

Introduction to Cognitive Science

- Spring 2010 -

[NOTE: The official version of this document is always the one posted on the Blackboard site for the class.]

I. Basic Information

Course cross-listings: Cognitive Science (CGS 360 TOPIC 1); Linguistics (LIN 373 TOPIC 7), Philosophy (PHL 365 TOPIC 2); Psychology (PSY 341K).

Course Time: MWF 10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

Course Location: UTC 3.132 (<http://www.utexas.edu/maps/main/buildings/utc.html>)

Instructor: David Beaver,

Position: faculty member, Depts of Linguistics and Philosophy, Director of Cognitive Science

Office: CAL 414 (<http://www.utexas.edu/maps/main/buildings/cal.html>)

Email: dib@mail.utexas.edu

Web: <https://webpace.utexas.edu/dib97/>

Office Hours: Tue 1:15-3:15 & Wed 2-3 (*preliminary*)

Teaching assistants:

So-Hee Kim <i>Office:</i> CAL 527C <i>Email:</i> shkim32@gmail.com <i>Office hours:</i> 11-12:30 Mon/Wed	Aimee Lawrence <i>Office:</i> CAL 525B <i>Email:</i> a_meelynn@yahoo.com <i>Office hours:</i> 12:30-2 Mon/Wed
--	---

II. Course Description

This course is an undergraduate introduction to the study of intelligence, mind and brain from an interdisciplinary perspective. We will study contemporary views of how the mind works, the nature of reason, and how thought processes are reflected in the language we use. Central to the course will be the modern computational theory of mind, the embodiment of that theory in a few pounds of grey meat, and what we know about how that lump of meat processes language, thinks thoughts, and develops consciousness. These topics are central to the inter-disciplinary field of Cognitive Science, an area in which UT boasts enormous strength. The course will be led by the current director of Cognitive Science at UT, and incorporate presentations from faculty in Computer Science, Linguistics, Neuroscience, Philosophy, and Psychology.

III. Course Requirements

The only general prerequisite is upper-division standing (although individual departments may impose additional restrictions). Although there are no specific course prerequisites, you will be expected to think, read, and write about topics that involve a very broad range of disciplines and methodologies. Thus you will need to be flexible. You will read discursive philosophical material, historical accounts, and descriptions of experiments in psychology and neuroscience, but you will also need to be comfortable learning about relatively formal methods, for example involving basic statistics, probability theory and theory of computation. However, it must be emphasized that you do not need to know any of this in advance, you just need to be completely fearless.

IV. Readings

Readings will consist of primary papers from the literature and short overview articles. They will normally be made available as pdf files on Blackboard. There is no course textbook.

V. Assignments, Exams and Grading Policy

Weekly assignments:

- Assignments will consist of *standard assignments* and *discussion board postings*. The standard assignments consist of short answer questions. The discussion board postings will be brief reactions to selected readings/presentations.
- Assignments will normally be issued on Fridays.
- Due dates will be specified in the assignment: typically web-based comments on readings will be due by midday before the class in which we discuss the reading, and other parts of the assignment will be due in class one week after the assignment is set.
- No assignments will be due on the Tuesday after Spring break.
- There will be 9 standard assignments, three for each of the main modules.
- Your 8 best standard assignments will count to your final grade.
- Discussion board postings are graded on 3 tiers only: FAIL/SATISFACTORY/GOOD.
- You will have responsibility twice in the semester for posting a *group summary*. A group summary is a short discussion board posting summarizing what some others posted, along with any questions arising. This will be graded in the same way as any other discussion board posting. When you write a summary, it is your choice whether you also submit a regular discussion board post, but you will not receive a separate grade for it (except for possible extra credit if we really like it!).
- An assignment which does not arrive by the due date will receive an F, except by prior agreement of the TA at least 24 hours before the due date. If you have a certified medical reason why you could not complete the assignment on time, the TA may, at her discretion, grant an extra 24 or 48 hours. Any larger extension will require the instructor's permission. The purpose of these restrictions is to ensure (i) efficient use of instructor and TA time, and (ii) fairness to the students.
- Total contribution of assignments to final grade: 50%

Exams:

- Exams will consist of essay, short-answer and multiple-choice questions.
- Mid-term exam 15%
- Final exam 35%
- Exam dates: [Midterm Wednesday March 10](#); [Final Monday, May 17, 9:00–12:00 noon](#).
- Total contribution of exams to final grade: 50%

VI. Academic Integrity

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.

You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

VII. Other University Notices and Policies

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

Documented Disability Statement

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD. (*Note: Details of a student's disability are confidential. The instructor and TAs will not ask questions related to a student's condition or diagnosis when receiving an official accommodation letter.*)

- Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).
- Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Q drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an

announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.