



PHIL-4710H-A: Philosophy of Mind 2018WI - Peterborough Campus

Instructor:

Instructor: Amanda Bryant

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Office: CC G15

Office Hours: Thursday, 2:30-3:30pm

Meeting Times:

THU 11am-1:50pm, GCS 105

Please check <http://www.trentu.ca/timetable/> to confirm times and locations.

Department:

Academic Administrative Assistant: Kathy Axcell

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Description:

Philosophers of mind are divided about the functional organization of the mind. Classic modularists believe that some systems, including paradigmatically the system responsible for perception, are *modular* — that is, operate relatively independently of other systems and don't receive information from them. Recent deniers of classical modularity point to empirical evidence that perception is *cognitively penetrable* or subject to *top-down effects* — that is, that higher-level cognition, like belief, can causally influence what we perceive. More recent modularists have argued that some weaker kind of modularity extends beyond the perceptual system to other important mental systems — and massive modularists even claim that *all* mental systems are modular in some sense. This course will explore that debate. Questions we'll consider include:

- How is the mind organized?
 - Do our beliefs literally affect how we see the world?
 - What are the channels of information flow in the mind?
 - How, methodologically, should we go about investigating these questions?
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Learning Outcomes:

I have developed the course to address several learning outcomes. By the end of the course a successful student should:

- understand and be able to explain and evaluate the principal competing theses concerning the structure of the mind
 - understand and be able to explain what informational encapsulation, top-down effects, and cognitive penetration are and grasp their importance in the debates concerning mental architecture
 - have a grasp of how recent scientific advances help shape how we think about the brain and its relation to the mind
 - have a deeper understanding of what it means to have a mind
 - have improved skills in reading, writing, and arguing about complex and abstract ideas
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Texts:

Jerry Fodor, *The Modularity of Mind* (Bradford)

Peter Carruthers, *The Architecture of Mind* (Clarendon)

Assessments, Assignments and Tests:

1. Type of Assignment: **Participation**

Description: attendance, in-class discussion, in-class low stakes writing assignments

Weighting: 15%

Due: Ongoing

2. Type of Assignment: **First Essay**

Description: a 10-12 page written paper on one of several topics to be distributed in advance of the due date

Weighting: 25%

Due: Feb 15

3. Type of Assignment: **Presentation**

Description: an oral presentation of at least 30 minutes, summarizing and raising questions or criticisms about the reading

Weighting: 25%

Due: Ongoing

4. Type of Assignment: **Second Essay**

Description: a 10-12 page written paper on one of several topics to be distributed in advance of the due date

Weighting: 35%

Due: Mar. 29

Schedule:

JAN 11 - Introduction

- No Reading

JAN 18 - Classical Modularity

- Jerry Fodor, *The Modularity of Mind* (Parts 1-2)

JAN 25 - Classical Modularity

- Jerry Fodor, *The Modularity of Mind* (Parts 3-5)

FEB 01 - Classical Modularity

- Zenon Pylyshyn, "Is Vision Continuous with Cognition? The Case for Cognitive Impenetrability of Visual Perception"
- Birgitta Dresp, "The Cognitive Impenetrability Hypothesis: Doomsday for the Unity of the Cognitive Neurosciences?"

FEB 08 - Cognitive Penetration

- Jesse Prinz, "Is the Mind Really Modular?"
- Jesse Prinz, "Faculty Psychology without Modularity"

FEB 15 - Cognitive Penetration

- Fiona MacPherson, "Cognitive Penetration of Colour Experience: Rethinking the Issue in Light of an Indirect Mechanism"
- **First Essay Due**

FEB 22 - NO CLASS

MAR 01 - Cognitive Penetration

- Daniel Levin & Mahzarin Banaji, "Distortions in the Perceived Lightness of Faces: The Role of Race Categories"
- Susanna Siegel and Waguter Wang, "Cognitive Penetrability and Perceptual Justification"

MAR 08 - Problems

- Ned Block, "How the ideas of modularity and cognitive penetration have misled us for a generation"
- Chaz Firestone and Brian Scholl, "Cognition does not affect perception: Evaluating the evidence for top-down effects"

MAR 15 - Problems / New Modularists

- Nick Shea, "Distinguishing Top-Down From Bottom-Up Effects"
- Eric Mandelbaum, "Seeing and Conceptualizing: Modularity and the Shallow Contents of Perception"

MAR 22 - New Modularists

- Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, "Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer" (<http://www.cep.ucsb.edu/primer.html>)
- Peter Carruthers, *The Architecture of Mind*, Chapters 1 & 2

MAR 22 - New Modularists

- Peter Carruthers, *The Architecture of Mind*, Chapters 3 & 4
- **Second Paper Due**

APR 05 - New Modularists

- Richard Samuels, "Evolutionary Psychology and the Massive Modularity Hypothesis"
- Eduard Machery, "Massive Modularity and the Flexibility of Human Cognition"

Course Guidelines:

Classroom Behaviour

- Be respectful. Our classroom should be a place where everyone feels comfortable contributing to discussion.
- If you're bursting with questions and comments all the time, great! Just make sure you share the discussion. Let others speak, too.
- Give your attention to the person speaking (no side-conversations, no texting, no Facebooking, etc.).
- Be on time. If you must be late, try to enter the classroom in the least distracting manner possible.
- Cell phones, laptops, and other noise-making devices should be silenced.

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected. Repeated, unexcused absences and latenesses will harm your grade. You must be present for all exams. Make-up exams will only be given to students with

documented extenuating circumstances.

24-Hour Rule

When an assignment or exam is returned to you, please wait at least 24 hours before contacting me about your grade.

Email

I get a lot of email, so please email me just when necessary. Make sure the answer to your question isn't already on the syllabus. If you have a question that might require a long answer, see me in my office hours.

Please note that I don't discuss grades by email. If you wish to discuss a grade, please make an appointment with me.

Safe Assignment

Assignments must be submitted electronically to the SafeAssign drop box in Blackboard. SafeAssign utilizes plagiarism-checking software. Further information about SafeAssign will be provided on the class Blackboard site.

Late Assignments

Unless you have some well-documented excuse and my prior permission, late assignments will be subject to the following penalty:

2% deducted on the first day of lateness, 5% additional deduction for each subsequent day of lateness (including weekends). These penalties add up fast!

I will not accept assignments that are more than one week late. If you fail to hand in an assignment within one week of the deadline, your grade for that assignment will be 0.

Departmental Policies:

Final departmental deadline for submission of work:

No term work will be accepted for evaluation in the Philosophy Department later than one week after the last day of classes. One week after the last day of classes is also the deadline for the filing of Request for Incomplete Standing Forms to the Chair with all the relevant documentation.

Note: Most instructors will have deadlines well before this final departmental deadline. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with instructor's deadlines and deadline policies.

University Policies:

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's *Academic Integrity Policy*. You have a responsibility to educate yourself –

unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more: www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and documentation from a regulated health care practitioner and feels that they may need accommodations to succeed in a course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) at the respective campus as soon as possible.

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