

# Topics in Philosophy of Cognitive Science (2634)

Prof. E. Machery

Fall 2015

machery@pitt.edu

## Class Meetings

T 3:00-5:30 pm, G28

## Office Hours

By appointment. 1017CL.

## Course Description/Goals

In this class, we will focus on recent topics in the philosophy of cognitive science. Possible topics include: the nature of beliefs, inner speech, introspection, imagination, and implicit attitudes. The focus will be on recent articles that have gathered attention in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of cognitive science literature.

## Prerequisites

Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

## Texts

Readings will be available in a shared dropbox folder. You will receive an invitation to join this folder by email. Copy and paste the readings. Please, do not download them and do not use them directly.

## Assignments

- (1) Readings and participation;
- (2) A research paper due at the end of the term.

## *Research paper*

The research paper may be on any subject of relevance to the seminar. To assist you in commencing work, you should submit a brief essay proposal by **November 10**. It should describe the topic to be investigated and give a brief indication of the sources you intend to use. I advise you to talk to me about possible topics as soon as possible. The paper should have the form and the length of a short journal article (no less than 4000 and no more than *7000 words*). The deadline is **December 15, 12:00 pm (send it by e-mail)**. **I do NOT issue incomplete grades**, save in extraordinary circumstances. In return for the rigidity of the deadline, the seminar will not meet in the final week of term (i.e., *no class December 15*).

## Assessment

Your grade will be based on the quality of your research paper due at the end of the term.

## Class Organization

This course will be based on the discussion of the readings. I will lead the discussion. Participation in class discussion is expected. Reading the articles is of course mandatory. You are expected to attend every class.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**(Subject to revision as the semester proceeds)**

### **Tuesday 09/01 Syllabus**

#### **Tuesday 09/08 Beliefs and Representationalism**

Fodor, J. (1981). Propositional attitudes. In *RePresentations: Philosophical Essays on the Foundations of Cognitive Science* (pp. 177–203). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Schwitzgebel, E. (2001). In-between believing. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 51, 76-82.\*

Schwitzgebel, E. (2002). A phenomenal, dispositional account of belief. *Nous*, 36, 249-275.\*

*Additional reading*

Fodor, J. (1987). *Psychosemantics*. Chapter 1.

#### **Tuesday 09/15 Belief and Behavior**

Zimmerman, A. (2007). The nature of belief. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 14, 61-82.\*

Schwitzgebel, E. (2010). Acting contrary to our professed beliefs or the gulf between occurrent judgment and dispositional belief. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 91, 531-553.\*

Borgoni, C. (Forthcoming). Dissonance and irrationality: A criticism of the in-between account of dissonance cases. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*.

Rose, D., Buckwalter, W., & Turri, J. (2014). When words speak louder than actions: Delusion, belief, and the power of assertion. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 92, 683-700.

#### **Tuesday 09/22 Fragmented Beliefs**

Egan, A. (2008). Seeing and believing: perception, belief formation and the divided mind. *Philosophical Studies*, 140, 47-63.\*

Norby, A. (2014). Against fragmentation. *Thought*, 2, 30–38.

Elga, A. & Rayo, A. (ms). Fragmentation and information access.

*Additional reading*

Greco, D. (Forthcoming). Iteration and fragmentation. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

#### **Tuesday 09/29 Doxastic Voluntarism**

Williams, B. (1973). Deciding to believe. *Problems of the Self* (pp. 136-151). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gilbert, D. (1991). How mental systems believe. *American Psychologist*, 46, 107-119.

Frankish, K. (2007). Deciding to believe again. *Mind*, 116, 523-548.

Levy, N., & Mandelbaum, E. (2014). The Powers that bind: Doxastic voluntarism and epistemic obligation. In J. Mattheson & R. Vitz (Eds.), *The Ethics of Belief* (pp. 15-33). OUP.\*

*Additional reading*

Mandelbaum, E. (2014). Thinking is believing. *Inquiry*, 57, 55-96.

### **Tuesday 10/06 Evolution of Beliefs**

Sterelny, K. (2003). *Thought in a hostile world*. MIT. Chapters 2-4.\*

Schulz, A. W. (2011). The adaptive importance of cognitive efficiency: An alternative theory of why we have beliefs and desires. *Biology and Philosophy*, 26, 31-50.

### **Tuesday 10/13 Aliefs**

Gendler, T. S. (2008). Alief and belief. *The Journal of philosophy*, 634-663.\*

Gendler, T. S. (2008). Alief in action (and reaction). *Mind & Language*, 23, 552-585

Nagel, J. (2012). Gendler on alief. *Analysis*, 72, 774-788.

Mandelbaum, E. (2013). Against alief. *Philosophical studies*, 165, 197-211.\*

Browstein, M. (2015). Implicit bias. *SEP*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/implicit-bias/>  
*Additional readings:*

Hahn, A., & Gawronski, B. (2015). Implicit social cognition. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences* (2nd edition, pp. 714-720). Oxford: Elsevier.

