



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course Title:	Theory of Mind: Psychology of Social Insights
Course Code:	PSYC 3008 PRAG
Programs offering course:	CES, CNMJ
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

Course Description

The course will examine the psychological construct of the Theory of Mind. It will primarily focus on the construction of one's thinking, including remembering, problem solving, and decision-making, from early childhood via adolescence through adulthood. Students will learn about the developmental stages of the Theory-of-Mind (ToM) acquisition, including social perception, thinking and reflection, construction of critical thought and about the current theories of the ToM acquisition. As the development of ToM lies inherently in an interaction between genetic and learned factors, the effect of social, communal and cultural influences will frequently resurface.

Learning Objectives

Upon the completion of the course, students

- will demonstrate their insights into what constitutes one's understanding of the social world around us;
- will acquire a basis for critical thinking and learn to form new perspectives to approach the problematic through informal environment facilitating the share of views and ideas;
- will develop reading-comprehension skills adequate for scholarly literature in the field through reading texts representing different research approaches and methodologies, and an ability to engage in an academic dialogue.

Course Prerequisites

Although there are no prerequisites to the course, background in developmental science, psychology, linguistics, or language acquisition would be definite assets.

Methods of Instruction

The course will consist of informal lectures and seminars. The seminars will involve class debates, presentations and workshops on selected topics. At least one guest teacher will be invited to class to lecture on either of the following areas: phylogeny of ToM, ToM in current philosophical thought, practical aspects of ToM in atypical development, etc.



Field Trips:

- A trip to the Prague ZOO to elaborate on the presence of socio-cognitive skills in non-human primates, date TBC
- The Invisible Exhibit to experience life and behavior in settings devoid of visual stimuli, date TBC

Guest Speakers:

- Stanislav Lhota, PhD, primatologist at the Prague ZOO, date TBC

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Five reflection papers, 5x4%	20%
2. Two unannounced quizzes 2x5%	10%
3. Individual class presentation	20%
4. Peer reviews of 4 presentations, 4x2%	8%
5. Self-reflective evaluation of own presentation	2%
6. Final Academic paper	20%
7. Class participation, 4x5%	20%

Course Requirements

1. Reflection journal

A total of five reflection entries will be required from each student, each 500-words long. The papers should reflect on the course topics, readings, discussions, etc. pertaining to the content of the class and should examine a theme beyond the reading and/or class discussion. The choice of the readings or themes is up to each student, although the instructor is ready to consult the topics with students. Intellectual queries are welcome but a reflection based on one's own application of the knowledge gained on to one's personal experience will suffice.

2. Quizzes

Two unannounced short quizzes will test the students' competence on concepts and constructs operationalized in class and on the course readings.

3. Individual Class Presentation

Each student is required to present and lead a discussion on one of the course themes of their own choice relating to the topic of the course and the students' interests. Upon an agreement with the instructor, the student will present their topic to the class for about 20-30 minutes long. It will be followed by a discussion lead by the presenting student. The presentation itself is worth 20% of the final grade.



4. Peer Reviews

Students are required to review four different presentations of their choice and write a constructive criticism to help their peer to reflect on the delivery of their presentation. To get a full score, the review should include both the positive aspects of the presentation, as well as suggest avenues for improvement of concrete facets of the presentation.

5. Self-reflective evaluation of one's own presentation

Upon the receipt of peer reviews and the instructor's comments on the class presentation, the students are required to reflect constructively on their presentation and elaborate on the potential avenues for its improvement.

6. Final academic paper

The final course work consists of writing a research paper in which an analysis of the constituent parts and their subsequent synthesis will be assessed. One of three topics suggested by the instructor will be graded as to whether the thesis of the paper is well defended and counterarguments are dealt with equally (Grade A), whether the thesis is supported sufficiently (Grade B), whether the thesis is clearly constructed without sufficient arguments presented for either the arguments or counter-arguments to the thesis (Grade C), or whether the paper only marginally touches on the theme of the course and at least some part of an argument is present (Grade D). A total of 2000 words with an adequate list of scholarly references will be required.

