

Cognitive Science 7: Introduction to Cognitive Science

MWF 2:10-3:00, LL 316

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Office Hours MWF 9:00-11:00 and by appointment

1. Course Description. Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding human cognition, where "cognition," broadly construed, includes such faculties as perception, thought, and language. This approach incorporates the insights and methods of psychology, neurobiology, philosophy, linguistics, computer science, anthropology, and sociology. Sometimes, as we shall see, these disparate strands complement each other, but sometimes they come into conflict. Cognitive science is still in its infancy, and it remains an open question whether the divergent claims of the aforementioned individual contributing disciplines can really be integrated into any kind of coherent whole. We shall, however, be making an attempt.

Perhaps the most influential paradigm in cognitive science to date is *computationalism*. Our course will be loosely structured around issues arising from the exposition of computationalism, the exploration of its consequences, and the criticism of its inadequacies.

2. Readings. The following texts have been ordered through the Lehigh bookstore:

Barbara von Eckhardt, *What is Cognitive Science?* (WCS)

Jerry Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (LOT)

Jerry Fodor, *In Critical Condition* (ICC)

John Haugeland, ed., *Mind Design II* (MD)

The abbreviations following each title are used below in specifying the readings for each week.

3. Course requirements. There will be two take-home exams and two papers. The first exam will be assigned on Feb. 15, and due in class on Feb. 22. It will be worth 20 points. The papers, due on March 15 and May 3, will be worth 25 points each. The take-home final, worth 25 points, will be assigned on May 3 (the last day of classes), and due in my box by 12:00 noon on Tuesday, May 11. Up to an additional 10 points may be awarded for contributions to in-class discussion. The theoretical maximum possible score is 105, and grades will be awarded on a 100-point scale. For the two mid-term assignments (exam and paper) turned in after the due date, a penalty of four points will be assessed for each day. With the exception of the final,

assignments, no matter how late, must be in by May 3. No late finals will be accepted under any circumstances.

I really hate to have to say this on the syllabus, but sad experience has proved it necessary. The minimum sanction for any student found to have committed plagiarism on any assignment will be **a failing grade for the entire course** (not just the assignment). A report will also be made to the Dean of Students for possible further disciplinary action. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism, please consult your Student Handbook (under the heading "Academic Dishonesty"), or come see me.

4. Schedule of readings and assignments.

Week of:

Readings and Assignments:

Introduction

Jan. 13:	WCS, Introduction, §1.1
Jan. 18:	WCS, Ch. 1-2.
Jan. 25:	LOT, Introduction.
Feb. 1:	LOT, Ch. 1.
Feb. 10:	WCS, Ch. 3.
Feb. 15:	MD, Ch. 2.
Feb. 22:	MD, Ch. 3, 4. Feb. 22: First take-home exam due.
Mar. 1:	MD, Ch. 7, 8.
Mar. 15:	MD, Ch. 12, 13. March 15: First paper due.
Mar. 22:	WCS, Ch. 4.
Mar. 29:	WCS, Ch. 5.
Apr. 7:	WCS, Ch. 6.

Apr. 12: WCS, Ch. 7.

Apr. 19: ICC, selection TBA.

Apr. 26: Readings TBA.

May 3: **Final paper due. Take-home exams will be assigned, to be turned in to the instructor's box no later than 12:00 noon, Tuesday, May 11.**

That's it. Have a great Summer!