



PSYCO 400
HONOURS SEMINAR
FALL & WINTER, 2003-2004
THURSDAYS, 15:30-16:50, BSB P226

Course Instructor: C. D. Heth
P-455 BSB
492-2662

Graduate Assistant: M. Pinfeld
P-319K BSB
492-5269

Introduction

The honors seminars are designed to help you develop skills and explore advanced topics in psychology. PSYCO 300 concentrated on the *modes* of psychology (i.e., some the ways psychologists communicate, how they analyze data, and so on). This seminar will concentrate on *models* of psychology, by looking at ways of conceptualizing the human mind and explaining its function.

Objectives

The first objective of this course is to explore a particular model of the mind, the modern Darwinian synthesis as it is applied to mental phenomena. Our readings and discussions will explore some of the complex implications of thinking about psychology within the context of natural selection. The second objective of the course is to examine some particularized models of mind, as they might be used to explain certain phenomena of human behavior. A third objective is to give you an opportunity to convey some of these concepts to your fellow students, through our seminar discussions, and to a more general audience through some special projects.

Course Organization

The class meets weekly on Thursday. Beginning with our third meeting, and continuing every other week, we will use these meetings to discuss assigned readings from the textbooks. Melinda and I will want to know your reactions to the text assignments, so it is important that you read these carefully and thoughtfully. Part of meeting will be devoted to picking out sections of the text that are particularly helpful to understanding the Darwinian model.

The other weekly meetings will be devoted to exploring particularized models of the mind through a set of group projects. Your group will be responsible for one topic and one project for the year. We will use the meeting for group work and to hear progress reports as we progress through the term.

Assignments

There is no final examination for this course.

In addition to the weekly reading assignments, there are two main assignments.

One is the group project for which you are responsible as a group. The other is an individual term paper based on the readings. These assignments will be described in more detail during the class orientation.

Grading

Grades will be based on a raw mark for class contribution, for the term paper, and for the group project. In the case of the latter, all members of the group will be graded on the final product. However, failure to contribute productively to your group's efforts will adversely affect your class participation mark.

Raw marks will then be weighted according to the following:

class contribution	20%
term paper	40%
group project	40%

I will then convert this weighted mark into the University's new letter grade, using the

verbal description for each grade as a guide. Depending on the success of the group project, I may allow you to transfer 20% of the marks from your group project to the term paper. I will advise you of this possibility by the end of January.

Textbooks

The weekly reading assignments for the Fall term will be taken from

Pinker, S. (1998). *How the mind works*. New York: Norton.

This book is available in paperback.

Mandatory GFC Stuff

GFC regulations require that I call your attention to the University's policies regarding plagiarism and other academic offences. I don't think it's necessary to belabour this point here. If you have any questions regarding academic conventions for citations and quotes, please feel free to discuss them with Melinda or me.