7. Class participation

Class participation will be evaluated four times per semester and will take into account the students' familiarity with the course readings and the willingness to either spur or join a class debate on the particular class topic. As well, Canvas discussions will allow for a further engagement in virtual space to elaborate on the topics raised in class or reflection papers.

CIEE Prague Class Participation Policy

Assessment of students' participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Participation is valued as **meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom**, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared, as directed, in advance of each class session. This includes valued or informed engagement in, for example, small group discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.



Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor's or other students' line of thought or argumentation.

The use of electronic devices is only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students' active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

CIEE Prague Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and **all absences are treated equally regardless of reason** for any affected CIEE course. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursions or events, as well as Internship.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

Missing classes will lead to the following penalties:

90-minute semester classes:

<i>Number of 90-minute classes</i>	<i>Equivalent percentage of the total course hours missed</i>	<i>Minimum penalty</i>
one to two 90-minute classes	up to 10%	no penalty
three 90-minute classes	10.1–15%	reduction of the final grade by 3%
four 90-minute classes	15.1–17%	reduction of the final grade by 5%; written warning
five 90-minute classes	17.1–20%	reduction of the final grade by 7%; written warning
six and more 90-minute classes	more than 20%	automatic course failure and possible expulsion

180-minute semester classes:

<i>Number of 180-minute classes</i>	<i>Equivalent percentage of the</i>	<i>Minimum penalty</i>
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	<i>total course hours missed</i>	
one 180-minute class	up to 10%	no penalty
two 180-minute classes	10.1–20%	reduction of the final grade by 5%; written warning
three and more 180-minute classes	more than 20%	automatic course failure and possible expulsion

Persistent absenteeism (students approaching 20% of the total course hours missed, or violating the attendance policy in more than one class) will result in a written warning, a notification to the student’s home school, and possibly a dismissal from the program.

Missing more than 20% of the total class hours will lead to a **course failure**, and **potential program dismissal**. This is a CIEE rule that applies to all CIEE courses and is in line with the Participant Contract that each CIEE student signs before arriving on-site.

Late arrival to class will be considered a partial (up to 15 minutes late) or full (15 or more minutes late) absence. **Three partial absences due to late arrivals will be regarded as one full class absence.**

Students must notify their professor and Program Coordinator (PC) beforehand if they are going to miss class for any reason and are responsible for any material covered in class in their absence.

If missing a class during which a test, exam, the student’s presentation or other graded class assignments are administered, **make-up assignment will only be allowed in approved circumstances**, such as serious medical issues. In this case, the student must submit a local doctor’s note within 24 hours of his/her absence to the PC, who will decide whether the student qualifies for a make-up assignment. Doctor’s notes may be submitted via e-mail or phone (a scan or a photograph are acceptable), however **the student must ensure that the note is delivered to the PC.**

Should a truly **extraordinary situation** arise, the student must contact the PC immediately concerning permission for a make-up assignment. Make-up assignments are not granted automatically! The PC decides the course of action for all absence cases that are not straightforward. **Always contact the PC with any inquiry about potential absence(s) and the nature thereof.**

Personal travel (including flight delays and cancelled flights), handling passport and other document replacements, interviews, volunteering and other similar situations are not considered justifiable reasons for missing class or getting permission for make-up assignments.



For class conflicts (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips, make-up classes and other instances), **always contact the Academic Assistant** to decide the appropriate course of action.

Course attendance is recorded on individual Canvas Course Sites. **Students are responsible for checking their attendance regularly to ensure the correctness of the records.** In case of discrepancies, students are required to contact the Academic Assistant **within one week of the discrepancy date** to have it corrected. Later claims **will not** be considered.

CIEE staff does not directly manage absences at FAMU and ECES, but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

CIEE Academic Honesty Policy

CIEE subscribes to standard U.S. norms requiring that students exhibit the highest standards regarding academic honesty. Cheating and plagiarism in any course assignment or exam will not be tolerated and may result in a student failing the course or being expelled from the program. Standards of honesty and norms governing originality of work differ significantly from country to country. We expect students to adhere to both the American norms and the local norms, and in the case of conflict between the two, the more stringent of the two will preside. Three important principles are considered when defining and demanding academic honesty. These are related to the fundamental tenet that one should not present the work of another person as one's own.

