

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Connections Category

Connections: Understanding Individual and Social Responsibility

Connections courses direct students to apply and integrate discipline-specific knowledge and skills to the significant issues challenging our individual and shared responsibility as global citizens. Students will learn to analyze and evaluate cultural contexts, examine issues on both a local and global scale, and apply system-level approaches to the stewardship of our social and physical environments. Although they may be used with a major or minor program, *Connections* courses are classes at the 200-level or above designed for the general student population, and may be taken *only after* students have earned at least 21 hours in **WKU Colonnade Program** coursework or have achieved junior status.

Connections courses may not have graduate components or prerequisites other than approved courses within the **WKU Colonnade Program**.

Proposed courses must be designed to address specifically the goals and outcomes of one (1) of the subcategories listed below. Students will take one course from each of the three following areas, selecting three different disciplines (usually defined by course prefixes).

- **Social and Cultural** (3 hours)

Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. Courses will consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape societal norms and behaviors, the independent and collective or collaborative artistic expression of those values, and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs.

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

- **Local to Global** (3 hours)

Students will examine local and global issues within the context of an increasingly interconnected world. Courses will consider the origins and dynamics of a global society, the significance of local phenomena on a global scale, and/or material, cultural, and ethical challenges in today's world.

1. Analyze issues on local and global scales.
2. Examine the local and global interrelationships of one or more issues.
3. Evaluate the consequences of decision-making on local and global scales.

- **Systems** (3 hours)

Students will examine systems, whether natural or human, by breaking them down into their component parts or processes and seeing how these parts interact. Courses will consider the evolution and dynamics of a particular system or systems and the application of system-level thinking.

1. Analyze how systems evolve.
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

***NOTE: The **Colonnade Program** is designed to incrementally build student skills in argumentation and the use of evidence beginning with discipline-specific coursework in the *Foundations* and *Explorations* categories. By extension, *Connections* courses are intended to be summative learning experiences in which students apply basic knowledge to larger and more complex social, global and systemic issues of concern. Proposals should address this summative purpose in the design of the course and the assessment of student learning.

Please complete the following and return electronically to colonnadeplan@wku.edu.

1. What course does the department plan to offer in *Connections*? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Social and Cultural, Local to Global, Systems)

Course: **PHIL 332: Philosophy of Mind: Minds and Machines**

Subcategory: **Systems**

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory? Please address **all** of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

Learning Outcomes	How the Course Meets Them
<p>Students will examine systems, whether natural or human, by breaking them down into their component parts or processes and seeing how these parts interact. Courses will consider the evolution and dynamics of a particular system or systems and the application of system-level thinking.</p>	<p>In this course students learn how to analyze the mind as a cognitive system by breaking it down into its component parts and processes and examining how they function and interact; students then deepen their understanding of the human cognitive system by comparing it to cognitive systems created by humans, namely artificial intelligence (AI). For example, students learn how to critically evaluate arguments and evidence concerning how the components of vision, consciousness, and memory function and interact and how they determine the behavior and properties of the overall system, such as the system's personal identity and responsibility for judgments and decisions; students then confront questions such as under what circumstances a machine with AI would be capable of making decisions and being held personally responsible (in contrast to the responsibility of the machine's designers: the question is when does a cognitive system become an agent capable of being held to agential normativity); finally, students use those answers to enrich their understanding of the functioning and nature of the human cognitive system. Furthermore, students analyze arguments and evidence for and against the sensorimotor theory of embodied cognition, which uses systems-level thinking to understand the mind and body as a coupled system based on cyclical sensorimotor feedback loops, rather than distinct Cartesian substances.</p>
<p>1. Analyze how systems evolve.</p>	<p>In this course students examine both the development and evolution of the mental system within an individual (e.g., (i) the utilization of various mental and sensorimotor components in an individual's development of a theory of mind and a capacity for joint attention, and (ii) causal and historical conditions of reference of singular</p>