Dunham, Y., Chen, E. E., & Banaji, M. R. (2013). Two Signatures of Implicit Intergroup Attitudes Developmental Invariance and Early Enculturation. *Psychological Science*, 24, 860-868.

Axt, J. R., Ebersole, C. R. & Nosek, B. A. (2014). The rules of implicit evaluation by race, religion, and age. *Psychological Science*, 25, 1804-1815.

### **Tuesday 10/20 NO CLASS**

### **Tuesday 10/27 Implicit Biases and Associationism**

Mandelbaum, E. (Forthcoming). Attitude, inference, association: On the propositional structure of implicit bias. *Nous*.\*

Levy, N. (Forthcoming). Neither fish nor fowl: Implicit attitudes as patchy endorsements. *Nous*.\*

Gawronski, B., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2014). Implicit and explicit evaluation: A brief review of the associative-propositional evaluation model. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 8, 448-462.

Madva, A. (Forthcoming). Why implicit attitudes are (probably) not beliefs. *Synthese*.  
*Additional readings:*

Mandelbaum, E. (2015). Associationism. *SEP*.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/associationist-thought/>

### **Tuesday 11/3 Attitudes as Traits?**

Wilson, T. D., Lindsey, S. & Schooler, T. Y. (2000). A model of dual attitudes. *Psychological Review*, 107, 101-126.

Machery, E. (forthcoming). De-Freuding Implicit Attitudes. In J. Saul and M. Brownstein (Eds.), *Implicit Bias and Philosophy Volume 1: Metaphysics and Epistemology*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.\*

Lee, C. (ms). A dispositional account of aversive racism.\*

*Additional readings:*

Oswald, F. L., Mitchell, G., Blanton, H., Jaccard, J., & Tetlock, P. E. (2013). Predicting ethnic and racial discrimination: A meta-analysis of IAT criterion studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *105*, 171-192.

Greenwald, A. G., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2015). Statistically small effects of the Implicit Association Test can have societally large effects. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *108*, 553-561.

### **Tuesday 11/10 Imagination I: A Distinct Attitude?**

Nichols, S., & Stich, S. (2003) *Mindreading*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 2.\*

Nichols, S. (2006). Just the imagination: Why imagining doesn't behave like believing. *Mind & Language*, *21*, 459-474.

Langland-Hassan, P. (2012). Pretense, imagination, and belief: the Single Attitude theory. *Philosophical studies*, *159*, 155-179.\*

*Additional reading*

Weisberg, D. S. (2014). The development of imaginative cognition. *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements*, *75*, 85-103.

### **Tuesday 11/17 Imagination II: Imaginary Desire? (Deadline for essay proposal)**

Velleman, J. D. (2000). On the aim of belief. In *The possibility of practical reason*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/spobooks/6782337.0001.001/1:7/--possibility-of-practical-reason-first-edition?rgn=div1;view=fulltext#7.11>

Doggett, T., and Egan, A. (2007). Wanting things you don't want. *Philosophers' Imprint*, *7*, 1-17.\*

Funkhouser, E., & Spaulding, S. (2009). Imagination and other scripts. *Philosophical Studies*, *143*, 291-314.\*

Kind, A. (2011). The puzzle of imaginative desire. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *89*, 421-439.

*Additional reading*

Van Leeuwen, N. (2011). Imagination is where the action is. *The Journal of Philosophy*, *108*, 55-77.\*

### **Tuesday 11/24 NO CLASS**

### **Tuesday 12/01 The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance**

Gendler, T. S. (2000). The puzzle of imaginative resistance. *The Journal of Philosophy*, *97*, 55-81.\*

Weatherson, B. (2004). Morality, fiction, and possibility. *Philosophers' Imprint*, *4*, 1-27.

Weinberg, J. M., & Meskin, A. (2006). Puzzling over the imagination: Philosophical problems, architectural solutions. In S. Nichols (Ed.), *The architecture of imagination* (pp. 175-204). OUP.\*

Liao, S., Strohminger, N., & Sripada, C. S. (2014). Empirically investigating imaginative resistance. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 54, 339-355.

**Tuesday 12/08 Normative cognition**

Gibbard, A. (1990). *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings: A Theory of Normative Judgment*. Cambridge: Harvard UP. Chapter 4.\*

Railton, P. (2006). Normative guidance. *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, 1, 3-34.\*

Sripada, C. S., & Stich, S. (2006). A framework for the psychology of norms. In P. Carruthers, S. Laurence, and S. Stich (Eds.), *The innate mind, vol.2* (pp. 280-301). OUP

Railton, P. (2009). Practical competence and fluent agency. In David Sobel and Steven Wall (Eds.), *Reasons for Action* (pp. 81–115). New York: Cambridge University Press.

*Additional Reading*

Railton, P. (2014). The Affective Dog and Its Rational Tale: Intuition and Attunement\*. *Ethics*, 124, 813-859.

**Tuesday 12/15 NO CLASS—Deadline for the term paper**