

Psychology 1551: Mind Perception

We find faces in the moon, armies in the clouds; and, by a natural propensity, if not corrected by experience and reflection, ascribe malice or good-will to every thing, that hurts or pleases us...trees, mountains, and streams are personified, and the inanimate parts of nature acquire sentiment and passion.

David Hume (1757), *The Natural History of Religion*.

How do we perceive minds? How should we understand the mind of a cow, a computer, a corporation, someone in pain, an idol, a hated enemy, or a person in a persistent vegetative state? How does our natural ability to perceive minds influence our tendency to attribute a mind to God or to the dead? These are questions about mind perception. This course explores how mind perception operates by extending it to extraordinary targets—kinds of minds beyond the prototypical idea of the human mind.

REQUIREMENTS

Comments on the Main Readings. Each week there will be main readings for the class (marked with * in the outline below). Your assignment is to do the reading and then turn in a page (or so) of comments on the reading set by class time that week. The comments should include at least 2 of these 4 elements: a *summary* (a few sentences summarizing the readings), an *idea* (the most interesting or important idea you found in the readings or had about the topic), a *question* (a query, comment, complaint, wish, deeply repressed desire, or issue for class discussion), or an *example* (something you have experienced that is relevant to the topic). Class discussion each week will center on these comments. This requirement accounts for 20% of your course grade.

Class Participation. Your discussion, questions, and comments in class will account for 20% of your course grade. Unexcused late arrival and/or absence from class are considered lapses in participation.

Individual Reports on the Special Readings. In addition to the main readings, there are special readings for each week's topic. Each class member will select 2 to 4 of the weekly topics (depending on class size) and do one of the special (un-asterisked) readings those weeks. A 10-min. presentation on the special reading will be made in class that week (beginning 9-21). Your assignment is to present the special readings clearly and creatively, and to explain how the reading relates to the week's topic. If you include Powerpoint or other computer media, please arrange to bring a laptop to class for your presentation. If you want to make any copies of handouts for class, contact Allison Gaffey in WJH 1456 (email gaffey@wjh.harvard.edu). This requirement accounts for 25% of your course grade.

Term Paper. A paper examining a specific topic in the study of mind perception accounts for 30% of your grade. This paper may take the form of a review, a theory, a case report, a research proposal, or a research report. A proposal for the paper (under one page) is due 11-2; a paper in APA style is due in class on 11-23; and an oral presentation of the paper in class should be prepared by 11-23 for presentation then or on 11-30.

DATES, OUTLINE, AND READINGS

* The main readings for each topic. Those not asterisked are for individual reports or background.

9-2 Organizational Meeting

9-14 Minds and Cryptominds <http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~wegner/1551/>

*Baron-Cohen, S. (1994). *Mindblindness*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. (Ch 1, 4-5).

*Dennett, D. (1996). *Kinds of minds*. New York: Basic Books. (Ch 1-3).

*Gray, H. M., Gray, K., & Wegner, D. M. (2007). Dimensions of mind perception. *Science*, 315, 619.

Turing, A. M. (2004). Computing machinery and intelligence. In S. Shieber (Ed.), *The Turing test: Verbal behavior as the hallmark of intelligence* (pp. 67-95). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

9-21 Minds of Animals (individual reports begin)

*Blakemore, S. J., & Decety, J. (2001). From the perception of action to the understanding of intention. *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience*, 2, 561-567.

*Johnson, S. C. (2003). Detecting agents. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 358, 549-559.

*Scholl, B., & Tremoulet, P. D. (2000). Perceptual causality and animacy. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 4, 299-309.

DeLeeuw, J. L., Galen, L. W., Aebersold, C., & Stanton, V. (2007). Support for animal rights as a function of belief in evolution, religious fundamentalism, and religious denomination. *Society and Animals*, 15, 353-363.

Jamison, W. V., Wenk, C., Parker, J. V. (2000). Every sparrow that falls: Understanding animal rights activism as a functional religion. *Society and Animals*, 8, 305-330.

Kennedy, J. S. (1992). *The new anthropomorphism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Ch 1-2)

Kozak, M. N., Marsh, A. A., & Wegner, D. M. (2006). What do I think you're doing? Action identification and mind attribution. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(4), 543-555.