	terms and their neural realizers in an individual's cognitive system) as well as the essential role that causal history plays in the development across individuals of mental states with propositional contents (e.g., how the evolution of syntactic processing in humans' mental system can account for conditions of veridical representation of one's environment).
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.	In this course students study individual components of the mental system, such as vision, emotions, and memory, and they have to compare and analyze how those features relate to the entire system. E.g., students study empirical work on memory and the brain, and then they study philosophical arguments concerning the role that memory plays in the overall system. Thereby students examine both component-level and systems-level analysis of memory and learn how to two interact.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.	Students study how system-level analysis of the mind informs our understanding of the mind's judgment and decision-making processes; furthermore, they study how these processes affect personal responsibility (i.e., responsibility at the system level). For example, students use systems analysis to answer questions such as under what circumstances it would be correct to hold your clone responsible for something you did. They also learn how component-level plasticity contributes toward sustainability of the system.

3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.

Systems-level thinking is often applied to humans on a macro scale: how a number of individuals can function as a system. This course, however, provides a valuable *Connections* experience by applying systems-level thing to humans on a micro scale: it treats the human mind as a complex system of various integrated parts. Furthermore, it does so by incorporating current research from a variety of disciplines (philosophy, psychology, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, and neurobiology) to address deep philosophical issues about personhood, responsibility, mentality, embodiment, and cognition. These issues are additionally important for their bearing on other social and macro-systemic concerns, for example, via the issue of how the components of the mental system determine personal identity and responsibility for the individual system's decisions.

4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.

Phil 101, Phil 102, Phil 103, or permission of the instructor.

5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.

Learning Outcomes	Syllabus Statement
Students will examine systems, whether natural or human, by breaking them down into their component parts or processes and seeing how these parts interact. Courses will consider the evolution and dynamics of a particular system or systems and the application of system-level thinking.	In this course students learn how to analyze the mind as a cognitive system by breaking it down into its component parts and processes and examining how they function and interact. Students learn how to analyze the human cognitive system by comparing it to cognitive systems created by humans, namely artificial intelligence. Students learn how to critically evaluate arguments and evidence concerning how the components of vision, consciousness, etc., function and interact and how they determine the properties of the overall system, such the individual or system's personal identity and its responsibility for judgments and decisions.
1. Analyze how systems evolve.	In this course students examine both the development and evolution of the mental system within an individual as well as the essential role that causal history across individuals plays in the development of various mental states.
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.	In this course students study individual components of the mental system, such as vision, emotions, memory, and perhaps embodiment, and they compare and analyze how those features relate to the entire system.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.	Students study how system-level analysis of the mind informs our understanding of minds' judgment and decision-making processes; furthermore, they study how these processes affect personal responsibility. They also learn how component-level plasticity contributes toward sustainability of the system.

6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.

- I. The department will use several questions, added to the final exam, in order to assess how well the course's learning objectives are being met. The questions will require students to
 - a. Analyze and evaluate philosophical and cognitive scientific arguments and evidence relating to the material of the course (viz., the mental system).
 - b. Analyze how the mental system has evolved and developed.
 - c. Compare the study of individual components of the mental system, such as vision, consciousness, and memory, to the analysis of entire mental system.

- d. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, responsibility, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.
 - II. At the end of each semester the answers of 30% of the students in the course will be selected at random for assessment.
 - III. At the beginning of the next semester a faculty member will assess each answer. The names of the students and of the instructor will be eliminated before the assessment takes place.
 - IV. Answers will be given one of four designations:
 - a. Excellent: The student has demonstrated proficiency in all outcomes.
 - b. Good: The student has demonstrated proficiency in most outcomes.
 - c. Fair: The student has demonstrated proficiency in some outcomes.
 - d. Poor: The student has demonstrated proficiency in no outcomes.
 - V. The results will be tabulated and given to the Department Head.
 - VI. The Department Head will convene the relevant faculty to review the results and to determine what steps, if any, need to be taken in order to improve the instruction in the course.
7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

