Syllabus: Proseminar in Cognitive Science, Fall 2013 (16:185:500)

Instructors: Zenon Pylyshyn and guest lecturers (see schedule)
Classroom: Psychology Building Room A139, Psychology Addition, Busch Campus
Time: Tuesdays, 9:30am to 12:00pm
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Summary

This seminar has two aims. One is to introduce graduate students to some of the core concepts in Cognitive Science. Another is to provide students with a brief view of the research being pursued by a sample of people associated with the Center for Cognitive Science. The main themes include some discussion of the foundational issues in the field; a brief review of work in perception and cognitive development -- including development of the language capacity in infants and children; and a brief discussion of the special nature and role of language and mental imagery in thought. Several of these issues, especially ones dealing with the nature of the underlying capacity (called the *architecture of the cognitive system*) bring in insights from neuroscience, animal learning, computer science and philosophy. The issue of whether the human cognitive system is best viewed as a form of computing will be raised.

The Proseminar in Cognitive Science is a required course for those contemplating obtaining a *Certificate in Cognitive Science* on graduation (for more on the Certificate requirements see [Certificate](#)).

Readings and notes for this class will be downloadable through links in Sakai, the campus course management system. Most graduate students have access to printing facilities that allows them to print the downloaded files. If you need the readings in hard copy and do not have access to a printer, we may be able to arrange for them to be custom printed at cost -- see Sue Cosentino about how to arrange this.

On-Line Discussion Forum

An on-line discussion forum has been created for this class. It will allow students to discuss ideas contained in the readings and lectures. It is also an important vehicle for fulfilling one of the course requirements – taking part in the online question and answer forum. The discussion board, as well as announcements and tests will be done through the Rutgers **Sakai** web site. Go to: https://sakai.rutgers.edu . You need your NetID (login name and password) to use it. If you are officially registered in this course your name and Rutgers ID automatically appears on the roster for this class. Otherwise I can add you – send me an email.

Requirements

1. **Attendance:** As has been traditional in this course, attendance is mandatory -- no more than two excused absences will be permitted. It has been traditional that additional unexcused absences result in reduction of 1/2 grade per absence.
2. **Questions/Comments on the Readings:** Students are required to post at least one question or comment concerning each class, other students' comments or the readings associated with the class on the Sakai discussion forum each week. These can be very informal. Missing once or twice on this assignment will not affect your grade. Postings are due by noon the day before each lecture.
3. **Final Grades**: Grades will be mainly based on 2 short take-home tests posted through Sakai. There will be a question covering each lecture in the set of lectures preceding the test. Answers should typically be no more than one page. Tests will be available through Sakai right after the last class in the set of classes covered (as indicated in your schedule) and are due by 10 pm the next day (giving you a total of 20 hrs to answer all questions). Test dates are tentatively set for *October 15 and December 3*. Attendance and participation in the course discussion forum will also be used in deriving a final grade.

If you have any urgent problems, send an email to both:
 prosem@ruccs.rutgers.edu and zenon@ruccs.rutgers.edu