

Early Social Cognition
PSYC 789R / NACS 728G, 3 credits
Spring 2014

Time: Tuesdays, 3:30 to 6:00 pm

Location: BPS 1103

Instructor: Jonathan Beier

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Biology-Psychology Building, room 2147E

Office hours: by appointment

Website: <http://elms.umd.edu>

Course description

This graduate seminar explores the foundations of social cognition, from birth through the first few years of life. There will be two phases of the semester. The first phase of the class will focus on weekly collections of primary empirical and theoretical readings. We will first review infants' and toddlers' developing conceptions of people as mental agents, whose behavior is structured by goals and beliefs. Next, we will observe that young children not only understand the experiences of others, but also care about them, as revealed through both their evaluations of characters who act in appropriate versus inappropriate ways and children's own prosocial behaviors towards others. The class will continue with consideration of the mechanisms by which infants learn from those around them, via both direct instruction and observation. We will conclude with an exploration of how young children recognize, reason about, and relate to the social ties that bind people together: affiliation, dominance, and social group membership.

The second phase of the class will feature a close reading of the new book by Michael Tomasello, "A Natural History of Human Thinking", a soon-to-be-released grand statement and synthesis of his work on social cognition in evolution and development. Previous versions of this course have featured his work prominently, interspersed through the different weekly reading. We will take advantage of the book by shifting much of this material into the "book club" days, allowing for a deeper exploration during the first class phase of very early appearing social cognitive processes, which have not traditionally been Tomasello's focus. Because the book does not come out until early February, I have not yet read it, so the structure of discussion and possible additional empirical readings for those days is somewhat less worked out; I'll read it immediately upon release and fill in those details soon.

Attendance and participation

This course is based around active discussion among its participants. Before each course meeting, students are expected to have read all of the assigned readings. Students will also submit short response papers the night before class, and should be prepared to elaborate on the ideas they raised. As this is a graduate seminar, I encourage you to introduce ways that your own areas of expertise might relate to the course material.

Course requirements and evaluation for enrolled students

Attendance and class participation (10%):

Be prepared and be engaged! Your grade will be based on whether you come prepared to discuss the readings, the relevance of your comments to the ongoing discussion, and your ability to integrate the readings and comments made by other seminar participants.

Response posts (20%):

Each week, students should compose a short response to that week's readings. Response posts should be posted to the Discussion Board on the ELMS website for the course; each week there will be a new Forum on the board. Papers should be posted by 6 pm the Monday before class. Discussion leaders for a given week should read all response papers and raise their themes as points of discussion. Discussion leaders are exempt from writing responses.

Response papers should be at least 200 words, but content is more important than length. Since everybody will have read the readings there is no need to summarize them. Your paper should be a thoughtful response to the course material; for instance, you may critique the readings, point out interesting contrasts among them, relate them to another body of work, or extend their arguments. Although non-discussion leaders are not required to read the responses, I encourage you to do so. Your response may be a reply to another student's response, extending her or his ideas.

Discussion leading (30%)

Each week, at least one student will lead discussion of the primary readings for that day. On the first day of class, we will take volunteers for the next class, and then work out the semester's assignments the following week, once final course enrollment is hopefully determined. I expect each student will lead about once, but we shall see!

Discussion leaders should plan to meet with me briefly, early in the week before their class leading day. Ideally, we would check in for 5-10 minutes after Tuesday's class, but we can arrange times as fits our schedules. In this meeting, we will review the themes of the upcoming class meeting. I may suggest additional readings or findings that should be brought into the discussion.

The discussion leader should prepare a handout summarizing the day's material. I strongly encourage you to include figures of results, images of stimuli, and any tables, charts, or other graphical summarization devices that you may generate! This will allow us to have the discussion without constantly flipping through different papers. The discussion leader should bring printouts of the handout to class (double-sided, please!). The handout should also be posted as a pdf to ELMS by shortly after class, so that other students can have it for their records.

To encourage discussion, no Powerpoint-guided presentations will be allowed; however, if there is a video of an experimental task or behavior that would be helpful for the class to view, I'll be glad to include it.

Secondary topic presentations (10%):

Each week, at least one student will also give a 30-minute primer on a set of secondary readings, as a supplement to the main discussion. Other students are not required to have read these papers, but are of course welcome to do so.