Students learn to apply the philosophical skills of argument interpretation and analysis to theories of the nature of the mind. Students must determine the nature and quality of various types of evidence from philosophical and cognitive scientific sources, and they must evaluate both empirical and *a priori* arguments concerning the mental system. In Foundations and Explorations courses students will have gained skills in argument analysis and evidence, and in this course students will refine and extend those skills by engaging with some of the most interesting and difficult questions in philosophy and cognitive science: whether the body is an essential component of the mental system, via sensorimotor feedback loops, or whether the mental system can exist independently of the body; whether a computer could have a mind; whether subjective conscious states of the mental system can be reduced to objective neurological states; whether there are causal conditions of the reference of one's cognitive states; etc. This course is summative because its material is both more difficult and complex than Foundations and Explorations courses and because it requires students to integrate and jointly analyze *a priori* philosophical and empirical scientific evidence and arguments; furthermore, students then bring those arguments and considerations to bear on the difficult and advanced topic of how the mental system determines personal identity and responsibility.

8. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

Every other year.

9. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.

See attachment.

Philosophy 332: Philosophy of Mind: Minds and Machines

Fall 2012

Ian Schnee

Western Kentucky University

Contact Info

Instructor: Ian Schnee

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Office: Cherry Hall 319C

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday from 12:00-1:00 p.m. (or by appointment!)

Overview

This course is a study of the mind as a cognitive system. Students examine some of the most important philosophical arguments about the systemic nature of the mind and their relation to psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience and artificial intelligence.

What sort of system is the mind? How do parts of the mental system, such as consciousness and vision, affect the identity and functioning of the mind (such as intentionality and decision making)? Are our mental states, like beliefs and desires, states of our brains? Are they functional states (the brain is the hardware; the mind is the software)? Are they states of some non-physical substance? Or are they nothing more than tendencies to behave in certain ways?

Could a computer have a mind? What is consciousness? Is the nature of our conscious experiences entirely determined by our brain states? Can there be a “science” of consciousness? What makes you the same person across time? Can two people “switch” bodies? If you were cloned to make a perfect adult replica of you, is the clone responsible for the things that you did? How does causal history impact the content of our mental states? How does the mental system evolve over time? When you have a belief about your mother, what makes it the case that your belief is about that particular person (rather than about someone who looks just like your mother)? If you store some facts in your iPhone instead of your brain, do you still count as knowing them? What if the iPhone were wired to your brain? Or implanted? Does the location matter? What are the functional and biological determinants of memory? How does memory affect personal identity and responsibility?

Philosophers and scientists have argued for a variety of answers to these questions. We will examine and evaluate those answers and arguments, and attempt to gain an understanding of the relation between the physical world and our minds.

Prerequisites

Philosophy 101, 102, 103, or permission of the instructor.

Grading and Course Requirements

There are five components of your grade:

1. One-page response papers and participation (5%)
2. First five-page essay (25%)
3. Second five-page essay (25%)
4. Personal project (20%)
5. Final exam (25%)

In order to pass the class students must complete all five of these components on time. No late work will be accepted except with prior approval or demonstrated medical emergency.

Help Is Out There

There are many resources at WKU that provide all manner of academic aid and inspiration. E.g., check out the free help at The Learning Center: www.wku.edu/tlc.

Student Disability Services

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200 (phone 270-745-5004; TTY 270-745-3030). Per university policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the OFSDS.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated; students caught doing either will receive an F for the course.¹ It is your duty to know and understand the university's policy on student conduct and discipline. See, e.g., <http://www.wku.edu/~jan.garrett/dptengpl.htm> as well as <http://www.wku.edu/undergraduatecatalog>, especially p. 29. All cases of plagiarism, cheating, etc., will be reported to the Dean and the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

Laptop Policy

Using a laptop in class is a privilege, not a right (unless authorized by Student Disability Services—see above). Students may use laptops for taking notes only. Students using a laptop for any other reason, such as doing homework, email, Facebook, or playing World of Warcraft during lecture, will lose the privilege of using a laptop in class. Any cell phones I see or hear will be confiscated and auctioned on eBay.

