

# Phil 360: Philosophical Aspects of Cognitive Science

August 23, 2012

**Instructor:** Carlotta Pavese.

**Time:** 9.50-11.10am, Mondays and Thursdays.

**Place:** Classroom B2, Frelinghuysen Hall.

**Website:** Sakai.

**Email:** carlotta.pavese@gmail.com.

**Office:** 3, Seminary Place. Office: 317.

**Office Hours** (where: my office): 11:10am-1pm on Mondays and 11.10am-1pm, on Thursdays

**Course Description:** Most philosophers today consider it necessary to engage with the findings and the methodology of cognitive sciences. What are the reasons underlying this general consensus? Why should philosophers care at all about cognitive science? To what extent, if at all, should philosophers use results and findings from the cognitive sciences in their arguments? What aspects of cognitive science are the most relevant, if any?

In this course we will try to reach a partial answer on each of these questions. In particular, we will focus on two main areas of possible philosophical applications of cognitive science, the philosophy of mind and epistemology. The course is divided into three main subjects:

- (1) Introduction: Philosophy and Cognitive Science;
- (2) Cognitive Science and the Philosophy of Mind;
- (3) Cognitive Science and Epistemology.

The third subject will in turn divide into two main topics:

- (3a) Traditional Knowledge and Cognitive Science;
- (3b) Knowledge, Expertise and Skills, and Cognitive Science.

## Textbook and Readings

*Mandatory:*

CRANE, T. [? ].

*Optional:*

CLARK, A. [? ].

GOLDMAN, A. [? ].

RYLE, G. [? ].

**Other Readings:** Some of the readings aren't in the mandatory textbook. All such readings will be available electronically on the course's Sakai site. You should print these out and bring them to class.

**Advice on Reading:** It is more important to reach a basic grasp of the overall point of a reading than to understand any particular detail. Accordingly, I advise you to do each of the readings once quickly in a single sitting and then return to the details you missed. If, on a second reading, you can't sort out some specific detail, write down what you don't understand and bring it to class for discussion. Do your best to raise your question at a point in the class where that detail is relevant to what's being discussed. It is much more likely that you will get a satisfying answer if you ask your question at the appropriate time. In all the readings, it will be helpful to ask yourself 'what is the problem or issue at stake here?' and then 'what solutions or positions is the author arguing for here?'

**Grading:** 90% 3 Exams (Exam 1: 25%, Exam 2: 30%, Exam 3: 35%). See the schedule for the exam days.

All 3 exams will require you to answer 3 short-answer essay questions. Each exam will present you with 3 pairs of questions and you will have to select one from each pair to answer; all the answers will have to be completed in-class. Prior to each exam I will post 12 study-questions on Sakai. The 6 exam questions will be among these study questions. The exams will be non-cumulative, but there is a good deal of interdependence in the course material, so it may be necessary to revisit old notes and texts in studying for an exam. The last exam will be a take home.

10% Attendance and class discussion.

**Policy on Absences:** Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website

<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>

to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Please note: My policy for missed classes and missed exams is the following. If you miss an exam and want to make it up, you will need a Dean's Note to excuse your absence. This is just the official University policy. In all but the most extreme cases, you will be required to make up the missed exam within 10 days. You've got up to *two* excused absences during the semester. If you need more absences, you will need a Dean's note.

**Academic Integrity:** In this course we will strictly adhere to the University Policy on Academic Integrity. If you are not familiar with it, view it at:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Any violation of this policy will be reported immediately to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Violations will, at the very least, result in an F on the assignment in question, but are also likely to lead to an F in the class, suspension and other penalties.

### **(Provisional) Schedule**

The following schedule is only provisional and most likely subject to changes as we go on. Also I have not settled on the readings for the last month of the course, yet, but they will be communicated soon.

#### **1st week:**

*When:* 19th January Thursday;

*Readings:* None.

*Topic:* We will go over the Syllabus.

#### **2nd week:**

*When:* 23rd January Monday;

*Readings:* My notes.

*Topic:* Introduction: Philosophical Applications of Cognitive Science. Part I

*When:* 26th January, Thursday;

*Readings:* My notes

*Topic:* Introduction: Philosophical Applications of Cognitive Science, Part II.

