Northern Illinois University  
Fall 2015, ILAS 261 — Language, Mind, and Thought  
TTh 2:00-3:15, DuSable 246

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**Blackboard:** This syllabus and some course materials will be available on Blackboard.

**Format:** Lecture/discussion

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**
This course introduces theories of cognition from the perspective of multiple disciplines, including linguistics, computer science, psychology, and anthropology. We will discuss the structure and processes of the human brain, and we will focus on language as a central issue in the study of human cognition. Finally, we will consider human cognition from the point of view of computer science and artificial intelligence, and ask to what extent human intelligence can be successfully modeled on a machine. Through the multidisciplinary character of the course, you will acquire an appreciation for the advantages of the different approaches and how they complement each other in our study of the mind.

**Class Policies:**
1. Class attendance and participation are expected; repeated absences may lower your grade.

2. Advance class preparation and attendance are expected. Assigned readings must be completed prior to the class meeting for which they are scheduled.

3. There is no textbook. Assigned readings and other required preparation for class will be listed on the Blackboard site at least one week in advance.

4. You are responsible for all material covered in class. If you miss a class, you must get notes from another student before the next class, not from the instructors.

5. Exams must be taken on the date and time scheduled. A late exam will be administered only in the case of a documented medical emergency, and then only with the prior consent of the instructor.

6. When in class, be in class: Your cell phone should be muted, and it should be put out of the way in a backpack, pocket, or purse. Don’t even think of looking at it while class is in session. No laptops or tablets may be used in class.
7. No activity that interferes with learning, i.e., one that may distract other students or the instructor, is permitted in class. For example, eating, side conversations, newspaper reading, and regularly being late or leaving early are not permitted.

8. Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an accessible educational environment in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Any student requiring an academic accommodation due to a disability should let one of the professors know as soon as possible and should contact the DRC if they have not done so already. The DRC is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu.

9. You are expected to do your own work. Academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating) will result in the filing of an academic misconduct form and a course grade of F, and may result in expulsion from the university.

Grading:
Grades in this course will be earned through performance on a 400-point scale. There will be three exams of 100 points each, and 100 points of assignments. Assignments may have different point values. For in-class assignments, there will be no makeups for any reason. Out-of-class assignments must be submitted according to the rules listed on the assignment sheet, and no late assignments or assignments that do not follow the rules will be accepted. Assignments will not be accepted by email.

Grades will be assigned according to the following scheme. Grades will not be curved or rounded.

93%+ A (372 or more points)
90-93% A- (360-371 points)
87-90% B+ (348-359 points)
83-87% B (332-347 points)
80-83% B- (320-331 points)
77-80% C+ (308-319 points)
70-77% C (280-307 points)
60-70% D (240-279 points)
0-60% F (below 240 points)

Course Schedule: The following page contains a tentative schedule. It is subject to change based on class progress and interests.
Tentative Course Schedule

Aug. 25 – Introduction
   27 – Philosophy of language
Sep.  1 – Philosophy of language
   3  – Philosophy of language
   8  – Psychology
   10 – Psychology
  15 – Psychology
  17 – Psychology
  22 – Exam #1
  24 – Psychology
  29 – Neurology
Oct.  1  – Neurology
   6  – Artificial intelligence
   8  – Artificial intelligence
  13 – Linguistics
  15 – Linguistics
  20 – Linguistics
  22 – Linguistics
  27 – Exam #2
  29 – Linguistics
Nov.  3  – Linguistics
   5  – Linguistics
  10 – Linguistics
  12 – Artificial intelligence
  17 – Artificial intelligence
  19 – Artificial intelligence
  24 – Artificial intelligence
 26 – THANKSGIVING; NO CLASS
Dec.  1  – Artificial intelligence
   3  – Exam #3