

Psych 142: Psychology of Consciousness

Spring 2001

Time: MWF 3:35-4:25

Location: Center Hall 113

Course web page: <http://psy.ucsd.edu/~ferreira/psy142/>

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Office Hours</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
Instructor	Prof. Victor Ferreira	Th 2–4, or by appt. McGill Hall Annex 2539	vferreira@ucsd.edu 534-6303
Grad. TA	Randy Nino	TTh 1-2 1117 McGill Hall	rnino@ucsd.edu
UG TA	Irina Rudnitsky	MW 2-3 Cafe Roma (Price Center)	irudnitsky@ucsd.edu

Textbook: “The Psychology of Consciousness,” by G. William Farthing. The book should be available in the bookstore. Used copies should be available, but their might not be many around.

Course Objectives: Until recently, consciousness has not been a scientifically productive area in which do research. Psychologists spent time exploring it at the turn of the century, but with the advent of behaviorism, talking about consciousness as anything besides “subvocal articulation” became disreputable. As cognitive psychology rose in influence, consciousness was still largely ignored as a topic that was too flaky or subjective, even for such a mentalistic discipline. However, in recent years (the 1990s), there has been growing recognition that a science of psychology has serious shortcomings if it cannot address something as central to human (and nonhuman?) experience as consciousness.

The objective of the course will be examine the phenomena, evidence, and issues that relate to consciousness, with an eye toward scientific evaluation of the topic. We will not focus on philosophical issues, although we will spend some time on them. Nor will we use consciousness as an excuse to explore some of the more flashy topics in the course, such as hypnosis or dreaming. In all cases, we will try to bring the topic of each class back to an evaluation of what consciousness is, what it is for, and why we have it.

The course is divided roughly into four sections. First, we address introductory issues, discussing possible definitions of consciousness and the philosophical problems that relate to it. Second, we will discuss neuropsychological evidence relating to consciousness, usually arising from aberrant brain functioning. Third, we will explore consciousness within a cognitive psychological framework, exploring theories that attempt explain consciousness, or to identify consciousness with particular components of cognitive theory. Finally, we will discuss other related but idiosyncratic topics, such as hypnosis and dreaming.

Content and Evaluation: Students will be responsible for all material presented in class, for all assigned parts of the textbook, and for the assigned readings. I have tried to indicate in the schedule below the parts of the textbook that you will be responsible for, but this may change during the course of the semester. I will, however, keep an up-to-date syllabus on the course website (see URL above). Those who do not have web access should contact me or a TA to make other arrangements.

There will be two midterms. The first midterm will be on Monday, April 23rd (Week 4), and the second midterm will be on Friday, May 18th (Week 7). The first midterm will cover material presented from April 4th to April 20th, and the second midterm will cover material presented from April 25th to May 16th. Each midterm is worth 25% of your grade. The final examination is *tentatively* scheduled for Wednesday, June 13th from 3:00 PM until 6:00 PM. The final exam is worth 50% of your grade; roughly two-thirds of the final will cover the material after the second midterm, while the remaining third will cover the first two-thirds of the class (i.e., the final is *cumulative*). Office hours will be held right up until the final exam. The examinations will have a variety of question formats, including multiple choice, short-answer,

and short-essay questions. You are responsible for bringing Scantron form F-1712 ERI (it's a PINK form that's the size of a full sheet of paper; it's available at the bookstore) to all three examinations, and a #2 pencil. You will need to indicate your student number (not your Social Security Number) on each exam.

You are *strongly* encouraged to take the exams at their scheduled times. Because make-up exams are very difficult to administer fairly in a course of this size, students with a valid reason to miss an exam cannot be guaranteed a make-up during the current quarter, requiring an incomplete grade to be assigned for the class. Furthermore, the format of any make-up exam cannot be specified ahead of time. Any student taking a make-up exam should be prepared to take an essay, short answer, or multiple-choice test. To be eligible to take a make-up, a student must have a legitimate (e.g., medical) and verifiable reason for having missed the scheduled exam.

Both examinations are *closed-book* tests. No aids of any kind are permitted. Although the vast majority of students are of high academic integrity, it is still necessary to say that *cheating will not be tolerated*. Students found guilty of cheating can expect a zero for course (see the General Catalog for UCSD's policy on academic dishonesty) and possible academic sanctions including expulsion from UCSD.

Bonus Grade Points: You can get a bonus 3% added to your grade by participating in experiments in the Department of Psychology human subject pool. Any credit that you receive from participating in the subject pool will be added on only after your final grade is calculated — these are truly “bonus” points. You are permitted to participate in the subject pool for up to three hours. You will receive 1% towards your grade for every hour you participate. Please see the additional handout for information on how to participate in the subject pool. Note that it is your responsibility to keep track of your subject pool credit receipts until the end of the quarter. Please attach the receipts separately to a full (8.5” x 11”) sheet of paper, and write your name and student ID number on that sheet of paper (it's probably a good idea to do this during the semester, so that you are less likely to lose the receipts). Bring the attached receipts to the final class (Friday, June 8th), where we will collect them. If you wish to turn the receipts in at another time, you must make specific arrangements with the TA.

Alternatively, if you do not wish to participate in the psychology subject pool, but still wish to receive up to 3% in bonus points, you may write a 4-8 page research paper on a topic related to the material presented in class. The paper may be on a topic of your choosing, but that topic must be approved by Professor Ferreira *before* the paper is written. Any student who writes a paper is expected to do supplemental research (e.g., at the library) in support of that paper. (Note that a student may *not* both write a paper and participate in the subject pool.)

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings

**This schedule of classes is tentative; it may change if the material or interest warrants.**

<u>Wk</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading (tentative)</u>
1	Mon, April 2	Introduction and Preliminary Issues	Farthing: Chapters 1 & 2
	Wed, April 4		
	Fri, April 6		
2	Mon, April 9	Mind-Body Problem	Farthing: Chapter 4
	Wed, April 11		
	Fri, April 13		
3	Mon, April 16	Discussion: Science & CS <a href="http://www.nsplus.com/nsplus/insight/big3/conscious/1a.html">http://www.nsplus.com/nsplus/insight/big3/conscious/1a.html</a>	New Scientist Debate
	Wed, April 18		
	Fri, April 20		
4	Mon, April 23	<b>FIRST MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>	
	Wed, April 25	Brain & Consciousness	Farthing: Chapters 5 & 6 [126-143]
	Fri, April 27		
Mon, April 30			
5	Wed, May 2		
	Fri, May 4		
	Mon, May 7	Cognitive Approaches to Consciousness	Farthing: Chapters 6 [143-151] & 7
Wed, May 9			
Fri, May 11			
7	Mon, May 14	Discussion: Animal CS <a href="http://www.sciam.com/1998/1198intelligence/1198debate.html">http://www.sciam.com/1998/1198intelligence/1198debate.html</a>	Scientific American Debate
	Wed, May 16		
	Fri, May 18	<b>SECOND MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>	
8	Mon, May 21	Sleeping & Dreaming	Farthing: Chapters 10, 11, 12, & 13 [317-323]
	Wed, May 23		
	Fri, May 25		
9	Mon, May 28	<b>MEMORIAL DAY -- NO CLASS</b>	
	Wed, May 30	Hypnosis	Farthing: Chapters 14, 15, 16
	Fri, June 1		
Mon, June 4			
10	Wed, June 6	Discussion: Qualia & CS On reserve at the library	Ramachandran: Chapter 12
	Fri, June 8		
	Wed, June 13	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION</b>	

