

Evolution of the Mind

SS 50-2410H Fall 2016, MW 12:30-1:20, 624 rm 909
HHSS department (624 S Michigan, 10th floor suite),
Columbia College Chicago 600 S Michigan, 60605

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Research group in Mind, Science, and Culture homepage: www.mindscienceculture.com

Course Description

The human mind is a product of biological and cultural evolution. This course will study the philosophical and psychological implications of this claim. What makes the human mind unique, compared with those aspects of mind we share with non-human animals? What is the relationship between emotion and thought? What are the successes and failures of evolutionary psychology and philosophy of mind? Are religion and ethics products of the evolution of the mind?

Course Rationale

This course offers a blend of philosophy and psychology, the study of the physical brain and the study of the processes of the mind. The debate about what is genetic and what is due to experience has extended into the sphere of Ethics. Understanding the character of the mind from its evolutionary origins is crucial to mapping out the outlines of the mind and its products. “Evolution of the Mind” will be a space for fresh discussion upon the topic of how the mind came to be what it is. We will contrast approaches to the study of the mind across life forms. We will also discuss the uniqueness of the human mind in relation to the evolution of emotion, cognition, and culture.

Pre-requisites: Writing & Rhetoric II, and at least one previous course in HU or SS (or permission of the instructor), before enrolling.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course students will be able to develop:

- The ability to critically read and clearly interpret complex information
- An appreciation and respect for some of the more creative answers that have been proposed in response to old intellectual questions
- A familiarity with some of the contemporary research methods conducted across various disciplines
- An understanding of the relationship between philosophical, psychological, empirical, and critical perspectives within the Social Sciences

Liberal Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum/General Education Credits:

Note: SS 50-2410 bears Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) and General Education credit for Social Sciences.

By taking this course you will complete three (3) of the required Culture, Values, and Ethics credits needed to graduate from Columbia College Chicago. In addition this course will assist you in achieving the following LAS core objectives:

- Reflect on and appreciate human endeavor across cultures and eras

- Consider and examine, historically and comparatively, human behavior, ethical issues, and social institutions
- Reason scientifically and understand the scientific method and its place in contemporary society

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to develop:

- The ability to critically read and clearly interpret complex information
- An appreciation and respect for some of the more creative answers that have been proposed in response to old intellectual questions
- Perspectives on the relationship between intellectual theories and culture
- An understanding of the relationship between philosophical, psychological, and other perspectives.

Course texts:

All readings will be provided via MOODLE. CCC bookstore 624 S Michigan.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Attendance

Regular on-time attendance is a must for this course. Absences affect your participation score. After three unexcused absences your participation score is 0. If it is impossible to come to class, contact the instructor. Three lates equals one absence.

Participation

This is not a lecture course, it is a discussion/seminar course. Students will be expected to participate consistently in the collective and cooperative effort to accomplish the goals set out in the syllabus. It is essential that all of us keep up with the readings and come prepared to discuss the text at hand.

Students will be expected to come to class (**with the text**) prepared to discuss the readings, *lack of preparation will be counted as an absence*. Written work must be handed in on time. If an assignment is handed in one week after the due date, its grade will be automatically reduced by one letter (e.g., B becomes C, D becomes F, etc.). **No written assignments will be accepted after the one-week grace period.** No make-up exams will be given.

Seminar Style

The seminar style is significantly different from the lecture-based and regular discussion courses. In a seminar, the students are expected to contribute strongly to the daily class agenda. The instructor presupposes an intelligent interest on the part of the students and, therefore, will not consume the class time with a simple review of the reading. It is imperative that each student read the material carefully and come into the class with questions and concerns--ready and willing to talk. Intelligent class discussion is expected from each student. **No computers or cellphones or tablets allowed during class.**

Grading

Your final grade will be made up of:

20% Participation (attendance + class participation)

25% Midterm

30% Paper

25% Final

The traditional grading scale will be used based on the relationship between expectations expressed in the syllabus, participation in class, and the quality of written work, in the form of papers and exams: A for excellent work, B for good work, C for average work, D for poor work, F for unacceptable work. The college uses the '+/-' system and your final grade will incorporate this.

Incompletes: An Incomplete Grade (I) can only be issued for an undergraduate student who has successfully completed all course requirements to date but is faced with unexpected circumstances during the final weeks of the semester resulting in the inability to complete course requirements by the end of the semester. The student must have, in the instructor's estimation, the ability to complete missed course requirements outside of class and by the end of the eighth week of the following semester. The instructor must agree to evaluate the student's work and replace the Incomplete grade before the end of the following semester. A [Student-Faculty Agreement for Incomplete Grade](#) specifying work to be completed and a due date must be signed by both instructor and student and approved by the Department Chair. In the event that an instructor is no longer employed by the College, a program Coordinator, Director, or the Department Chair can evaluate the work and assign the course grade.