This syllabus lists the general topic areas of secondary presentations, but the ultimate content will be partly determined by the presenter (with my input). The presenter should post a list of relevant papers to ELMS as early in the week as possible, so that other students may look over these in advance if they wish.

Final paper (30%):

Final papers should be about 15 pages double-spaced. I am open to a range of topics, but they should engage the material of the course. We will discuss possible topics as the course proceeds. Before settling on a topic, you should discuss it with me – in person or by email. Your papers will likely take the form of either 1) a grant or project proposal or 2) a theoretical review that offers more than just summary (i.e., includes a new synthesis or positive account), but you are welcome to propose an alternative format if it would be useful to you in your own work.

Final papers are due by midnight on the night of Tuesday, May 20.

Course requirements for auditors

Auditors are expected to be active participants in the class. They should do all the readings and come to all class meetings. Based on final enrollment, auditors may be required to lead discussion or offer secondary topic presentations.

Policies

Everyone is expected to come prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Class attendance is essential and if you cannot attend a particular session please let me know as soon as possible.

- Students with disabilities or special needs: If you have special needs with regards to this class, please contact me so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.
- Academic honesty: All students are expected to adhere to campus policy on academic integrity. Cheating on academic work will not be tolerated in any form and will be subject to strong penalties in this class and the university system. If you cheat on a paper or assignment, you risk failing the class, as well as suspension or expulsion from the University as a whole. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, falsifying any information in a citation or academic exercise, using unauthorized materials in any academic exercise, or helping another to commit academic dishonesty. You are expected to work independently on your papers.

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Leader	2nd Presenter
Jan 28	Intro and organization		
Feb 4	Innateness and learning devices: the case of faces	Sara Haas	
	Bodies		Brandon T
Feb 11	Goal-directed action and intentional agency		
	Agents cause things to happen		
Feb 18	Beliefs and ToM		
	Non-human ToM		
Feb 25	Emotion		
	<i>[secondary tbd]</i>		
March 4	Prosocial behavior		
	Antisocial behavior		
March 11	Social evaluation and Morality		
	Resource distribution		
March 18	<i>No class – SPRING BREAK</i>		
March 25	Teaching and Selective Trust		
	Blind Trust		
April 1	Imitation		
	Conformity		
April 8	<i>No class – JSB travelling</i>		
April 15	Interpersonal relations		
	Attachment and working models		
April 22	Social Groups		
	Language and Accent		
April 29	Tomasello, part 1 Individual and Joint Intentionality		?
May 6	Tomasello, part 2 Collective intentionality		
	<i>[secondary tbd]</i>		
May 13	Tomasello, part 3 “Human Thinking as Cooperation”		
May 20	Final papers due		

Class Readings: Readings may change as the course proceeds!

January 28: Introduction and organization

February 4: Innateness and learning devices: the case of faces

Primary readings:

Carey, S. (2009). *Origin of concepts*. New York: Oxford University Press. (read Chapter 1: Some preliminaries, pp. 1 - 25).

Sugita, Y. (2008). Face perception in monkeys reared with no exposure to faces. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 105(1), 394-8. doi:10.1073/pnas.0706079105

Meltzoff, A. N., & Moore, M. K. (1977). Imitation of facial and manual gestures by human neonates. *Science*, 198(4312), 75.

Johnson, M. H., Grossmann, T., & Farroni, T. (2008). The social cognitive neuroscience of infancy: Illuminating the early development of social brain functions. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 36, 331-372.

Secondary presentation: TBD, likely on the development of body representations

February 11: Goal-directed action and intentional agency

Primary readings:

Woodward, A. L. (2009). Infants learning about intentional action. In A. L. Woodward & A. Needham (Eds.), *Learning and the infant mind* (pp. 227-49). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gergely, G. (2010). Kinds of agents: The origins of understanding instrumental and communicative agency. In U. Goswami (Ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of childhood cognitive development, second edition* (pp. 76-105). John Wiley & Sons.

Biro, S., & Leslie, A. M. (2007). Infants' perception of goal-directed actions: Development through cue-based bootstrapping. *Developmental Science*, 10(3), 379-98.

Csibra, G., & Gergely, G. (2013). Teleological understanding of actions. In M. R. Banaji & S. A. Gelman (Eds.), *Navigating the social world: What infants, children, and other species can teach us* (pp. 38-43). Oxford University Press.

Skerry, A. E., Carey, S. E., & Spelke, E. S. (2013). First-person action experience reveals sensitivity to action efficiency in prereaching infants. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 110(46), 18728-33.

