PHIL340H1S: Issues in Philosophy of Mind: Perception, Vision Science, and Conception

University of Toronto

July–August 2019

Lecture Times: MW 3–6pm, SK548

Instructor: Rory Harder

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Office Hours: Immediately after lecture, or by appointment

Course Description

We begin the course with a recent debate about the nature of conscious perception. One side, representationalism, holds that the conscious character of a perception is exhausted by the way it represents things as being. This representation could be present whether or not things actually are that way. The other side, naive realism, holds that the conscious character of a perception includes the perceived objects and their properties.

After covering the basics of recent philosophical accounts of perception, we move to two final topics. First, we look at influential work in vision science and discuss its relevance to philosophical concerns. Second, we discuss the relationship of perception to thought, and what that relationship can tell us about the nature of perception.

Learning Objectives

Aside from mastery of arguments and positions in cutting-edge controversies in the philosophy of mind, the primary things you will gain from this course are the following general skills:

- how to draw out complex arguments and positions from difficult texts;
- how to evaluate complex arguments and positions;
- how to write clearly and concisely.

The assignments and lectures will be geared towards developing those skills, which will help you in your future philosophy courses and life in general.

Course Materials

All readings will be made available through Blackboard.

Course Requirements

1. One argument analysis (750 words): 20%.

2. Two short papers (1000 words each): 25% each. If you get a high enough mark on your argument analysis (A- or more), then you may write one longer paper (2000 words) instead, worth 50%. You must request this option before the due date of the first short essay. This longer paper will be due at the same time as the second short paper. If you choose to write the longer paper, you must meet with me before August 12th with a paper topic and have it approved.

3. Final test (in-class): 25%.

4. Attendance: 5%.

Reading List

Part 1: The Phenomenal Character of Perception

July 3: Course Intro and The Problem of Perception

Reading: Crane & French, "The Problem of Perception", Sections 1.2 and 2

July 8: Classical Responses and the Immediacy of Experience

Reading: Crane & French, "The Problem of Perception", Sections 1, 3.1, and 3.2; Strawson, "Perception and its Objects"

July 10: Representationalism I

Reading: Dretske, "Experience as Representation"

Optional: Harman, "The Intrinsic Quality of Experience"; Tye, "Representationalism and the Transparency of Experience"

July 15: Representationalism II

Reading: Chalmers, "The Representational Character of Experience"

Optional: Byrne, "Intentionalism Defended"

July 17: Naive Realism

Reading: Campbell, "Reference and Consciousness", Chapter 6

Optional: Logue, "Why Naive Realism?"

Part 2: Vision Science and its Consequences

July 22: Calculationism

Reading: Marr, *Vision*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Optional: Hildreth & Ullman, "The Computational Study of Vision"; Smith & Kosslyn, "What Visual Perception Tells us about Mind and Brain"

July 24: Vision Science and Disjunctivism

Reading: Soteriou, *Disjunctivism*, Chapter 2

Part 3: Perception and Conception

July 29: Nonconceptual Content

Reading: Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, excerpt; McDowell, *Mind and World*, excerpt

Optional: Heck, "Nonconceptual Content and the Space of Reasons"

July 31: Demonstrative Concepts and Perceptual Phenomenology

Reading: Smithies, "What is the Role of Consciousness in Demonstrative Thought?"

August 7: Review

August 12: In-class Test

Other Information

Attendance and Participation: You are expected to attend class and participate in discussion. When engaging in class discussion, do not act disrespectfully by, for instance, speaking out of turn, cutting people off in conversation, dominating discussion, talking down to or making fun of someone, or any other jerky behaviour. Other ways of being disrespectful and distracting the class include showing up late, having your cellphone go off, being on Facebook on your computer, and having side conversations with the person next to you.

Accessability: I will only make accommodations (e.g. extensions) if you provide me with appropriate documentation, or that are requested of me through accessability services or your college registrar. I will do my best to accommodate any disabilities. Here are two links that may help if you need support with the class: http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell and http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed.

E-mail Policy: You should only e-mail me with structural questions about the course, or to arrange a time to meet. I will not answer e-mails that ask substantive philosophical questions, or whose answer may be easily obtained by checking the syllabus or the course website.

Late and Regrade Policy: One half of a letter grade (5%) subtracted per day late. Grade of 0 if more than seven days late. I will only regrade an assignment if contacted within two weeks of when the assignment was first graded and returned to you, and you must provide a reason for wanting a regrade. All regrade requests must be made in writing and you must acknowledge that your new mark may be less than the original one.

Plagiarism and Academic Miscoduct: The University of Toronto takes plagiarism (and academic misconduct in general) very seriously. For a complete statement of the policies governing academic conduct, see the University's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.* You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, and also for knowing the particular plagiarism penalties.

Quercus Use: You are expected to check the course webpage page regularly to access the readings and check for updates.

Assignment Submission: You must submit the assignments through the course webpage. After uploading your assignments on quercus, it is your responsibility to ensure that the file was successfuly uploaded, and that it is the correct file you have uploaded.

<For Library Services

The start date of my course July 3rd, 2019 and the end date is August 22nd, 2019. The number of students in the course is 47. I would like Robarts library to be the library where you put print items in the course reserves collection. I have not scanned any items on the syllabus. Here is a bibliography for all the readings listed above>

<Byrne, Alex. 2001. "Intentionalism defended." *Philosophical Review 110*(2). 199–240.

Campbell, John. 2002. "The relational view of experience." In *Reference and Consciousness.* Oxford University Press.

Chalmers, David. 2004. "The representational character of experience." In B. Leiter (ed.), *The Future for Philosophy.* OUP.

Crane, Tim & Craig French. 2015. "The problem of perception." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-problem/

Dretske, Fred. 2003. "Experience as representation." *Philosophical Issues 13*(1). 67–82.

Fodor, Jerry A. & Pylyshyn, Z. W. 1981. "How direct is visual perception?: Some reflections on Gibson's"Ecological Approach"". *Cognition 9.* 139–196.

Gibson, James J. 1986. "The Theory of Information Pickup and its Consequences." In *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Taylor & Francis Group.

Harman, Gilbert. 1990. "The Intrinsic Quality of Experience." *Philosophical Perspectives 4*. 31–52.

Logue, Heather. 2012. "Why naive realism?". *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 112*. 211–237.

Marr, David. 1982. "General Introduction". In *Vision: A Computational Investigation into the Human Representation and Processing of Visual Information*. W. H. Freeman and Company.

Marr, David. 1982. "Chapter 1: The Philosophy and the Approach". In *Vision: A Computational Investigation into the Human Representation and Processing of Visual Information*. W. H. Freeman and Company.

Martin, Michael G. F. 2002. "The Transparency of Experience." *Mind and Language 17*(4). 376–425.

Schellenberg, Susanna. 2011. "Perceptual content defended." *Nous 45*(4). 714–750.

Siegel, Susanna. 2011. "The content view." In *The Contents of Visual Experience*. Oxford University Press.

Soteriou, Matthew. 2016. "Representational content, the science of perception, and disjunctivism about conscious character". In *Disjunctivism*. Routledge.

Soteriou, Matthew. 2016. "Does Introspective Reflection Support Naive Realism?". In *Disjunctivism*. Routledge.

Strawson, Peter F. 1988. "Perception and its objects." In Jonathan Dancy (ed.), *Perceptual Knowledge*. Oxford University Press.

Tye, Michael. 2002. "Representationalism and the transparency of experience." *Nous 36*(1). 137–151.>