

PHIL 173/COGS 177: Consciousness in Philosophy and Cognitive Science

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Carolyn Dicey Jennings: SSM 257A, cjennings3@ucmerced.edu

Morgan Fleming: mfleming2@ucmerced.edu

Office Hours: 4:15-5:15 Tue/Thu or by appointment

REQUIRED TEXT

Susan Blackmore, *Consciousness: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This course will explore the topic of consciousness as it is studied within philosophy and cognitive science. The course aims to supply students with the skills and knowledge to accurately discuss the latest developments in research on consciousness.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Students will take part in discussion for at least 10 of the 14 topics listed below (following the introductory lecture). Taking part in a discussion requires that the student post at least one original question or comment on the CatCourses discussion board for that topic (due before lecture on the first day that topic is discussed) as well as one response to another student's question or comment (due before lecture on the second day that topic is discussed). Each discussion for which a student posts both a question/comment and a response will be worth up to 1% of the final grade, for up to 10 total discussions. All questions, comments, and responses are expected to add substantially to the discussion and to be connected to the reading and topic. Determination of whether student involvement on the discussion board counts for credit will be up to the instructor. **Total Participation Grade: 10%**

Students will take a midterm exam on **March 8th** from 3 to 4:15 p.m. in SSM 104. The midterm exam will be around 30 short-answer questions covering topics up to March 6th. **Total Midterm Grade: 30%**

Students will write a final research paper for this course, due **April 26th**. The final research paper should be between 1500 and 2000 words, with a word count printed on the cover page with the student's name and paper title (the name should not appear on any other page of the paper). Students must also turn in a draft of the final research paper on **March 22nd** for feedback from the instructor. This draft will be assessed and that assessment will form part of the final research paper grade. Students should expect to read between 3 and 5 external sources for the research paper, the references for which should be included in the paper. **Total Paper Grade: 30%**

Students will take a final exam on **May 7th** from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. in SSM 104. The final exam will be around 30 short answer questions covering topics from March 13th to May 3rd. **Total Final Grade: 30%**

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND READINGS

Jan 16: Introduction and Review of Syllabus

Jan 18 & 23: The Puzzle of Consciousness, Chapters 1 and 2 [30 pages]

Jan 25 & 30: From Unconscious to Conscious Processing, Chapters 3 and 4 [33 pages]

Feb 1 & 6: Attention and the Grand Illusion, Chapters 5 and 6 [34 pages]

Feb 8 & 13: The Self, Chapters 7 and 8 [30 pages]

Feb 15 & 20: Agency and Free Will, Chapter 9 [17 pages]

Feb 22 & 27: Neural Correlates of Consciousness, Chapter 10 [18 pages]

Mar 1 & 6: Pathologies of Consciousness, Chapter 12 [16 pages]

Mar 8: Midterm Exam

Mar 13 & 15: Animal Consciousness, Chapter 15 [17 pages]

Mar 20 & 22: Minds and Machines, Chapters 16 and 17 [34 pages]

Paper Draft Due on March 22nd

Apr 3 & 5: Unconscious Processing, Chapter 19 [17 pages]

Apr 10 & 12: Drugs and Altered States, Chapter 22 [17 pages]

Apr 17 & 19: Sleep, Dreams, and Hypnotic States, Chapter 23 [18 pages]

Apr 24 & 26: Exceptional Experiences, Chapter 24 [18 pages]

Final Paper Due on April 26th

May 1 & 3: Introspection and Meditation, Chapters 25 and 26 [35 pages]

Sat May 7: Final Exam

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

CLO 1. Describe consciousness from the perspective of multiple disciplines.

CLO 2. Articulate and analyze philosophical ideas and arguments about consciousness.

CLO 3. Articulate and analyze developments in the scientific study of consciousness.

These CLOs help students to reach the **Philosophy** Program Learning Outcomes 2, 3, & 4.

PLO 2: Topics: Identify and explain the central questions within major topics of philosophical research.

This PLO is supported by CLO 2, in which students are expected to be able to articulate and analyze philosophical ideas and arguments about consciousness.

PLO 3: Ideas: Describe the contributions of major thinkers in the philosophical canon.

This PLO is also supported by CLO 2, since some of the philosophical ideas and arguments considered in this course are due to major thinkers in the philosophical canon.

PLO 4: Application: Apply philosophical knowledge...to a subject in another discipline, and/or apply knowledge from another discipline to a subject in philosophy.

This PLO is supported by CLO 1, in which students are expected to be able to describe conscious-

ness from the perspective of multiple disciplines.

These CLOs help students to reach the **Cognitive Science** Program Learning Outcomes 1 & 4.

PLO 1: Understanding foundational concepts in cognitive and information sciences.

This PLO is supported by CLO 1, in which students are expected to understand the foundational concept of consciousness, as well as other key concepts.

PLO 4: Ability to integrate knowledge across the disciplines that compose cognitive and information sciences.

This PLO is supported by CLO 1,2, and 3, in which students are expected to be able to understand consciousness from multiple perspectives.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This course supports the UC Merced guiding principles of *scientific literacy, communication, and self and society*.

On *scientific literacy*: Students will learn about consciousness from the perspective of multiple scientific disciplines, including neuroscience and psychology.

On *communication*: Students will practice their communication skills in three different settings: an in-class presentation, weekly information discussions online, and a formal research paper.

On *self and society*: The problems posed within consciousness research are perennial, cross-cultural problems that are essential to understanding self and society.

RESOURCES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Academic Support: For free academic support, go to the Calvin E. Bright Success Center located at KOLLIG 222 or email learning@ucmerced.edu.

Students with Disabilities: Upon identifying themselves to the instructor and the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact UCM Disabilities Services at SSB 230, 209-228-6996, or disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu.

Lateness Policy: Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval by the instructor, except in the case of a verifiable emergency.

Academic Honesty Policy: Any student found guilty of cheating, plagiarism, or collusion (defined here: <http://studentlife.ucmerced.edu/what-we-do/student-judicial-affairs/academic-honesty-policy>) will be reported to Judicial Affairs and may be given a failing grade for the course.

Laptop/Tablet/Cell Phone Policy: The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, smart phones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive, and is therefore prohibited during class. Except in emergencies or for students with prior approval from the professor, those using such devices may be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period.