

PHIL 351
PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COGNITIVE SYSTEMS RESEARCH

Term: Term 2, Winter 2022
Meeting time: 9:30-10:50am
Venue: Osborne Centre, Unit 1, Rm 203
Instructor: Jordan Dodd

Office: Buchanan E172
Office hours: TTh 11-12pm (by classroom)
Email: jdodd@mail.ubc.ca
Cell: 778-323-0226

1. Course description

This course is an advanced introduction to empirically-engaged philosophical work on cognition. Lots of academic fields often do empirical work on cognition (e.g., all of: psychology, linguistics, computer science, cognitive science, and neuroscience). So, we will study work that can variously be categorized as philosophy of psychology, philosophy of cognitive science, and so on. The biggest aim of this course is to spark students to think about various aspects of their mental lives and to do so in a way that is informed by research that is both philosophically incisive and empirically grounded.

Structure: The classes will be in-person. Recordings of lectures will be available online after classes. We will pivot to a web-based course (Zoom lectures) if that becomes prudent for COVID-19 reasons.

Prerequisite: 3 credits selected from any of PHIL 211, 212, 220, 230, 235, 240, 250, 260, or COGS 200

2. Texts

We will just use book chapters and journal articles that will be linked to through Canvas.

3. Course requirements

The marking scheme is:

88% Essays (2 essays, 40% each)

12% Mini-Papers (6 mini-papers, 2% each)

Essays

You have to write one essay for each half of the course.

Essay#1 will be due via Canvas by Noon on Thursday, March 3.

Essay#2 will be due via Canvas by Noon on Thursday, April 7.

44% of your course mark will be your grade on Essay#1

44% of your course mark will be your grade on Essay#2

Mini-papers

Six mini-papers (each max. 250 words) are required. These are brief critical discussions of theses or arguments in the assigned readings.

You have some flexibility about when to e-submit (via Canvas) your mini-papers. But this flexibility is only within the following framework:

(1) There are 8 separate topics in the course (see the reading schedule). Each of your mini-papers must be on a different topic.

(2) You must e-submit (via Canvas) your mini-paper by 9:30am on the last day that we are scheduled to cover the reading that your mini-paper addresses. So, for example, if we are scheduled to address a reading one week on both a Tuesday and Thursday, then a mini-paper on that reading must be e-submitted by 9:30am on that Thursday. And, as another example, if we are only scheduled to address a reading on one day, then a mini-paper on that reading must be e-submitted by 9:30am on that day.

Each mini-paper is worth 1/6th of the 12% Mini-Papers portion of the course grade. So, if you pass 6 mini-papers, you get the full 12%, and if you only pass 5 mini-papers, you get 10%, and so on.

See the Canvas handout on mini-papers for this course for more information about them (e.g., their content, their structure, how they're marked, etc.).

4. Academic misconduct

There will be serious repercussions if I believe that you plagiarized in any of the writing assignments. Disciplinary proceedings will commence immediately and as per UBC's prescribed protocols. Make sure that you're familiar with UBC's standards for student conduct and discipline (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,0,0>) and, in particular, for academic misconduct (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>).

5. Feedback

The university will ask for your feedback on this course at the end of the semester. That sort of feedback is important. But it doesn't help me change things on the fly - that is, in ways that will help you, as opposed to helping future students.

So give me feedback: after class, at office hours, via email, via text, in e-meetings, whatever. Tell me that I should go faster or slower on certain material, that our discussion of such and such wasn't clear, etc. - or that you think we're going a good speed, our discussion of such and such topic was clear, etc. Either way, feedback is very welcome and encouraged!