Student Course Evaluations: Student Course Evaluations for the 15-week session open on Monday, November 21, 2016 and close on Monday, December 12, 2016.

Grading and Requirements

Exam

There will be a midterm and one cumulative final in-class exam consisting of short answer essays.

Paper

All students will write a research paper, which focuses on using three different approaches to interpret behavior (5 pages). More details regarding the topic will be provided during the semester.

Evaluation Principles

Discussion is an important part of this course and a student's intelligent contributions can go some distance in raising his/her grade, but **written work will be of crucial importance**. As a basic requirement, all essays will be expected to have good grammar and punctuation. The professor is not your proofreader. In addition, essays will be evaluated using the following three criteria: (1) logical organization, (2) mastery of the course material, and (3) creativity--in that order.

(1) LOGICAL ORGANIZATION

This criterion is designed to measure your ability to organize your arguments, ideas and observations into a clear and cogent presentation. Your ability to make claims and systematically back them up with evidence and argument, without wandering aimlessly through vague beliefs, is extremely important.

(2) MASTERY OF THE COURSE MATERIAL

This criterion is designed to measure the degree of your grasp on crucial ideas contained in the assigned texts. The degree to which you understand and articulate the concepts entailed in the readings and the discussions will be vital to your grade.

(3) CREATIVITY

In addition to good structure and evidence of comprehension, you are encouraged to infuse your written work with some creativity. Good writing should include some level of imagination and originality.

Plagiarism: *To steal and use (the ideas or writings of another) as one's own. To appropriate passages or ideas from another author and use them as one's own. All use of another author's writings and ideas must be properly acknowledged and cited in your own writing. Failure to do so is tantamount to plagiarism and can result in failure of the course and expulsion from the college.*

Note: *Syllabus is subject to change.*

Weekly outline of Topics and Readings

9/7 Wk 1

WED Introduction to class

9/12 Wk 2 **Mechanisms of Adaptation**

MON – Intro to evolution theory: Darwin and Neo-Darwinism.

Text: Darwin (Campbell Biology)

The Brain

WED – Evolution of the Brain. Text: Ch.2 Steven Rose

9/19 Wk 3

MON – Development of the Brain. Text: Ch. 3 Steven Rose

WED – Perception. Text: Ch. 4 – Making Sense of Senses

9/26 WK 4 **Fundamental Processes**

MON – Chemical systems of the brain. Text: Ch. 5 Primer

WED – Motor Planning. Text: Cerebellum

10/3 WK 5

MON – Spatial imagination. Text: Kosslyn on Mental rotation

Emotions

WED – Emotions. Text: Core emotional systems of the mammalian brain by Jaak Panksepp

10/10 Wk 6

MON – TOTAL RECALL (113 min) or Eternal sunshine. Text: Memory and emotion.

WED – Movie discussion and memory and emotion.

10/17 WK 7 **Cognition I**

MON – Cognitive development. Text: Core knowledge

WED – Consciousness. Text: Chalmers

10/24 WK 8

MON – Approach or avoid. Text: Damasio

WED – **Midterm exam**. No Reading.

10/31 WK 9

Cognition II: Advanced mental functions

MON – Imagination. Text: Asma

WED – Theory of Mind. Text: *The Evolution of Theory of Mind* by Simon Baron-Cohen

11/7 WK 10 **Representation**

MON – Cognitive maps. Text: Spatial representation

WED – Language. Text: “From primate communication to human language” by Charles Snowdon (from Tree of Origin)

11/14 WK 11 **Distributed Mind**

MON – Ecological Psychology. Text: “Out of Our Minds: Neuroethology of Primate Strategic Behavior”

WED – Free will. Text: Executive control

11/21 WK 12

MON – The function of music. No reading

PAPER DUE

WED – PLANET OF THE APES (115 min.). No reading

11/28 WK 13 **Social Intelligence**

MON – Social Intelligence Text: Gabriel

WED – The Self. Text: **Self**

12/5 WK 14 **Cultural Evolution and the Future**

MON – Text: Cecilia Heyes

WED – Cultural evolution. Text: Johnson and Earle, ch. 1

12/12 WK 15

MON – Summary

WED – **Final exam**

Important Notice: This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. However, instructors reserve the right in their discretion to modify, supplement, and make changes as course needs arise.

Other Policies and Information

Statement on Academic Integrity: See the undergraduate catalog for this policy.

