Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	:	Philosophy of Psychology
Course Code	:	PHI4399J
Recommended Study Year	:	2-4 Years
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Sectional
Class Contact Hours	:	3 hours/week
Category in Major Programme	:	Program Elective – Special Topics
Prerequisite(s)	:	N/A
Co-requisite(s)	:	N/A
Exclusion(s)	:	N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	:	N/A

Brief Course Description

This course is an introduction to philosophical issues arising from the fields of psychology and cognitive science. We will begin with an overview of some major philosophical views on the relation between mind and body. We will then examine the relationship between commonsense and scientific views of the mind. From there, we will examine specialized topics within the philosophy of psychology, including computational and connectionist theories of cognition, the 'modularity' of mind, theories of concepts, theories of our understanding of other minds, and views on human rationality.

Aims

The aim of the course is to survey basic issues in philosophy of psychology. Through introduction to these issues, students will gain insight into the connections between philosophy and the empirical discipline of psychology; more generally, this will increase students' understanding of the connections between philosophy and the sciences.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to:

1) Identify and understand major approaches to the mind-body problem
2) Understand the issues surrounding the relationships between 'folk' psychology, scientific psychology, and the other sciences.
3) Be able to characterize computational and connectionist approaches to the mind.
4) Understand the 'modularity of mind' hypothesis.
5) Be able to characterize major theories of concepts.
6) Distinguish theory-theory and simulation approaches to our understanding of other minds.
7) Recognize some major challenges to the assumption that humans are inherently rational

Indicative Content

1) Introduction to the mind-body problem
2) Behaviorism
3) Identity theory
4) Functionalism
5) Folk psychology vs. scientific psychology
6) Eliminative materialism
7) Special sciences vs. 'hard' sciences
8) Computational theory of mind
9) Connectionism

10) Modularity of mind
11) Concepts: classical theory
12) Concepts: prototypes
13) Concepts: atomism
14) Theory of mind: theory-theory
15) Theory of mind: simulation
16) Rationality

Teaching Method
The course will be in lecture format, with heavy emphasis on discussion.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes
Students will be assessed on the basis of a mid-term and a final paper (LO's 1-7), as well as on course attendance and participation, which may include contribution to online discussions outside of class (LO's 1-7).

Assessment
Mid-term paper: 30%
Final paper: 50%
Participation and attendance: 20%

Required Readings

Required Text
Block, N., ed., *Readings in the Philosophy of Psychology, vol. 1*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Other required readings
Churchland, P. M., "Eliminative materialism and the propositional attitudes," *Journal of Philosophy, 78*, 67-90, 1981.
Excerpt from Fodor, J., *The Language of Thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.
Excerpt from Fodor, J., *The Modularity of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983.
Excerpt from Fodor, J., *Concepts: Where Cognitive Science Went Wrong*. Oxford University Press, 1998.
Fodor, J., and Pylyshyn, Z., "Connectionism and cognitive architecture: a critical analysis" *Cognition*, *28*, 3 – 71, 1988.
Goldman, A., "Interpretation Psychologized," *Mind and Language*, 4, 161–185, 1989.
Gopnik, A. and Wellman, H.M., "Why the child's theory of mind really is a theory," *Mind and Language*, 7: 145–71, 1992.
Laurence, S., and Margolis, E., "Concepts and cognitive science," in S. Laurence and E. Margolis (eds.), *Concepts: Core Readings*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.
Newell, A., and Simon, H., "Computer Science as Empirical Inquiry: Symbols and Search," *Communications of the ACM*, *19*, 113-126, 1976.
Rosch, E., "Principles of categorization," In E. Rosch & B. B. Lloyd (Eds.), Cognition *and Categorization*. Hillsdale, N J: Erlbaum, 1978.
Samuels, R., Stich, S. and Tremoulet, P., "Rethinking rationality: From bleak implications to Darwinian modules," in E. Lepore and Z. Pylyshyn (eds.) *What Is Cognitive Science?* Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.
Searle, J., "Minds, brains, and programs," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 3*, 417–24, 1980.
Smolensky, P., "On the Proper Treatment of Connectionism," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 11,

1–74, 1988.
Waston, J., "Psychology as the behaviorist views it," *Psychological Review, 20*, 158-177, 1913.

Supplementary Readings

Cohen, L.J., "Can human irrationality be experimentally demonstrated?" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 4*, 317-331, 1981.
Dennett, D., "True believers: The intentional strategy and why it works," in A. F. Heath (Ed.), *Scientific explanation*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981.
Fodor, J., and Lepore, E., "The red herring and the pet fish: why concepts still can't be prototypes," *Cognition, 58*, 253-270, 1996.
Kim, J., "Multiple realization and the metaphysics of reduction," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 52*, 1-26, 1992.
Smart, J.J.C., "Sensations and brain processes," *Philosophical Review, 68*, 141-156, 1959.
Stich, S. & Nichols, S., "Folk Psychology: Simulation or Tacit Theory?" *Mind and Language*, 7, 35–71, 1992.

Important Notes

(1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
(2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
(3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
(4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on https://pla.ln.edu.hk/