Opfer, J. E. (2002). Identifying living and sentient kinds from dynamic information: The case of goal-directed versus aimless autonomous movement in conceptual change. *Cognition*, 86, 97-122.

9-28 Minds of Machines and Robots

*Breazeal, C., & Scasselatti, B. (1999). How to build robots that make friends and influence people. *1999 IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS-99)*. Kyongju, Korea.

*MacDorman, K. F., & Ishiguro, H. (2006). The uncanny advantage of using androids in cognitive and social science research. *Interaction Studies*, 7(3), 297-337.

- Morewedge, C. A., Preston, J., & Wegner, D. M. (2007). Timescale bias in the attribution of mind. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *93*, 1-11.
- Heberlein, A. S., Adolphs, R., Tranel, D., & Damasio, H. (2004). Cortical regions for judgments of emotions and personality traits from pointlight walkers. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, *16*, 1143-1158.
- De Angeli, A., Johnson, G. I., & Coventry, L. (2001). The unfriendly user: Exploring user reactions to chatterbots. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Affective Human Factors Design*. London: Asean Academic Press.
- De Angeli, A., & Carpenter, R. (2005). Stupid computer! Abuse and social identity. In Abuse: The dark side of human-computer interaction. *Interact*, Rome, Italy, 19-25.

10-5 Mind of the Patient

- *Hodges, S., & Wegner, D. M. (1997). Automatic and controlled empathy. In W. J. Ickes (Ed.), *Empathic accuracy* (pp. 311-339). New York: Guilford.
- *de Vignemont, F., & Singer, T. (2006). The empathic brain: How, when and why? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *10*(10), 435-441.
- *Gray, K., & Wegner, D. M. (2009). Moral typecasting: Divergent perceptions of moral agents and moral patients. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *96*, 505-520.
- Spiro, H. (1992). What is empathy and can it be taught? *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *116*, 843-846.
- Cheng, Y., Lin, C. P., Liu, H. L., Hsu, Y. Y., Lim, K. E., Hung, D., et al. (2007). Expertise modulates the perception of pain in others. *Current Biology*, *17*(19), 1708-1713.
- Marshall, W. L., Hudson, S. M., Jones, R., & Fernandez, Y. M. (1995). Empathy in sex offenders. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *15*, 99-113.
- Platek, S. M., Critton, S. R., Myers, T. E., & Gallup, G. G., Jr. (2003). Contagious yawning: The role of self-awareness and mental state attribution. *Cognitive Brain Research*, *17*, 223-227.

10-19 Mind of the Enemy

- *Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *10*(3), 252-264.
- *Harris, L. T., & Fiske, S. T. (2006). Dehumanizing the lowest of the low: Neuroimaging responses to extreme out-groups. *Psychological Science*, *17*(10), 847-853.
- Castano, E., & Giner-Sorolla, R. (2006). Not quite human: Infrahumanization in response to collective responsibility for intergroup killing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *90*, 804-818.
- Galinsky, A. D., & Moskowitz, G. B. (2000). Perspective-taking: Decreasing stereotype expression, stereotype accessibility, and in-group favoritism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *78*, 708-724.
- Goff, P. A., Eberhardt, J. L., Williams, M. J., & Jackson, M. C. (2008). Not yet human: Implicit knowledge, historical dehumanization, and contemporary consequences.

- Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94, 292-306.
- Loughnan, S., & Haslam, N. (2007). Animals and androids: Implicit associations between social categories and nonhumans. *Psychological Science*, 18, 116-121.
- Morewedge, C. K. (in press). Negativity bias in attribution of external agency. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