The first principle is that final examinations, quizzes and other tests must be done without assistance from another person, without looking at or otherwise consulting the work of another person, and without access to notes, books, or other pertinent information (unless the professor has explicitly announced that a particular test is to be taken on an "open book" basis).

The second principle applies specifically to course work: the same written paper may not be submitted in two classes. Nor may a paper for which you have already received credit at your home institution be submitted to satisfy a paper requirement while studying overseas.

The third principle is that any use of the work of another person must be documented in any written papers, oral presentations, or other assignments carried out in connection with a course. This usually is done when quoting directly from another's work or including information told to you by another person. The general rule is that if you have to look something up, or if you learned it recently either by reading or hearing something, you have to document it.

The penalty ranges from an F grade on the assignment, failure in the course to dismissal from the program. The Academic Director is consulted and involved in decision making in every case of a possible violation of academic honesty.

Weekly Schedule



Week 1

Class 1

Course introduction

Course content, course requirements, grading and syllabus overview

Class 2

Key concepts defined, presentation sign-up

Reading:

Doherty 2009, 1-4.

Miller 2012, 1-4.

Week 2

Class 1

Psychological basis of ToM research

Research methodologies and terminology overview

Reading:

Pillai et al. 2012.

Class 2

Developmental milestones

Empirical research

Reading:

Wellman & Liu 2004, 523–541.

Week 3

Class 1

Infancy

Early precursors of ToM abilities

Reading:

Brooks & Meltzoff 2015, 67-78.

Class 2

Early precursors of ToM abilities cont.

Class presentation(s)

Journal entry 1 due on Thursday.

Week 4

Class 1

Origins of ToM abilities

Reading:

Meltzoff 2011, 49-75.

Class 2

Class presentation(s)

Peer-review 1 due

Week 5

Class 1

Preschool and school years

Early school years

Reading:

Lillard, Pinkham, Smith 2011, 285-311.

Class 2

Later school years

Class presentation(s)

Reading:

Ronald et al. 2005, 664-684.

Journal entry 2 due on Thursday.

Week 6

Class 1

Role of language in ToM acquisition

Early linguistic competence and ToM

Readings:

Astington & Baird 2005, 3-25.

Class 2

Pragmatic competence and ToM

Class presentation(s)

Readings:

Filippova & Astington 2008, 126-138.

Journal entry 3 due on Thursday.

Week 7

Class 1

Role of executive functions in ToM acquisition



Theories of ToM development

Reading:

Carlson et al. 2015, 186-197.

Class 2

Brain regions involved in ToM processing

Class presentation(s)

Reading:

Zelazo, Muller 2011, 574-603.

Peer-review 2 due on Thursday.

Week 8

Class 1

Adolescence

Reading:

Dumontheil et al. 2010, 331-338.

Class 2

Critical thinking and writing

Class presentation(s)

Reading:

Hughes et al. 2015, 149-153.

Journal entry 4 due on Thursday.

Week 9

Class 1

Adulthood

ToM and aging

Reading:

Bernstein et al. 2011, 481-502.

Class 2

In-class film viewing

Peer-review 3 due on Thursday

Week 10

Class 1 and Class 2

Social insight in atypical development

Autism, SLI

Reading:

Peterson et al. 2012, 469-485.

Journal entry 5 due on Thursday.

Week 11

Class 1

Social insight in atypical development, continued

Deafness and Blindness

Reading:

Filippová, Hudáková, 2016, 85-103.

Class 2

Field trip to the Invisible Exhibit

Peer-review 3 due on Thursday

Week 12

Classes 1 and 2

Non-human social reasoning

Reading :

MacLeod, 2017, 6348-6354.

Class 2

Evolutionary perspective on collaboration and cooperation

Field trip to the Prague ZOO with a possible guest primatologist on site.

Reading: TBA

Peer-review 4 due on Thursday

Final research paper due by midnight of Sunday.

Final Exam Week

Class 1

Concluding remarks, course evaluations

Self-reflective evaluation of one own's presentation due on Wednesday.