Secondary presentation: Agents and causality

February 18: Beliefs and Theory of Mind

Primary readings:

Wellman, H. M. (2012). Theory of mind: Better methods, clearer findings, more development. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 9(3), 313-330.

Baillargeon, R., Scott, R. M., & He, Z. (2010). False-Belief understanding in infants. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14(3), 110-8.

Kovács, Á. M., Téglás, E., & Endress, A. D. (2010). The social sense: Susceptibility to others' beliefs in human infants and adults. *Science (New York, N.Y.)*, 330(6012), 1830-4.

Senju, A., Southgate, V., Snape, C., Leonard, M., & Csibra, G. (2011). Do 18-month-olds really attribute mental states to others? A critical test. *Psychological Science*, 22(7), 878-80.

All students pick at least one of the following, to be decided in prior class:

Butterfill, S. A., & Apperly, I. A. (2013). How to construct a minimal theory of mind. *Mind and Language*, 28(5), 606-37.

Carruthers, P. (2013). Mindreading in infancy. *Mind & Language*, 28(2), 141-172.

Rakoczy, H. (2012). Do infants have a theory of mind? *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 30(1), 59-74.

Ruffman, T., Taumoepeau, M., & Perkins, C. (2011). Statistical learning as a basis for social understanding in children. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 30(1), 87-104.

Secondary presentation: Non-human ToM

February 25: Emotion

Primary readings:

Baldwin, D. A., & Moses, L. J. (1996). The ontogeny of social information gathering. *Child Development, 67*(5), 1915-1939

Vaish, A., Grossmann, T., & Woodward, A. (2008). Not all emotions are created equal: The negativity bias in social-emotional development. *Psychological Bulletin, 134*(3), 383-403.

Repacholi, B. M., Meltzoff, A. N., & Olsen, B. (2008). Infants' understanding of the link between visual perception and emotion: "If she can't see me doing it, she won't get angry.". *Developmental Psychology, 44*(2), 561-74.

Davidov, M., Zahn-Waxler, C., Roth-Hanania, R., & Knafo, A. (2013). Concern for others in the first year of life: Theory, evidence, and avenues for research. *Child Development Perspectives, 7*(2), 126-131.

Secondary presentation: TBD

April 3: Prosocial behavior

Primary readings:

Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2006). Altruistic helping in human infants and young chimpanzees. *Science (New York, N.Y.), 311*(5765), 1301-3.

Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2009). Varieties of altruism in children and chimpanzees. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 13*(9), 397-402.

Svetlova, M., Nichols, S. R., & Brownell, C. A. (2010). Toddlers' prosocial behavior: From instrumental to empathic to altruistic helping. *Child Development, 81*(6), 1814-1827.

Vaish, A., Carpenter, M., & Tomasello, M. (2009). Sympathy through affective perspective taking and its relation to prosocial behavior in toddlers. *Developmental Psychology, 45*(2), 534-43.

Paulus, M. (in press). The emergence of prosocial behavior: Why do infants and toddlers help, comfort, and share? *Child Development Perspectives*.

Zaki, J., & Mitchell, P. (2013). Intuitive prosociality. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22*(6), 466-470.

Secondary presentation: Antisocial behavior and psychopathy

March 11: Social evaluations and moral intuitions

Primary readings:

Hamlin, J. K., Wynn, K., Bloom, P., & Mahajan, N. (2011). How infants and toddlers react to antisocial others. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *108*(50), 19931-6. doi:10.1073/pnas.1110306108

Hamlin, J. K. (2014). The origins of human morality: Complex socio-moral evaluations by preverbal infants. In J. Decety & Y. Christen (Eds.), *Research and Perspectives in Neurosciences: Vol. 21. New frontiers in social neuroscience* (pp. 165-188).

Sommerville, J. A., Schmidt, M. F. H., Yun, J. -E., & Burns, M. (2013). The development of fairness expectations and prosocial behavior in the second year of life. *Infancy : The Official Journal of the International Society on Infant Studies*, *18*(1), 40-66.

Killen, M. – to be determined – Mike, recommend!

Secondary presentation: Developments in children's own resource distribution

March 18: no class -- SPRING BREAK

March 25: Teaching and Trust

Primary readings:

Csibra, G., & Gergely, G. (2009). Natural pedagogy. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *13*(4), 148-53.

