OVERVIEW

Human beings are a unique animal when taking into consideration the complex nature of our social interactions. How do we understand the minds of others? For that matter, how do we infer the beliefs and desires that underlie the bases for our own behavior? How does the way we think about ourselves inform the way we think about others, and vice versa? How do we navigate our social world? In this course we will attempt to answer these questions through an examination of a range of topics, including research on the self, how we understand others, the process of judgment and decision making, the role of emotion in cognition, moral reasoning, the social brain, and the development of social cognition.

REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation. This seminar is a discussion during which we engage each other in an attempt to puzzle through the complexities involved in social cognition. You are expected to contribute to the discourse at every class meeting. Your discussion, questions, and comments in class will account for 40% of your course grade. Late arrival and/or absence from class are considered lapses in participation.

Thought Postings. Each week there will be main readings for the class. Your assignment is to do the reading and then turn in comments on the reading on our coursework discussion board. They need not be longer than a well-developed paragraph. Your comments can be in several forms. First, you can post a critique of one of the papers, or even one of the ideas contained in one of the papers. Part of your critique should include alternative ways to think about the problem. Second, you can integrate the ideas of several of the papers and discuss how they relate to each other (this can be either other papers from this week, or from other weeks). Third, you can develop a research idea to further explore an idea raised by the topic for the week. You should also post any questions you had about aspects of any part of the readings you did not understand. These postings should be done by Monday, 5pm. Part of this requirement is taking the time before class to read the postings of your classmates. Postings count for 25% of your course grade.

Term paper. Consider one of the controversies or ambiguities we discussed or about which you read, and propose an experiment that would help serve to clarify the issue. The paper should begin by describing existing research and the specific controversy and then detail a proposed experiment that would help resolve it. Project proposals, 2 pages in length, are due in class on Oct 26th. We will discuss the ideas for research as a group, so you will have some feedback before the end result is due. The final paper length should be approximately 10-12 pages, written in APA style. Papers are due the last day of class and a brief oral presentation (5 minutes or so) of your paper will be given that day. This requirement accounts for 35% of your course grade.
READINGS AND OUTLINE

Week 1. September 7th Organizational Meeting

Week 2: Sept. 14th
Introduction


Week 3: Sept. 21st
Automaticity and Control


Week 4: Sept. 28th
Thinking about the Self


Week 5: October 5th
Understanding Others


**Week 6: Oct. 12th**

**Stereotyping and Implicit Attitudes**

*Take an IAT at Project Implicit (implicit.harvard.edu)*


**Week 7: Oct. 19th**

**Attitude Change**


**Week 8: Oct. 26th**

**Project Discussion**

**Week 9: November 2nd**

**NO CLASS – Election Holiday**

**Week 10: Nov. 9th**

**Judgment and Decision Making**


**Week 11: Nov. 16th**

**Emotions**


**Week 12: Nov. 23rd**

**Moral Reasoning**


**Week 13: November 30th**

**The Development of Social Cognition**


**Week 14: (Last day of class) Dec. 7th**

**Paper Presentations**