

730: 675 -cross listed with [185:602:01]
Advanced Topics: Philosophy of Mind, Fall Semester 2022

Instructors: Frances Egan and Brian P. McLaughlin

Location: Philosophy Department Seminar room, 5th floor, 106 Somerset Street

Time: Wednesday 12-3

Office Hours: By appointment

Readings: All readings are available on the Canvas website.

Requirements: a seminar paper – roughly 15-20 pages – on a topic related to the course materials, due at the end of the semester. We will have a workshop in the last class where students will give a short presentation of a draft of their papers, followed by Q&A. The aim is to provide constructive feedback for the final version of the paper.

Learning Goals: Like any advanced philosophy graduate seminar this seminar aims to

- 1) give students an opportunity to explore a set of fundamental issues in depth
- 2) give students opportunities to further develop and hone their analytical skills
- 3) give students a chance to write and revise a major research paper that will hopefully be interesting, original, and important
- 4) provide ample opportunities to further develop one's oral skills during discussion.

Course Description: The general topic of the seminar is *intentionality*, the capacity of mental states to be about, or represent, objects, properties, and states of affairs. We will consider such issues as:

- Can intentionality be *naturalized*?
- The role of representation in cognitive science
- Does perception accurately represent the world?
- The objects of perception
- The nature of *singular thought*
- The percept/concept distinction

In the first half of the semester Frankie Egan will present her *deflationary* account of mental representation – the topic of her 2021 Jean Nicod lectures – according to which there is no distinctively mental content, there is only public content. Public content is used to serve various pragmatic purposes in thinking, speaking, and theorizing about the mind. She will discuss cognitive science, propositional attitudes, and perceptual experience. In the second half of the semester, Brian

McLaughlin will examine Christopher Hill's new book, *Perceptual Experience* (Oxford, 2022), which attempts to develop a naturalized, teleosemantic theory of intentionality based on a teleosemantic representational theory of perceptual experience. The topics covered will include, among others, color, geometrical properties, the objects of perception, and singular thoughts.

Tentative schedule and readings

9/7 Introduction and overview

Recommended reading: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intentionality/>

9/14 Representation in Cognitive Science I: Naturalizing Intentionality

Required reading: N. Shea, "Naturalizing Representational Content"

Recommended: F. Egan, "Content is Pragmatic: Comments on Nicholas Shea's *Representation in Cognitive Science*"

F. Egan, "The Elusive Role of Normal-Proper Function in Cognitive Science"

9/21 Representation in Cognitive Science II

Required reading: F. Egan, "A Deflationary Account of Mental Representation"

Recommended: W. Ramsey, "Defending Representational Realism"

9/28 Belief I: The Standard View

Required reading: J. Fodor, "The Persistence of the Attitudes"

Recommended: J. Quilty-Dunn and E. Mandelbaum, "Against Dispositionalism: Belief in Cognitive Science"

10/5 Belief II: A non-representationalist account

Required reading: F. Egan, "Belief and its Linguistic Representation"

Recommended: V. McGeer, "The Regulative Dimension of Folk Psychology"

10/12 Perceptual Experience I: The popular views – Relationalism and Representationalism

Readings: TBA

10/19 Perceptual Experience II: A deflationist alternative

Required reading: F. Egan, "The Structure of Perceptual Experience: A New Look at Adverbialism"

10/26 Appearance (or Apparent) Properties I

Required Reading: *Perceptual Experience* (Oxford, 2022), Ch.1
“Representationalism” and Ch.2 “Appearance and Reality I”;
first half of McLaughlin, “The Skewed View From Here: Normal
Geometrical Misperception”; McLaughlin, “Color, Consciousness, and
Color Consciousness”; Tye, “The Puzzle of True Blue”; Cohen, Hardin, and
McLaughlin, “True Colors”; Bryne and Hiblert, “Truist Blue”; Cohen, Hard,
and McLaughlin, “The Truth About `The Truth About True Blue””

11/2 Appearance (or Apparent) Properties II

Required reading: *Perceptual Experience*, Ch.3 “Appearance and Reality II”;
second half of McLaughlin, “The Skewed View From Here: Normal
Geometrical Misperception”

11/9 Appearance (or Apparent) Properties III

Same readings as the 10/26 and 11/2

11/16 The Objects of Perception and Singular Thoughts I

Required reading: *Perceptual Experience*, Ch.4 “Perceptual Awareness of
Particulars”; McGee and McLaughlin, “Lessons of the Many”; McGee and
McLaughlin, “A Permutation Argument for Indeterminacy of Reference”

11/16 The Objects and Perception and Singular Thoughts II

Same reading as 11/16

THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/30 Perceptual Consciousness

Required reading: *Perceptual Experience*, Ch.5 “Perceptual Phenomenology” and
Ch.7 “Perceptual Consciousness”

Recommended reading: Ch.6 “A Quasi-Perceptual Account of Pain Experience”

12/7 Percepts and Concepts

Required reading: *Perceptual Experience*, Ch.8 “Percepts and Concepts”

Recommended reading: Ch.9 “The Epistemic Role of Perception”

12/14 Student presentations