Students at Columbia enjoy significant freedom of artistic expression and are encouraged to stretch their scholarly and artistic boundaries. However, Columbia prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is understood as the appropriation and representation of another's work as one's own, whether such appropriation includes all or part of the other's work or whether it consists of all or part of what is represented as one's own work (plagiarism). Appropriate citation prevents this form of dishonesty. In addition, academic dishonesty includes cheating in any form, the falsification of academic documents, or the falsification of works or references for use in class or other academic circumstances. When such dishonesty is discovered, the consequences to the student can be severe.

Students with Disabilities Statement: Columbia College Chicago seeks to maintain a supportive academic environment for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations for a disability must register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office. Once registered, a Columbia College Chicago accommodation letter will be provided to the student each semester. Students are encouraged to present their current accommodation letters to each instructor at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner by the College, the department, or the faculty member, as appropriate. Accommodations begin at the time the letter is presented. Students with disabilities who do not have accommodation letters should visit the SSD office, Room 311 of the 623 S. Wabash building, call 312-369-8296, email SSD@colum.edu or visit colum.edu/ssd.

Mandatory Attendance Policy Statement: *for undergraduates only:* Students are required to attend class regularly. Failure to attend class in the first two weeks of the term will negatively impact financial aid. If your professor reports that you failed to attend and participate in class during the add/drop period, a grade of NS (no-show) will be entered on your record for the course. Please note, you will still be charged tuition and fees for any course for which you receive a NS grade. For more information on non-attendance please visit the Student Financial Services [website](#).

Academic Progress Report Statement: *for undergraduates only:* During week 6 of fall and spring terms, Columbia College Chicago measures the academic progress of all undergraduate students. The academic progress report is meant to provide a sense of your performance at this point in time. For each course in which you are enrolled, you will receive one of the following reports from your instructor:

Exceeds basic expectations: Demonstrating performance at a very high level in the course, typically shown as consistent attendance, earning high grades on assignments and displaying a deep engagement with course content.

Meets basic expectations: Demonstrating behavior proven to produce success in college, such as consistent attendance, class participation, and on-time completion of assignments.

Does not meet basic expectations: Demonstrating behaviors known to put students at risk for failure, such as excessive absences, lack of class participation, and missed or incomplete assignments.

While the academic progress report is not a final grade and will not impact your grade point average, it is a valuable indicator of your performance in the course to date. Columbia College Chicago is providing you with this report because it is committed to your success. You will receive the reports via email during week 6, and you are encouraged to discuss them with your instructor(s).

Counseling Services:

731 S. Plymouth Court, suite 112
312.369.8700 / counselingservices@colum.edu

Services are designed to help students increase self-awareness and address mental health concerns with the goal of empowering students to manage challenging areas in their lives. All counseling services staff follow professional standards of confidentiality. Information discussed within a counseling relationship is not disclosed without written permission of the individual. Counseling Services are provided free of charge. The most utilized services include individual sessions, group sessions, and linkage to community services. A Columbia College student in a relationship with another Columbia College student, can also receive couple sessions. All currently enrolled students are eligible to receive 12 individual sessions per academic year. Group sessions are unlimited.

College Advising Center:

623 S. Wabash, Suite 300
312-369-7645 / collegeadvising@colum.edu

The College Advising Center assists undergraduate students with all transitional issues as they navigate their entire college experience. College advisors guide students in creating and implementing an educational and professional plan as they progress from orientation toward graduation. As students take responsibility for their academic and career goals, they should meet with their college advisor on a regular basis. Students at Columbia are expected to meet with their college advisor at least once a semester during their first year.

The Learning Studio:

33 E. Congress, first floor

312.369.8130 / www.colum.edu/learningstudio

The Learning Studio is an excellent resource for academic progress and success for all students at any level. The Learning Studio provides tutoring in a number of disciplines including Accounting, the Science and Math Learning Center, the Foreign Languages Lab and the Writing Center. Students are encouraged to go to the Learning Studio and work with the tutors. Students can make an appointment through Oasis (using the “Make Appointments” tab) or call the Learning Studio.

Library Statement

The Library serves students with resources and support for research, study, collaboration, fun, and information in all formats—books, ebooks, articles, primary sources, images, film, music, space, programs, technology, and equipment. Our specialized materials and services focus on what students need and want—textbook reserves, study rooms, collaborative technology, maker lab, 3D printer, light boxes, scanners, equipment checkout (cameras, camcorders, projectors) and research assistance by chat, text, email, phone, or in-person. For more, see the website <http://library.colum.edu> or drop by the Library (624 S. Michigan).