



PHIL707

Research Topics in Philosophy and Cognitive Science

S1 External 2015

Dept of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Dr. Rachael Brown

rachael.brown@mq.edu.au

Contact via rachael.brown@mq.edu.au

Rm 726, Building W6A

Tuesdays, 2-3pm or by appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores some of the cutting edge research questions at the forefront of cognitive science and the philosophy of cognition. The unit explores philosophical problems that arise from the core disciplines of cognitive psychology, cognitive neuropsychology, linguistics, neuroscience and AI and robotics. Topics to be covered may include: embodied and distributed cognition; disorders of the mind; folk psychology and theory of mind; the use of fMRI to understand brain function; is the brain massively modular; can cognitive science explain consciousness, or the self?

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Acquire a coherent and advanced knowledge of the methodology, concepts and arguments of cognitive science and philosophy.

Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in cognitive science and philosophy.

Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments in written and oral form to a

variety of audiences.

Analyze and critically evaluate philosophical arguments.

Apply acquired knowledge and skills in the context of philosophical and cognitive science scholarship.

Reflect individual performance to identify opportunities for improvement.

Understand and critically evaluate evidence from a broad range of disciplines including cognitive science, psychology and neuroscience.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Weekly Mini-Papers</u>	40%	Weekly
<u>Presentation</u>	20%	Week 10 or 12/05/15
<u>Research Paper</u>	40%	12/06/15

Weekly Mini-Papers

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **40%**

In preparation for each seminar (weeks 2-12), students will write a short (maximum 300 word) mini-paper presenting their considered reflections on the assigned readings. Topics and guidelines for these papers will be posted on iLearn.

Instructions for Internal Students: Internal students will bring a printed copy of their mini-paper to seminar each week to be submitted at the end of class. During class students will have a chance to reflect on their mini-paper and add comments. Papers will not be accepted late and will not be accepted without attendance at class. Papers will be returned graded with feedback at seminar the following week.

Instructions for External Students: External students will post their mini-paper to their personal blog on iLearn before midday each Wednesday. Students may add comments to their blog post subsequent to Wednesday's seminar. Papers will not be accepted late. Grades and feedback will be provided to students on iLearn before the seminar the following week.

Grading: Students will receive a grade out of 10 for each paper submitted. If a student does not submit a mini-paper they will be graded 0 out of 10 for that week. The final grade for this assessment will be the average of the 9 best of these grades.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Acquire a coherent and advanced knowledge of the methodology, concepts and arguments of cognitive science and philosophy.

- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in cognitive science and philosophy.
- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments in written and oral form to a variety of audiences.
- Analyze and critically evaluate philosophical arguments.
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- Reflect individual performance to identify opportunities for improvement.

Presentation

Due: **Week 10 or 12/05/15**

Weighting: **20%**

In week 10 of the course each student will give a 20-30 minute presentation on their essay indicating:

1. The philosophical problem that the essay will address.
2. The location of that problem in an area of philosophy.
3. The structure of the argument, indicating the key concepts or arguments that require attention in addressing the problem.

Each student will be asked to present their proposal and outline to the class and to be prepared to respond to questions from the instructor and their peers.

Finally, each student will be expected to participate in the presentations, to ask questions of other students and to offer constructive commentary aimed at clarification or refinement of each proposal.

Criteria for assessment: clarity of the thesis problem, contextualisation in philosophical debate, articulation of the argument structure and rationale. Clarity of verbal presentation, value of the contribution to discussion.

Grading: Students will receive a grade out of 100 for the paper.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments in written and oral form to a variety of audiences.
- Analyze and critically evaluate philosophical arguments.

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- Reflect individual performance to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Understand and critically evaluate evidence from a broad range of disciplines including cognitive science, psychology and neuroscience.

Research Paper

Due: **12/06/15**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will write a research paper of 4000 words which provides a careful critical examination, based on reasons, argumentation and evidence, of topic of their own choosing.

Submission: Turnitin submission on iLearn

Grading: Students will receive a grade out of 100 for the paper.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Acquire a coherent and advanced knowledge of the methodology, concepts and arguments of cognitive science and philosophy.
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in cognitive science and philosophy.
- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments in written and oral form to a variety of audiences.
- Analyze and critically evaluate philosophical arguments.
- Apply acquired knowledge and skills in the context of philosophical and cognitive science scholarship.
- Understand and critically evaluate evidence from a broad range of disciplines including cognitive science, psychology and neuroscience.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery

- Seminars will be held Tuesdays from 11am-1pm in Y3A 210 Tutorial Rm.

Required Reading:

- Kristin Andrews (2015) *The Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition*, New York: Routledge.
- Other papers and journal articles to be made available on iLearn.

Optional Pre-Reading:

- Colin Allen and Marc Bekoff (1997) *Species of Mind: The Philosophy and Biology of Cognitive Ethology*, Sabon: MIT Press.

Unit Schedule

Week (Date)	Seminar Topic	Work Due This Week
1 (24/2)	Introduction to PHIL707	
2 (3/3)	The science of other minds I	Week 2 Mini-Paper
3 (10/3)	Consciousness I	Week 3 Mini-Paper
4 (17/3)	Consciousness II	Week 4 Mini-Paper
5 (24/3)	Thinking: belief, concepts and rationality	Week 5 Mini-Paper
6 (31/3)	Communication	Week 6 Mini-Paper
7 (21/4)	Knowing minds	Week 7 Mini-Paper
8 (28/4)	Moral minds	Week 8 Mini-Paper
9 (5/5)	Essay Proposal Presentations	Week 9 Mini-Paper
10 (12/5)	Case Study: Mental Time Travel	Week 10 Mini-Paper, Presentations
11 (19/5)	The science of other minds II	Week 11 Mini-Paper
12 (26/5)	Cognition and the moral status of animals	Week 12 Mini-Paper
13 (2/6)	Essay Meetings	
		Essay due 12/6/15

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply acquired knowledge and skills in the context of philosophical and cognitive science scholarship.
- Reflect individual performance to identify opportunities for improvement.

Assessment tasks

- Presentation
- Research Paper

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Acquire a coherent and advanced knowledge of the methodology, concepts and arguments of cognitive science and philosophy.
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in cognitive science and philosophy.
- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments in written and oral form to a variety of audiences.
- Analyze and critically evaluate philosophical arguments.
- Apply acquired knowledge and skills in the context of philosophical and cognitive science

scholarship.

- Reflect individual performance to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Understand and critically evaluate evidence from a broad range of disciplines including cognitive science, psychology and neuroscience.

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Mini-Papers
- Presentation
- Research Paper

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Acquire a coherent and advanced knowledge of the methodology, concepts and arguments of cognitive science and philosophy.
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in cognitive science and philosophy.
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- Apply acquired knowledge and skills in the context of philosophical and cognitive science scholarship.
- Reflect individual performance to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Understand and critically evaluate evidence from a broad range of disciplines including cognitive science, psychology and neuroscience.

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Mini-Papers
- Presentation
- Research Paper

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in cognitive science and philosophy.
- Analyze and critically evaluate philosophical arguments.
- Apply acquired knowledge and skills in the context of philosophical and cognitive science scholarship.
- Understand and critically evaluate evidence from a broad range of disciplines including cognitive science, psychology and neuroscience.

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Mini-Papers
- Presentation
- Research Paper

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments in written and oral form to a variety of audiences.
- Apply acquired knowledge and skills in the context of philosophical and cognitive science scholarship.

Assessment tasks

- Weekly Mini-Papers
- Presentation
- Research Paper

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Reflect individual performance to identify opportunities for improvement.