#### **3rd week:**

*When:* 30th January, Monday;

*Readings:* Crane [? ]: Introduction & Chapter I.

*Topic:* Cognitive Science and Mental Representation. Part I.

*When:* 2nd February, Thursday.

*Readings:* Crane [? ]: Introduction & Chapter I.

*Topic:* Cognitive Science and Mental Representation, Part II.

**4th week:**

*When:* 6th February, Monday;

*Reading:* Crane [? ]: Chapter II.

*Topic:* The Causal Picture of Thoughts.

*When:* 9th February, Thursday;

*Reading:* Crane [? ]: Chapter III.

*Topic:* Computationalism.

**5th week:**

*When:* 13th February, Monday;

*Reading:* Clark [? ]: Chapter IV.

*Topic:* Computationalism versus Connectionism.

*When:* 16th February, Thursday;

*Reading:* Crane [? ]: Chapter IV.

*Topic:* The Language of Thought Hypothesis.

**6th week:**

*When:* 20th February, Monday;

*Reading:* Crane [? ]: Chapter IV.

*Topic:* Arguments Against the Language of Thought Hypothesis.

*When:* 23rd February, Thursday;

*Reading:* My notes

*Topic:* Wrapping up: Cognitive Science and The Philosophy of Mind.

**7th week:**

*When:* 27th February, Monday;

*Reading:* none.

*Topic:* **First Exam.**

*When:* 1st March, thursday;

*Reading:* Goldman [? ]: Chapter I.

*Topic:* Cognitive Science and Epistemology.

**8th week:**

*When:* 5th March, thursday;

*Reading:* Goldman [? ]: Chapter I.

*Topic:* Reliabilism and Cognitive Science.

*When:* 8th March, Monday;

*Reading:* Goldman [? ]: Chapter I .

*Topic:* Evidence, Memory and Cognitive Science.

**9th week:**

*When:* 12th March, Thursday;

*Reading:* Goldman [? ]: chapter II.

*Topic:* Bayesianism and Cognitive Science.

*When:* 15th March, Monday;

*Reading:* No class, Spring Recess.

*Topic:* No class.

**10th week:**

*When:* 19th March, Thursday;

*Reading:* Goldman, [? ], Chapter II, plus my notes.

*Topic:* Bayesianism and Cognitive Science.

*When:* 22nd March, Thursday;

*Reading:* Nagel [? ]: Knowledge as a Mental State.

*Topic:* Wrapping up: Knowledge and Cognitive Sciences.

**11th week:**

*When:* 22th March, Thursday;

*Reading:* Ryle [? ]: .

*Topic:* Knowing how and Knowing that.

*When:* 26th March, Thursday;

*Reading:* Fodor [? ]:

*Topic:* Responding to Ryle.

**12th week:**

*When* 2nd April ;  
*Reading*: None.  
*Topic*: **Second Exam.**

*When*: 5th April, Thursday;  
*Reading*: Dreyfus [? ].  
*Topic*: Knowledge, Expertise and Skills, Part I.

**13th week:**

*When*: 9th April;  
*Reading*: Dreyfus [? ]; [? ]:  
*Topic*: Knowledge, Expertise, Skills. Part II.

*When*: 12th April;  
*Reading*: Skills and Expertise. My notes and Selection of Pylyshyn [? ]:  
*Topic*: Responding to Dreyfus.

**14th week:**

*When*: 16th April;  
*Reading*: Gelman [? ], [? ], [? ].  
*Topic*: Cognitive Psychologists on skills.

*When*: 19th April;  
*Reading*: Pylyshyn [? ], Cooke [? ].  
*Topic*: Cognitive Psychologists on skills.

**15th week:**

*When*: 23th April;  
*Reading*: Presentations: Leslie&Others [? ]; Greene [? ];  
*Topic*: Presentations Part I.

*When*: 26th April  
*Reading*: Presentations: Yudkowsky [? ]; Wiley [? ].  
*Topic*: Presentations Part II.

**16th week:**

*When*: 30th April.  
*Reading*: None.  
*Topic*: **Third Exam.**