1.0 CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Selected topics of current interest in Cognitive Psychology.
Prerequisites: Fourth year Honours Specialization in Psychology or Honours Specialization in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience.
3 seminar hours, 0.5 course

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

2.0 COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Patrick Brown
Office and Phone Number: SSC 7328 / Ext. 84680
Office Hours: Tuesday 2 – 4 pm
Email: brown5@uwo.ca

Time and Location of Lectures: Thursday 2:30 – 5:30 / Weldon 257

3.0 TEXTBOOK

In lieu of a textbook, readings from the recent literature will be assigned.

4.0 COURSE OBJECTIVES

Embodied cognition is the idea that cognitive processes have the character they do because humans are agents in specific physical bodies subject to biological and physical constraints. An important focus of research has investigated the connection between perception and action, conceived variously as the idea that perception is for action and thus is influenced by the body’s state of readiness for action (e.g., the work of Proffitt and colleagues); that perception and action share a common internal representation in terms of events in the world (e.g., the work of Hommel and colleagues); that our conceptual system operates by simulating experiences using the resources of both sensory and motor systems (e.g., the work of Barsalou and colleagues); and that observation-action systems in the brain (that respond both to planning an action and observing that action done by other people) explain many social cognition phenomena (e.g., the work of Niedenthal and colleagues).

In this course, we’ll consider how these ideas apply to empathy, taken simply as the ability to share the experience of others. The basic idea is conveyed in Iacoboni’s claim that that ability is fundamentally corporeal: the internal representations of other people’s mental states that make
shared experience possible depend in crucial ways on the resources underlying our own experience of such states, such as the motor system and the pain circuit. The goals of the course are to develop students’ understanding of the basic idea that thinking is for action and a shared action system can be a bridge between any two people.

5.0 EVALUATION

The Psychology Department follows the University of Western Ontario grading guidelines, which are as follows (see http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/general/grades_undergrad.pdf):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>Superior work that is clearly above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Competent work, meeting requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Fair work, minimally acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 50</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades will have three components: A term paper, worth 30%, a seminar presentation worth 30%, and a take-home final exam worth 35%. The term paper will be due on Friday, April 8th. Late papers (either term papers or take-home exams) will not be accepted. If your paper is not accepted, your grade for that component will be zero.

6.0 TEST AND EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

Final exam questions will be posted on the course website on Thursday, April 7th and exam papers must be received by Friday, April 22nd. Late papers will not be accepted.

7.0 LECTURE SCHEDULE

January 6 – Introduction

January 13 – Scaffolding


January 20 – Body


January 27 – Space


February 3 – Action and Intention


February 10 – Self


February 17 – Resonance


March 3 – Empathy


March 10 – April 7 – Seminar presentations.

8.0 STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Students are responsible for understanding the nature and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other scholastic offenses. Plagiarism and cheating are considered very serious offenses because they undermine the integrity of research and education. Actions constituting a scholastic offense are described at the following link: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf)

As of Sept. 1, 2009, the Department of Psychology will take the following steps to detect scholastic offenses. All multiple-choice tests and exams will be checked for similarities in the pattern of responses using reliable software, and records will be made of student seating locations in all tests and exams. All written assignments will be submitted to TurnItIn, a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism by comparing written material to over 5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn’s databases. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ([http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)).

Possible penalties for a scholastic offense include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

9.0 OTHER INFORMATION

Office of the Registrar web site: [http://psychology.uwo.ca/undergradresponsibilities.htm](http://psychology.uwo.ca/undergradresponsibilities.htm)

Student Development Services web site: [http://www.sdc.uwo.ca](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca)

Please see the Psychology Undergraduate web site for information on the following:

[http://psychology.uwo.ca/undergradresponsibilities.htm](http://psychology.uwo.ca/undergradresponsibilities.htm)

- Policy on Cheating and Academic Misconduct
- Procedures for Appealing Academic Evaluations
- Policy on Attendance
- Policy Regarding Makeup Exams and Extensions of Deadlines
- Policy for Assignments
- Short Absences
- Extended Absences
- Documentation
- Academic Concerns
- 2010 Calendar References

No electronic devices, including cell phones, will be allowed during exams.