10-26 Mind of the Living Body

- *Zeman, A. (1997). Persistent vegetative state. *Lancet*, 350, 795-799.
- *Ditto, P. H. (2006). What would Terri want? On the psychological challenges of surrogate decision making. *Death Studies*, 30, 135-148.
- *Wegner, D. M., Fuller, V., & Sparrow, B. (2002). Clever hands: Uncontrolled intelligence in facilitated communication. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 5-19.
- Parker, I. (January 20, 2003). Reading minds. *The New Yorker*, 52-63.
- Jones, J. G. (1994). Perception and memory during general anaesthesia. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*, 73, 31-37.
- Derbyshire, S. W. G. (2006). Can fetuses feel pain? *British Medical Journal*, 332, 909-912.
- Schiff, N. D. (2004). The neurology of impaired consciousness. In M. S. Gazzaniga (Ed.), *The cognitive neurosciences III* (3rd ed., pp. 1121-1132). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Flavell, J. H., Green, F. L., Flavell, E. R., & Lin, N. T. (1999). Development of children's knowledge about unconsciousness. *Child Development*, 70, 396-412.

11-2 Mind of the Idol (term paper proposal due)

- *Giles, D. C. (2002). Parasocial interaction: A review of the literature and a model for future research. *Media Psychology*, 4, 279-304.
- *Taylor, M., Carlson, S. M., Maring, B. L., Gerow, L., & Charley, C. M. (2004). The characteristics and correlates of fantasy in school-age children: Imaginary companions, impersonation, and social understanding. *Developmental Psychology*, 40, 1163-1187.
- *Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21, 173-206.
- Hooley, J. M., & Wilson-Murphy, M. (2009). *Borderline personality disorder and attachment to stuffed animals: Positive findings for the "positive bear" sign*. Unpublished manuscript, Harvard University.
- Engle, Y., & Kasser, T. (2005). Why do adolescent girls idolize male celebrities? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 20, 263-283.
- Gleason, T. R., Sebanc, A. M., & Hartup, W. W. (2000). Imaginary companions of preschool children. *Developmental Psychology*, 36, 419-428.
- Derrick, J. L., Gabriel, S., & Tippin, B. (2008). Parasocial relationships and self-discrepancies: Faux relationships have benefits for low self-esteem individuals. *Personal Relationships*, 15, 261-280.

11-9 Group Mind

- *Abelson, R. P., Dasgupta, N., Park, J., & Banaji, M. R. (1998). Perceptions of the collective other. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2(4), 243-250.
- *O'Laughlin, M. J., & Malle, B. F. (2002). How people explain actions performed by groups and individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(1), 33-48.
- *Knobe, J., & Prinz, J. (2008). Intuitions about consciousness: Experimental studies. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 7, 67-83.
- Wegner, D. M. (1986). Transactive memory: A contemporary analysis of the group mind. In B. Mullen & G. R. Goethals (Eds.), *Theories of group behavior* (pp. 185-208). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Bloom, P., & Veres, C. (1999). The perceived intentionality of groups. *Cognition*, 71, b1-b9.
- Knowles, E. S., & Bassett, R. L. (1976). Groups and crowds as social entities: Effects of activity, size, and member similarity on nonmembers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34, 837-845.
- Philpot, C. R., & Hornsey, M. J. (2008). What happens when groups say sorry: The effect of intergroup apologies on their recipients. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34, 474-487.
- Morewedge, C., & Schooler, J. (2009). *Mind diffusion*. Paper submitted for publication.

11-16 Supernatural Mind

- *Barrett, J. L. (2000). Exploring the natural foundations of religion. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 4, 29-34.
- *Bering, J. (2006). The cognitive psychology of belief in the supernatural. *American Scientist*, 94, 142-149.
- *Bloom, P. (2005). Is God an accident? *Atlantic Monthly*, 296, 105-112.
- Norenzayan, A., & Hansen, I. G. (2006). Belief in supernatural agents in the face of death. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(2), 174-187.
- Barrett, H. C., & Behne, T. (2004). Children's understanding of death as the cessation of agency: a test using sleep versus death. *Cognition*, 1-16.
- Benore, E. R., & Park, C. L. (2004). Death-specific religious beliefs and bereavement: Belief in an afterlife and continued attachment. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 14, 1-22.
- Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition and Emotion*, 17, 297-314.
- Barrett, J. L., & Keil, F. C. (1996). Conceptualizing a non-natural entity: Anthropomorphism in God concepts. *Cognitive Psychology* 31, 219-247.

11-23 Term paper presentations (term paper due)

11-30 Term paper presentations