

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

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor: Carolyn Dicey Jennings
Email: cjennings3@ucmerced.edu
Office Hours: 11:45-12:45 Tue/Thu, SSM 260B

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 **sign up for one course topic (listed below) for an online post (worth up to 5% of the final grade) and a presentation (worth up to 5% of the final grade)**. The online post will be in the form of a summary of the reading for that topic posted to a discussion board on Cat Courses. It should be between 150 and 200 words and must be posted at least one week prior to the date that topic will be discussed in class. The presentation will occur in one of the final two meetings of the course (May 3rd and 5th). The presentation should be a short review of the topic for the final exam. The presentation should be around 5 minutes long, including questions. Students must sign up for a course topic on the first day of class, January 19th. Total: 10% of final grade.

Students will **take part in discussion for at least 15 of the topics listed below (worth up to 30% of the final grade)**. Taking part in a discussion requires that the student post at least one original question or comment on the Cat Courses discussion board for that topic as well as one response to another student's question or comment (worth up to 2% of the final grade per discussion topic). All questions, comments, and responses are expected to add substantially to the discussion. Determination of whether student involvement on the discussion board counts for credit will be up to the instructor. Total: 30% of final grade.

Students will **write a final research paper for this course, due April 28th (worth up to 30% of the final grade)**. 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 17th 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: 30% of final grade.

Students will **take a final exam on May 7th from 3 to 6 p.m. (worth up to 30% of the final grade)**. The final exam will be around 50 short answer questions covering all of the topics of the course. Review for the final exam will take place on May 3rd and 5th, in the form of student presentations on the course topics. Total: 30% of final grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND READINGS

Tue, Jan 19: Introduction and Review of Syllabus

Thu, Jan 21: The puzzle of consciousness, Chapter 1
Tue, Jan 26: What is it like to be a bat? Chapter 2
Thu, Jan 28: The conscious and the unconscious, Chapter 3
Tue, Feb 2: The Cartesian theater, Chapter 4
Thu, Feb 4: Attention and timing, Chapter 5
Tue, Feb 9: The grand illusion, Chapter 6
Thu, Feb 11: Theories of self I, Chapter 7
Tue, Feb 16: Theories of self II, Chapter 8
Thu, Feb 18: Agency and free will, Chapter 9
Tue, Feb 23: Neural correlates, Chapter 10
Thu, Feb 25: The unity of consciousness, Chapter 11
Tue, Mar 1: Conscious pathologies, Chapter 12
Thu, Mar 3: The evolution of consciousness, Chapter 13
Tue, Mar 8: The function of consciousness, Chapter 14
Thu, Mar 10: Animal minds, Chapter 15
Tue, Mar 15: Minds and machines, Chapter 16
Thu, Mar 17: Machine consciousness, Chapter 17 ***Draft of Final Paper Due***
Tue, Mar 29: How to build a conscious machine, Chapter 18
Thu, Mar 31: Unconscious processing, Chapter 19
Tue Apr 5: Reality and Imagination, Chapter 20
Thu Apr 7: The Paranormal, Chapter 21
Tue Apr 12: Drugs and Altered States, Chapter 22
Thu Apr 14: Sleep, Dreams, and Hypnotic States, Chapter 23
Tue Apr 19: Exceptional Human Experience, Chapter 24
Thu Apr 21: Introspection, Chapter 25
Tue Apr 26: Meditation and Mindfulness, Chapter 26
Thu Apr 28: Waking Up, Chapter 27, ***Final Paper Due***
Tue May 3: Presentations and Review
Thu May 5: Presentations and Review
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.