues in Cognitive Science

Symbolic Systems Small Seminar

This is a preliminary syllabus and will change!

SymSys 207
Autumn Term 2021
Instructor: Paul Skokowski
Stanford University
Wednesdays 11:30am-1:00pm
Bldg 200, Room 105
Office Hours: By Appointment

Grading: 80% Participation (discussed 1st day of class); 20% Final Paper

***** MOST READINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE *****

**** Please do readings for Week 1 before first class ****

Week 1, Sept 22nd: Course Overview & Review of Theories of Mind I

Skokowski, [One Philosopher is Correct \(Maybe\)](#), or [here](#). Australasian Journal of Logic, 2010, 9(1).

Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* - [here](#).

Huxley, [On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata](#) - Read from "Thus far, the prepositions" through to "sum of existence." (note misspelling: 'prepositions' should read 'propositions!')

Further Suggested Reading:

Descartes, *Meditations on the First Philosophy* (2nd and 6th) - [here](#).

Leibniz, [The Nature and Communication of Substances](#)

Week 2, Sept 29th: Review of Theories of Mind II: Logical Positivism and Behaviorism

Schlick, [Positivism and Realism](#)

Ryle, [Descartes' Myth](#), from *Concept of Mind*, 1949.

Putnam, *Brains and Behavior*, [here](#).

Further Suggested Reading:

Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Sec. 293 (Canvas)

AJ Ayer, *The Nature of Philosophical Analysis*, Ch. 3 in *Language, Truth and Logic*

Carnap, [Psychology in Physical Language](#)

Week 3, Oct 6th: Mind as Matter & Functionalism

Place, [Is Consciousness a Brain Process?](#), British Journal of Psychology 47:44-50, 1956.

Smart, [Sensations and Brain Processes](#), Philosophical Review 68:141-56, 1959.

Putnam, *The Nature of Mental States* (or: Psychological Predicates, *Art, Mind, and Religion*, 1965.)
[-here](#).

Block, *Troubles with Functionalism*, in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 9:261-325 (1978), and in *Readings in the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. 1, Ned Block (ed.) Harvard, 1980. ([Read section 1.2, p. 275-278, here](#).)

Further Suggested Reading:

Armstrong, *The Causal Theory of the Mind*, [here](#).

Feigl, *The Mental and the Physical*, [here](#).

Week 4, Oct 13th: The Problem of Pain

Visitor: Howard Fields, UCSF Neuroscience

M. Aydede, [Pain](#)

Tye, [Pains](#), Sec. 4.5 of *Ten Problems of Consciousness*.

Fields, H., [Setting the Stage for Pain](#).

Fields, H., [Pain: An Unpleasant Topic](#).

Further suggested readings:

Fields, H., [State-Dependent Opioid Control of Pain](#).

Skokowski, [Is the Pain in Jane Felt Mainly in her Brain?](#)

Kripke, [Naming and Necessity](#), Lecture III, 144-155. (Search for 'Descartes'. Read from the previous paragraph through the last paragraph before the Addendum.)

Tye, [Another Look at Representationalism about Pain](#)

Week 5 Oct 20th: Brain, Reduction, and Belief

Churchland, [Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes](#)

Paul and Patricia Churchland, *Intertheoretic Reduction: A Neuroscientist's Field Guide*

Gold and Stoljar, *A neuron doctrine in the philosophy of neuroscience*. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22(5), 1999.

Dennett, *True Believers*, [here](#).

Further suggested readings:

Jerry Fodor, *Special Sciences*, *Synthese*, 28(2), 1974

Patricia Churchland, *Can Neurobiology Teach Us Anything About Consciousness?*

Week 6 Oct 27th: Neuroimaging

Coltheart, M, *What has functional neuroimaging told us about the mind (so far)?*

Coltheart, M, *Perhaps functional neuroimaging has not told us anything about the mind (so far)*.

Roskies, A., [Brain-mind and structure-function relationships: A methodological response to Coltheart](#)

Hardcastle and Stewart, *What Do Brain Data Really Show?*

Further Suggested Reading:

Klein, C, *Images are not the Evidence in Neuroimaging*.

Week 7, Nov 3rd: Attention and Consciousness

Visitor: Carlos Montemayor, SFSU Philosophy

Haladjian, H. And Montemayor, C., [Artificial consciousness and the consciousness-attention dissociation](#)

Montemayor, C., [Language and Intelligence](#)

Montemayor, C., [On the evolution of conscious attention](#)

Week 8, Nov 10th: Qualia in a Physical World

Jackson, [Epiphenomenal Qualia](#), *Philosophical Quarterly* 32:127-36, 1982.

Nagel, [What is it Like to be a Bat?](#), *The Philosophical Review*, LXXXIII(4), 435-450. Another version [here](#).

Tye, *Colours and other Secondary Qualities (On CANVAS)*. Read Section 5.3, pp. 144-150. (You can also read the previous pages if interested.)

Godfrey-Smith, *Varieties of Subjectivity*, (*On CANVAS*). *Philosophy of Science*, 87, 2020.

Further Suggested Reading:

Tye, [Another Look at Representationalism about Pain](#)

Skokowski, Excerpt from *Three Dogmas of Internalism (On CANVAS)* in Skokowski (ed.), *Information and Mind*, Stanford: CSLI Press, 2020.

Skokowski, [Temperature, Color and the Brain: An Externalist Reply to the Knowledge](#)

[Argument](#), *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 9(2), 2018. (Also on Canvas)

[The Brain on Sonar](#), National Geographic, 2011.

***** Note Different Time for Bill Newsome Visit: 1:00pm - 2:30pm *****

Week 9, Nov 17th, 1:00pm - 2:30pm: Neuroscience and Free Will

Visitor: Bill Newsome, Director, Stanford Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute

Newsome, W., [Neuroscience, Explanation and the Problem of Free Will](#), in Gazzaniga (ed.), *The Cognitive Neurosciences IV*.

Haggard, P., *Nature Reviews Neurosciences*, [Human volition: towards a neuroscience of will](#), 2008.

Gholipour, B., [A Famous Argument against Free Will has been Debunked](#), *The Atlantic*, Sept. 2019.

Further Suggested Reading:

Roskies, G. 2010. How does neuroscience affect our conception of volition?

Libet, B. 1999. Do we have free will?

Roskies, A.. Why Libet's studies don't pose a threat to free will.

Libet et al., Subjective Referral of the Timing for a Conscious Sensory Experience.

Week 10, Nov 24th: Thanksgiving Holiday - No Class

Week 11, Dec 1st: Integrated Information Theory

Tononi and Koch, *Consciousness: here, there and everywhere?*

Oizumi et al., *From the Phenomenology to the Mechanisms of Consciousness: Integrated Information Theory 3.0*

Bayne, T., *On the axiomatic foundations of the integrated information theory of consciousness*

Pockett, S., *Problems with theories that equate consciousness with information or information processing*

Further Suggested Reading:

Cerullo, *The Problem with Phi: A Critique of Integrated Information Theory*