Class 2

Final thoughts, contextualisation of knowledge and course wrap-up

Course Materials

Course readings

Astington, J.W. & Baird, J.A. (2005). *Why Language Matters for Theory of Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bernstein, D. M., Thornton, W. L., Sommerville, J. A. (2011). Theory of Mind through the Ages: Older Middle-Aged Adults Exhibit More Errors than Do Younger Adults on a Continuous False Belief Task. *Experimental Aging Research*, 37, 481-502. doi: 10.1080/0361073X.2011.619466

Brooks, R., Meltzoff, A. N. (2015). Connecting the dots from infancy to childhood: A longitudinal study connecting gaze following, language, and explicit theory of mind. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 130, 67-78.

Carlson, S. M., Claxton, L. J., Moses, L. J. (2015). The relation between executive function and theory of mind is more than skin deep. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 16, 186-197.

Doherty, M. J. (2009). *Theory of Mind: How Children Understand Others' Thoughts and Feelings*. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Dumontheil, I., Apperly, I.A., Blakemore S. J. (2010). Online usage of theory of mind continues to develop in late adolescence. *Developmental Science*, 13, 331-338.

Filippova, E., Astington, J. W. (2008). Further development of social reasoning revealed in discourse irony understanding. *Child Development* 79, 126-38. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01115.x.

Filippová, E, Hudáková, A. (2016). Czech Sign Language in Contemporary Czech Society. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 238, 85-103. doi: 10.1515/ijsl-2015-0046.

Hughes, C., Devine, R.T. (2015). Individual differences in theory of mind from preschool to adolescence: Achievements and directions. *Child Development Perspectives* 9, 149-153.

Lillard, A., Pinkham, A. M., & Smith, E. (2011). Pretend Play and Cognitive Development. In U. Gowami (Ed.). *Childhood Cognitive Development*, 2nd Ed., Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 285-311.

MacLeod, E. L. (2017). Unraveling the evolution of uniquely human cognition. *PNAS*, *113* (23), 6348-6354.

Meltzoff, A. N. (2011). Social Cognition and the Origins of Immitation, Empathy, and Theory of Mind. In U. Gowami (Ed.). *Childhood Cognitive Developent*, 2nd Ed., Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 49-75.

Miller, S. A. (2012). *Theory of Mind: Beyond the Preschool Years*. New York, US: Taylor & Francis Group.

Peterson, C. C., Wellman, H. M., Slaughter, V. (2012). The mind behind the message: Advancing theory of mind scales for typically developing children, and those with deafness, autism, or Asperger Syndrome. *Child Development*, *83*, 469-485.

Pillai, D., Sheppard, E., Mitchell, P. (2012). Can People Guess What Happened to Others from Their Reactions? *PLoS ONE* *7*(11): e49859.

Ronald, A., Happé, F., Hughes, C., Plomin, R. (2005). Nice and Nasty Theory of Mind in Preschool Children: Nature and Nurture. *Social Development*, *14*, 664-684.

Tompkins, V. (2015). Improving Low-Income Preschoolers' Theory of Mind: A Training Study. *Cognitive Development* *36*, 1-19. doi:10.1016/j.cogdev.2015.07.001.

Wellman, H. M., Liu, D. (2004). Scaling of Theory-of-Mind Tasks. *Child Development*, *75*, 523–541.

Zelazo, P. D., Muller, U. (2011). Executive Function in Typical and Atypical Development. In U. Gowami (Ed.). *Childhood Cognitive Developent*, 2nd Ed., Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 574-603.

Further scholarly literature

Baron-Cohen, S., Tager-Flusberg, H., & Cohen, D. J. (2002). *Understanding Other Minds: Perspectives from Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Malle, B. F. & Hodges, S. D. (2005). *Other Minds: How Humans Bridge the Divide between Self and Others*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications, Inc.

McHugh, L. & Stewart, I. (2012). *The Self and Perspective-Taking: Contributions and Applications from Modern Behavioral Science*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.



Mitchell, P. (2011). "Acquiring a Theory of Mind." In Alan Slater, & Gavin Bremner (eds.) *An Introduction to Developmental Psychology: Second Edition*, BPS Blackwell.

Overton, W. F. (2010).(Ed.) *Biology, Cognition and Methods Across the Life-Span*. Volume 1 of the *Handbook of Life-Span Development*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Tomasello, M. (1999). *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.