If you want to use a laptop in class you must sit in the front.

¹ From the Undergraduate Catalogue: “**Academic Dishonesty**—Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal” (my underlining; p. 29).

Learning Goals

In this course students learn how to analyze the mind as a cognitive system by breaking it down into its component parts and processes and examining how they function and interact. Students learn how to analyze the human cognitive system by comparing it to cognitive systems created by humans, namely artificial intelligence. Students learn how to critically evaluate arguments and evidence concerning how the components of vision, consciousness, etc., function and interact and how they determine the properties of the overall system, such as the individual or system's personal identity and its responsibility for judgments and decisions.

1. In this course students examine both the development and evolution of the mental system within an individual as well as the essential role that causal history across individuals plays in the development of various mental states.
2. In this course students study individual components of the mental system, such as vision, emotions, memory, and (controversially) embodiment, and they compare and analyze how those features relate to the entire system.
3. Students study how system-level analysis of the mind informs our understanding of minds' judgment and decision-making processes; furthermore, they study how these processes affect personal responsibility. They also learn how component-level plasticity contributes toward sustainability of the system.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

Week 1:

- Monday: Introduction
- Wednesday: Descartes: *Meditations* 1, 2 and 6 (selections)

Week 2:

- Monday: Bear, Connors and Paradiso: *Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain* (selections)
- Wednesday: Ryle: *The Concept of Mind*, Chapter 1: "Descartes' Myth"

Week 3:

- Monday: Carnap: "Psychology in Physical Language" (excerpts)
- Wednesday: Smart: "Sensations and Brain Processes"
- Thursday night: Film Viewing: *The Matrix* (Andy and Larry Wachowski)

Week 4:

- Monday: Armstrong: "The Causal Theory of the Mind"
- Wednesday: Uttal: *Mind and Brain: A Critical Appraisal of Cognitive Neuroscience* (selections)
- First paper due: Friday of week 4.

Week 5:

- Monday: Block: "Troubles with Functionalism"
- Wednesday: Nida-Rümelin: "Pseudonormal Vision"

Week 6:

- Monday: Turing: "Computing Machinery, and Intelligence"
- Wednesday: Searle: "Can Computers Think?"
- Thursday night: Film Viewing: *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott)

Week 7:

- Monday: Dennett: "True Believers"
- Wednesday: Churchland: "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes"

Week 8:

- Monday: Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"
- Wednesday: Putnam: "The Meaning of 'Meaning'"
- Second paper due: Friday of week 8.

Week 9:

- Monday: Clark and Chalmers: "The Extended Mind"
- Wednesday: Noë: *Out of our Heads* (selections)
- Thursday night: Film Viewing: *Memento* (Christopher Nolan)

Week 10:

- Monday: Dretske: "If You Can't Make One, You Don't Know How It Works"
- Wednesday: Pinker: *How the Mind Works* (selections)

Week 11:

- Monday: Campbell: "Consciousness and Reference"
- Wednesday: Treisman and Gelade: "A Feature-Integration Theory of Attention"

Week 12:

- Monday: Pylyshyn: "Connecting Vision with the World: Tracking the Missing Link"
- Wednesday: Aizawa: "The Biochemistry of Memory Consolidation: A Model System for the Philosophy of Mind"

Week 13:

- Monday: Gallistel and King: *Memory and the Computational Brain: Why Cognitive Science will Transform Neuroscience* (selections)
- Wednesday: Locke: "Of Identity and Diversity"
- Individual project due: Friday of week 13.

Week 14:

- Monday: Williams: "The Self and the Future"
- Wednesday: Parfit: "Personal Identity"

Final Exam: During the assigned slot in finals week.