



Prague, Czech Republic Study Center

Course Syllabus

Course Title:	Theory of Mind: Psychology of Social Insights
Course Code:	PSYC 3008 PRAG
Programs offering course:	CES, PSYC
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Summer 2018
Session:	Session 1 (May 21 – June 18)

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 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. There will be at least two field trips during the semester: a trip to the Prague ZOO to elaborate on the presence of socio-cognitive skills in non-human primates, the Invisible Exhibit to experience life and behavior in settings devoid of visual stimuli, activities with young Czechs learning English as a foreign language, or informal social outings involving viewing exhibits, festivals or films relating to the content of the course. 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.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Class presentation	25%
2. Reflection journal	25%
3. Quizzes	10%
4. Final academic essay	20%
5. Class participation	20%

Course Requirements

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.

Reflection journal

A total of five reflection entries will be required from each student, each about 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 one's personal experience will suffice.

Quizzes

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

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 2000-2500 words with an adequate list of scholarly references will be required.



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.

CIEE Prague Attendance Policy

CIEE Prague attendance policy corresponds to that delineated in the participant contract. Specific details will be published in the semester syllabus.

CIEE Academic Honesty Statement

Presenting work of another person as one's own, failure to acknowledge all sources used, using unauthorized assistance on exams, submitting the same paper in two classes, or submitting work one has already received credit for at another institution in order to fulfill CIEE course requirements is not tolerated. The penalty ranges from failure in the course to dismissal from the program. The Academic Director should be consulted and involved in decision making in every case of a possible violation of academic honesty.

Daily Schedule

Day 1	<i>Course introduction</i> <i>Course content, course requirements introduced</i> <i>Key concepts defined, presentation sign-up</i>
Day 2	<i>Psychological basis of ToM research</i> <i>Research methodologies and terminology overview</i> <i>Types of research</i> Reading: Pillai et al. 2012.
Day 3	<i>Developmental milestones</i> <i>Empirical research</i>

	<p><i>ToM tasks workshop</i></p> <p>Reading: Wellman & Liu 2004, 523–541.</p>
Day 4	<p><i>Infancy</i> <i>Early precursors of ToM abilities</i> <i>In class film viewing</i></p> <p>Reading: Brooks & Meltzoff 2015, 67-78.</p>
Day 5	<p><i>Preschool and school years</i> <i>Early school years</i> <i>Later school years</i></p> <p>Reading: Ronald et al. 2005, 664-684.</p>
Day 6	<p><i>Fieldtrip to the Prague ZOO</i></p>
Day 7	<p><i>Role of language in ToM acquisition</i> <i>Early linguistic competence and ToM</i> <i>Pragmatic competence and ToM</i></p> <p>Readings: Astington & Baird 2005. Filippova & Astington 2008.</p>
Day 8	<p><i>Role of executive functions in ToM acquisition</i> <i>Theories of ToM development</i> <i>Brain regions involved in ToM processing</i></p> <p>Reading: Carlson et al. 2015, 186-197.</p>
Day 9	<p><i>Adolescence</i> <i>Critical thinking and writing</i> <i>Theories of moral development</i></p> <p>Reading: Hughes et al. 2015, 149-153.</p>
Day 10	<p><i>Adulthood</i> <i>ToM and aging</i> <i>In-class film viewing</i></p> <p>Reading: Dumontheil et al. 2010, 331-338.</p>
Day 11	<p><i>Social insight in atypical development</i> <i>Autism, SLI</i> <i>Schizophrenia, Deafness</i></p> <p>Reading:</p>

	Peterson et al. 2012, 469-485.
Day 12	<p>Non-human social reasoning</p> <p><i>Phylogeny of ToM</i></p> <p><i>Evolutionary perspective on collaboration and cooperation</i></p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Tomasello 1999, TBA.</p>

Course Materials

Course readings

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

Further scholarly literature

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



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

Doherty, M. J. (2008). *Theory of Mind: How Children Understand Others' Thoughts and Feelings*. Hove, UK: Psychology 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.

Perner, J. (1993). *Understanding the Representational Mind*. MIT Press.