

PSYC G4635: The Unconscious Mind

Preliminary Course Information for Fall 2016

PSYC G4635: The Unconscious Mind Day: Thursdays **Time:** 4:10 – 6:00 PM **Room:** 405
Schermerhorn Hall **Credit Points:** 4

Instructor: Ran Hassin, contact ran.hassin@huji.ac.il

Prerequisites: Introduction to psychology, experimental design and statistics, and instructor permission.

Overview: Human consciousness – how we experience the world, our thoughts and emotions – is just the tip of the iceberg of the most sophisticated machine ever built: our brains. Yet we know very little about the unconscious processes that determine consciousness, and even less about the functions of consciousness. What is it that is so unique about our consciousness that makes us so different from all other animals? In this course we will study the human unconscious and the functions of consciousness. The discussion will mainly be from the perspectives of social cognition, cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience. It will emphasize theoretical contributions on the one hand, and important and recent findings from exciting and cutting edge techniques on the other.

Topics that will be covered include:

- perception, learning and memory
- attitudes and stereotypes
- subliminal persuasion
- motivation and goal pursuit
- large scale ideologies
- insights and decision making
- self control.

Course requirements:

- Weekly readings
- Short reaction papers on reading materials (~1 page)
- Class presentation on a selected topic. The presentation will include presenting the reading + leading a discussion.
- Final paper: Original research proposal. **Grading:**

Reaction papers: 15% Class participation: 20% Class presentation (~45 minutes): 25% Final paper: 40%

The reading list and weekly schedule

Readings consist of empirical contributions, philosophical/cultural contributions and review articles. All papers are available from PubMed (or usually, simply google them). The list of reading materials is preliminary and is likely to change. Final reading list will be available in the first meeting.

** denotes required readings

-- denotes recommended readings

Classes:

First Class, Sept. 8th, Consciousness and the Unconscious: Scientific Introduction, definitions

Ran will present: Introduction and main questions; what is consciousness, and what does it mean to be conscious of something; what are non-conscious processes. Levels of description in social-cognitive-neurosciences. We will also talk about the nature of the course and distribute assignments.

Readings:

** Dehaene, S., Changeux, J.-P., Naccache, L., Sackur, J., & Sergent, C. (2006). Conscious, preconscious, and subliminal processing: a testable taxonomy. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 10(5), 204-11.

- ** Schooler, J. W. (2002). Re-representing consciousness: dissociations between experience and meta-consciousness. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 6(8), 339-344.
- Z. Freud: The Unconscious, in *The Standard Edition*, vol. 14. pp. 159—205.
- C.G. Jung: Second lecture in *Analytical Psychology: Its theory and practice*, pp. 39—61

Second class, Sept 15th: Perception and meaning without awareness

Ran will present: From late 19th century to the mid 1980s: Can we perceive without being aware that we perceive; “see” and understand without consciously seeing?

Readings:

- ** Loftus and Klinger (1992). Is the unconscious smart or dumb. *American Psychologist*, 47, pp. 761—765
- ** Greenwald, G. A. (1992). Unconscious cognition reclaimed. *American Psychologist*, 47. Pp. 766—779
- Rensnik, R. (2004). Visual sensing without seeing. *Psychological Science*, 15, pp. 27—32. See also Simons et al. (2005) Visual sensing IS seeing. *Psychological Science*, 16, pp. 520-524

Third Class, Sept 22, Cognitive tools: Memory, Learning and Executive functions

Readings:

- ** Soto, D., Silvanto, D, (2015) Re-appraising the relationship between working memory and conscious awareness. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 18, 520-525
- ** Schacter, D. L. (1991). Consciousness and awareness in memory and amnesia. Chapter 9 in the *neuropsychology of consciousness*.
- Turk-Browne, N.B., Junge, J., & Scholl, B.J. (2005). The automaticity of visual statistical learning. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 134, 552–564.
- Reber, A.S. (1967). Implicit learning of artificial grammars. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 6, 855–863

- Lau, H. C., & Passingham, R. E. (2007). Unconscious activation of the cognitive control system in the human prefrontal cortex. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 27, 5805–5811.
- Rosenthal, CR et al. (2016). Learning and Recognition of a Non-conscious Sequence of Events in Human Primary Visual Cortex. *Current Biology*, 26, pp. 834-841.

Fourth Class, Sept 29 ** . Philosophical approaches, Dan Dennett vs. Ned Block.

Reading:

** Cohen, M., & Dennett, D. C. (2011). Consciousness cannot be separated from function. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 15(8), 358-364.

** Block, N. (2011). Perceptual consciousness overflows cognitive access. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 1-9.

-- Kouider, S., de Gardelle, V., Sackur, J., & Dupoux, E. (2010). How rich is consciousness? The partial awareness hypothesis. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 14(7), 301-7.