

Topics in Cognitive Development

November 14-18, 2016

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Goal of the course

The goal of this course is to offer an inspiring peak into issues of developmental psychology. Since practically everyone in the course has taken some courses in developmental psychology (or so I assume), I shall focus on specialized topics, although they will be properly introduced. The course will consist of lecturing plus group discussions of some interesting and foundational issues related to cognitive development and, to some extent, philosophy of mind. Proposed topics are listed below.

Themes

Monday

Concepts in cognitive psychology; Fodor's paradox of concept learning

9:00-10:30: Theories of concepts in psychology

10:45-12:15: Fodor's paradox – what does it take to *learn* a concept?

12:45-13:30: Non-referring concepts, pretence and fiction

Readings: There are no readings for the first day.

Tuesday

Perceptual development

9:00-10:30: Perceptual development in general; sight restoration after congenital blindness

10:45-12:15: Speech perception and reading development: studies using impoverished speech stimuli

12:45-13:30: The development of color vision: Why is it hard for children to learn color names?

Readings:

Knut Nordby: What Is This Thing You Call Color: Can a Totally Color-Blind Person Know about Color? In Torin Alter & Sven Walter (eds.) (2007): *Phenomenal concepts and Phenomenal Knowledge* Oxford University Press

Rosner et al. (2003). The Perception of Sine-wave Speech by Adults with Developmental Dyslexia, *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research* **46**, 68-79.

Wednesday

Numerical cognition

9:00-10:30: Core cognition in general; numbers in core cognition

10:45-12:15: The concept of natural number

12:45-13:30: Further development in numerical cognition; fractions and rational numbers

Reading: Dehaene, S. (2011). *The number sense*. Chapters 2,5,6,9

Thursday

Conceptual development and social understanding

9:00-10:30: Intro: the development of mindreading ability

10:45-12:15: Mental files – a representational framework for understanding social cognition

12:45-13:30: Combining concepts in childhood; some ongoing research

Reading:

Victoria Southgate, Coralie Chevallier and Gergely Csibra (2009): Seventeen-month-olds appeal to false beliefs to interpret others' referential communication *Developmental Science* (2009), pp 1–6

Josef Perner, Michael Huemer, Brian Leahy (2015). Mental files and belief: A cognitive theory of how children represent belief and its intensionality, *Cognition* 145 (2015) 77–88