Egyed, K., Király, I., & Gergely, G. (2013). Communicating shared knowledge in infancy. *Psychological Science*, *24*(7), 1348-53.

Skerry, A. E., Lambert, E., Powell, L. J., & McAuliffe, K. (2012). The origins of pedagogy: Developmental and evolutionary perspectives. *Evolutionary Psychology: An International Journal of Evolutionary Approaches to Psychology and Behavior*, *11*(3), 550-572.

Bonawitz, E., Shafto, P., Gweon, H., Goodman, N. D., Spelke, E., & Schulz, L. (2011). The double-edged sword of pedagogy: Instruction limits spontaneous exploration and discovery. *Cognition*, *120*(3), 322-30.

Harris, P. L., & Corriveau, K. H. (2011). Young children's selective trust in informants. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological Sciences*, 366(1567), 1179-87.

Secondary presentation: Blind trust

April 1: Imitation

Primary readings:

Gergely, G., Bekkering, H., & Király, I. (2002). Rational imitation in preverbal infants. *Nature*, 415(6873), 755.

Meltzoff, A. N. (2010). Social cognition and the origins of imitation, empathy, and theory of mind. *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Cognitive Development*, 49-75.

Lyons, D. E., Young, A. G., & Keil, F. C. (2007). The hidden structure of overimitation. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 104(50), 19751-6. =

Over, H., & Carpenter, M. (2011). Putting the social into social learning: Explaining both selectivity and fidelity in children's copying behavior. *Journal of Comparative Psychology (Washington, D.C. : 1983)*.

Zmyj, N., Daum, M. M., Prinz, W., Nielsen, M., & Aschersleben, G. (2012). Fourteen-Month-Olds' imitation of differently aged models. *Infant and Child Development*, 21(3), 250-266.

Secondary presentation: Conformity

April 8: no class – JSB is travelling

April 15: Interpersonal relationships

Primary readings:

Thomsen, L., & Carey, S. (2012). Core cognition of relational models. In M. R. Banaji & Gelman (Eds.), *Navigating the social world: What infants, children, and other species teach us*. Oxford University Press.

Mascaro, O., & Csibra, G. (2012). Representation of stable social dominance relations by human infants. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 109(18), 6862-7.

Lieberman, Kinzler, K. D., & Woodward, A. L. (in press). Friends or foes: Infants use shared evaluations to infer others' social relationships. *JEP: General*.

Cheney, D. L., & Seyfarth, R. M. (2005). Social complexity and the information acquired during eavesdropping by primates and other animals. *Animal Communication Networks*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 583-603.

Secondary presentation: Attachment and working models

April 22: Social groups

Primary readings:

Olson, K. R., & Dunham, Y. (2010). The development of implicit social cognition. In B. Gawronski & B. K. Payne (Eds.), *Handbook of implicit social cognition: Measurement, theory, and applications* (pp. 241-254). Guilford Press.

Dunham, Y., Baron, A. S., & Carey, S. (2011). Consequences of "minimal" group affiliations in children. *Child Development*, 82(3), 793-811. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01577.x

Shutts, K., Pemberton, C. K., & Spelke, E. S. (2013). Children's use of social categories in thinking about people and social relationships. *Journal of Cognition and Development : Official Journal of the Cognitive Development Society*, 14(1), 35-62.

Powell, L. J., & Spelke, E. S. (2013). Preverbal infants expect members of social groups to act alike. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 110(41), E3965-72.

Rhodes, M. (2013). How two intuitive theories shape the development of social categorization. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7(1), 12-16.

Secondary presentation: Language and accent

April 29: Tomasello, part 1

Primary readings:

Tomasello, M. Chapters 1 – 3, *A natural history of human thinking*, (p. 1-79).
Chapter 1: The Shared Intentionality hypothesis
Chapter 2: Individual Intentionality
Chapter 3: Joint Intentionality

May 6: Tomasello, part 2

Primary readings:

Tomasello, M. Chapter 4, *A natural history of human thinking*, (p. 80-123).
Chapter 4: Collective Intentionality
→Plus, further readings TBD

Secondary presentation: TBD

May 13: Tomasello, part 3

Primary readings:

Tomasello, M. Chapter 5 - 6, *A natural history of human thinking*, (p. 124-154).
Chapter 5: Human Thinking as Cooperation.
Chapter 6: Conclusions
→Plus, further readings TBD as wrap-ups, and as complimentary stories to Tomasello's account.