SESSION 2

DEVELOPMENTAL PROSEMINAR
NATIVISM VS. EMPIRICISM: DEPTH PERCEPTION

Come to class prepared to discuss the problem of depth perception. What has psychology discovered about how it is accomplished? How does the capacity to represent how far an away an object is arise in ontogenesis? Be prepared to characterize the difference between the empiricist answer to those two questions (exemplified by Berkeley in the readings) and the rationalist answer (exemplified by Descartes in the readings). They, of course, tried to answer these questions on a priori grounds—how did their arguments go? In what fundamental ways do these accounts differ? Why did these philosophers care so much about what are, after all, empirical questions? Be prepared to argue whether the empirical data favor Berkeley or Descartes. Be prepared to specify what you take "innate" to mean? What kinds of evidence bear on claims for innateness? ALL READ

Berkeley, G. "An essay towards a new theory of vision," A New Theory of Vision and Other Selected Philosophical Writings, 13-19.

Descartes, R. "The Optics VI", In Cottingham, Stoothoff & Murdoch (ed. & trans.), The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, 169-172.

Gibson, E. J., & Walk, R. D. (1960). The 'Visual Cliff'. Scientific American, 202, 65-69.

Held, R., Birch, E., & Gwiazda, J. (1980). Stereoacuity of human infants. *PNAS, 77,* 5572-5574. 

Optional — CHOOSE 1

Slater, A., Mattock, A., & Brown, E. (1990). Size constancy at birth: Newborn infants' responses to retinal and real size. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 49,* 314-322. 

Yonas, A. & Arterberry, A. M., Granrud, C. E. (1987). Four-Month-Old Infants' Sensitivity to Binocular and Kinetic Information for Three-Dimensional-Object Shape. *Child Development, 58,* 910-917.