

PHI 369. Philosophy and Psychology

Instructor: Gui Sanches de Oliveira

Course level: upper level

Course description:

Psychology is often described as “the science of mind and behavior.” But there’s wide disagreement about what this means, both within psychology itself and between psychology and neighboring disciplines that in some way or other also study mind and behavior, such as neuroscience and anthropology. This course examines philosophical questions arising from these theoretical and methodological tensions, focusing on questions about: (i) the foundations for the taxonomy of psychological phenomena and mental categories (e.g., perception, cognition, behavior, attention, memory, intelligence); (ii) the clash between subjective (first-person) experience and objective (third-person) description, between observational and experimental methods, and between qualitative and quantitative methods; and (iii) the relation between self and other(s), individual and group, and the role that environment and culture can play in psychological explanation.

Student Evaluation:

- Weekly reading responses (20%)
- Midterm and final exams (15+15%)
- Midterm and final papers (20+30%)

Schedule overview:

Weeks 1-3: What is psychological science?

- John B. Watson (1913) “Psychology as the Behaviorist Views it”
- selection from Ulric Neisser (1967) *Cognitive Psychology*
- Alan Costall (2006) “*Introspectionism* and the mythical origins of scientific psychology”

Weeks 4-7: What is mind and what is behavior?

- selections from John Dewey (1922) *Human Nature and Conduct*
- selections from Kurt Danziger (1997) *Naming the Mind*
- selections from Barbara Rogoff (2003) *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*

Weeks 8-11: How can we best study mind and behavior?

- Paul Churchland & Patricia Churchland (1990) “Intertheoretic Reduction”
- Joel Mitchell (2003) “The Quantitative Imperative: Positivism, Naive Realism and the Place of Qualitative Methods in Psychology”
- H. Heft (2013) “Environment, Cognition & Culture: Reconsidering the Cognitive Map”

Week 12 to end: Where do we look for mind and behavior?

- Miguel Segundo-Ortin and Paco Calvo (2021) “Consciousness and cognition in plants”
- Jean Lave (1991) “Situating Learning in Communities of Practice”
- selections from Edward S. Reed (1996) *Encountering the World*