PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY II: ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHIATRY
(7AAN2067) SPRING 2016

Credits: 20 units
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Consultation Hours: Tuesday 3-4 pm and Friday 2-3 pm
Seminar Hours: Tuesday 1-3 pm, 304 Philosophy Building

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this module, we will explore a number of philosophical questions raised by particular psychiatric phenomena, such as the following: What is the difference between rational and irrational cognition? What makes a conscious experience psychotic or pathological? Are delusions irrational or dysfunctional beliefs, or are they a different kind of mental state altogether? What role do moral values have in our assessment of psychiatric conditions like personality disorders? In what way, if any, do individuals with autism manifest impaired social cognition? We will aim to better understand both the implications that psychiatric conditions have for theoretical accounts of the mind and the structure and etiology of some psychiatric conditions.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the module, students will be able to demonstrate intellectual, transferable and practicable skills appropriate to a level-7 module. In particular they will be able to demonstrate that they have the ability:

1) To understand key issues in the philosophy of psychology.
2) To think carefully and critically about philosophical questions.
3) To summarize arguments and positions.
4) To form philosophical views of their own which they are prepared to defend or amend in light of criticism.
5) To read closely and gain understanding of relevant texts.

ASSESSMENT

Formative Assessment: One 3,000 word essay due 16:00 on Friday 1 April 2016
Summative Assessment: One 4,000 word essay due 12:00 noon, Tuesday 10 May 2016

READING

The suggested readings for this module are separated into the following two categories:

Core Reading: reading that everyone who wants proper coverage of the subject should read and will be discussed in seminar.
**Further Reading:** additional readings to help further develop your views on a particular subject.

Readings marked with an (*) are available online.

The following texts offer useful background:
Baron-Cohen, S. et. al. (eds) *Understanding Other Minds: Perspectives from Developmental Social Neuroscience*. Oxford University Press 2013.


**PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: The Theory of Cognitive Neuropsychiatry**

*Core Reading*

*Further Reading*

**Week 2: Explaining Psychiatric Conditions**

*Core Reading*
Further Reading

Week 3: The Nature of Delusion

Core Reading

Further reading

Week 4: The Structure of Delusion

Core Reading
*Davies, M. et. al. 2001: ‘Monothematic delusions: Towards a two- factor account’ Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology, 8: 133–158.

Further reading

Week 5: Irrationality and Mental Illness

Core Reading

Further reading
**Week 6: Autism Spectrum Disorder**

*Core Reading*

*Further Reading*

**Week 7: Dissociative Identity Disorder**

*Core Reading*

*Further Reading*

**Week 8: Addiction**

*Core Reading*
* Levy, N 2013: ‘Addiction is Not a Brain Disease (and it Matters)’ *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 4. 24
Further reading

Week 9: Personality Disorder

Core reading

Further reading

Week 10: Blame, Responsibility and Mental Illness

Core reading

Further reading

Essay Questions
1) By studying psychiatric conditions, can we learn anything about the structure and function of ordinary human cognition?

2) Can a developed Bayesian model provide a complete explanation of onset of psychiatric symptoms?

3) Are delusions beliefs or are they some other kind of mental state?

4) ‘A delusion is a hypothesis designed to explain unusual perceptual phenomena and developed through the operation of normal cognitive processes.’ (Maher) Discuss.

5) Is it possible to hold someone responsible for their actions that knowingly cause harm but to not blame them for that harm?

6) Is addiction a kind of brain disease?

7) What is the best explanation of why autistic children avoid eye contact?

8) Are individuals with dissociative identity disorder responsible for the behavior of their ‘alters’?