

**PSY 3360 / CGS 3325  
Historical Perspectives  
on Psychology  
Minds and Machines since 1600**

**Dr. Peter Assmann  
Spring 2010**

**Instructor**

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**Course web page:**

<http://www.utdallas.edu/~assmann/PSY3360/>

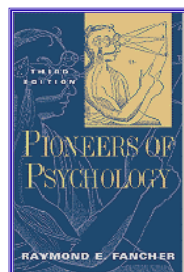
- Syllabus and study guides
- Review sheets for the exams
- Additional (optional) course readings

<http://www.utdallas.edu/~assmann/PSY3360/>



**Course Text**

Fancher R. E. 1996.  
*Pioneers of Psychology.*  
Third edition.  
New York: Norton.



In addition, choose one of the following as the basis for your **term paper**:

1. Michael S. Gazzaniga (2008). *Human: The Science Behind What Makes Us Unique.*
2. Jonah Lehrer (2009). *How We Decide.*
3. Frans de Waal (2009). *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society.*
4. Steven Pinker (2008). *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature.*

Michael Gazzaniga (2008).  
*Human: The Science Behind  
What Makes Us Unique.*

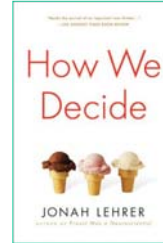


"Gazzaniga addresses the nature of consciousness, and by comparing the intellectual capabilities of a host of animals (chimps, dogs, birds and rats, among others) with those of human babies, children and adults, he shows what we all share as well as what humans alone possess."

*Publishers Weekly*

[http://www.edge.org/3rd\\_culture/gazzaniga08/gazzaniga08\\_index.html](http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/gazzaniga08/gazzaniga08_index.html)

Jonah Lehrer (2009).  
*How We Decide.*

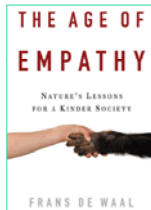


"Sometimes we need to reason through our options and carefully analyze the possibilities. And sometimes we need to listen to our emotions."

Jonah Lehrer

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101334645>

Frans de Waal (2009). *The Age of  
Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a  
Kinder Society.*

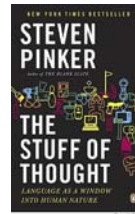


Is it human nature to be greedy and selfish? Primatologist Frans de Waal doesn't think so. In his new book "The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons For a Kinder Society" de Waal says empathy and solidarity are our primate heritage. De Waal joins guest host Joe Palca in this hour for look at how he thinks we humans may learn to get along better by looking to the natural world.

NPR Science Friday

<http://www.sciencefriday.com/program/archives/200910236>

Steven Pinker (2008) *The Stuff of  
Thought: Language as a Window  
into Human Nature.*



Pinker "analyzes how our words relate to thoughts and to the world around us and reveals what this tells us about ourselves." Put another way, Pinker "probes the mystery of human nature by examining how we use words".

<http://thesciencenetwork.org/programs/the-science-reader/the-stuff-of-thought-language-as-a-window-into-human-nature>

## Course requirements

- **Quiz/participation (10%)**
- **Midterm exam (30%)**
- **Final exam (40%)**
- **Term paper (20%)**

## Quiz/participation grade (10%)

- Selected classes will include a brief unannounced quiz. Their purpose is to help prepare for the exams. No makeup quizzes are provided. **1-2** quizzes may be missed without penalty.

### **Midterm exam (30%)**

- Mixture of short-answer, medium-length, multiple choice and essay questions.
- There will be a choice of questions to answer. Study questions are provided.
- Makeup exams are provided *only* in documented cases of medical and family emergencies.

### **Final exam (40%)**

- Same format and rules as the midterm exam
- Final exam is scheduled for 3 hours in the regular classroom from **8:00-11:00 AM** on **Wed May 12**.

### **Term paper (20%)**

- Due **Mon April 19**.
- Start early in the semester; choose one of the four books from the list, and read it early in the semester. We will be happy to discuss ideas for paper topics.

### **Term paper (20%)**

- Due **Mon April 19**.
  - The paper should not be a "book report" or a summary of the book.
  - Focus on one topic in the book and relate it to something outside the book.

### **Term paper (20%)**

- Due **Mon April 19**.
  - 7-8 (typed, double-spaced) pages
  - based on one of the four recommended books
  - relate some aspect of the book to something outside of the book, either in the course or in your more general experience.

### **Term paper (20%)**

- Due **Mon April 19**.
- Penalty of one letter grade notch per class period the paper is late. This policy ensures fairness to students who turn their paper in on time and do not have the advantage of extra time to improve its quality.

## Grading Scheme

Letter grade	Percent
A+	96
A	93
A-	89
B+	84
B	80
B-	75
C+	70
C	65
C-	60
D+	55
D	50
F	<50

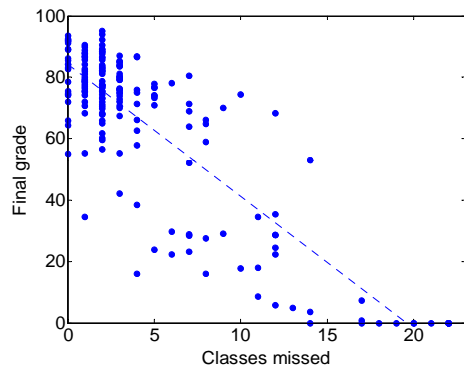
## Attendance policy

- Class attendance is mandatory and will count toward the course grade (through quiz grades). There are two reasons for this: (1) each lecture builds on materials covered in previous lectures; (2) exam questions are based both on lecture materials and the textbook.

## Attendance policy

- 1-2 missed quizzes is considered acceptable; we will omit the 2 lowest quiz grades.
- No makeup quizzes will be given.**
- If there are circumstances that lead to missed classes please see us to discuss the situation.

## Why is class attendance mandatory?



Dates	Topics	Readings
Jan 11	General introduction	
Jan 13	17 <sup>th</sup> century background	Fancher, Chapter 1
Jan 18	<b>Martin Luther King Day holiday</b>	
Jan 20	European rationalism: Descartes	Fancher, Chapter 2
Jan 25	European rationalism: Spinoza and Leibniz	
Jan 27	British empiricism: Hobbes, Locke	
Feb 1	British empiricism: Berkeley, Hume	
Feb 3	Kant's synthesis of rationalism & empiricism	Fancher, Chapter 4
Feb 8	Helmholtz (I)	
Feb 10	Helmholtz (II)	Fancher, Chapter 3
Feb 15	Rise of psychophysics and neuroscience	
Feb 17	Midterm review session	<i>Study guide online</i>
Feb 22	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	

## Research Credits

*All core courses in Psychology and Cognitive Science include a research participation component.*

- The research credit sign-up system is online: <https://utdallas.sona-systems.com>.
- Use your UTD NetID to login and sign up for experiments.
- New experiments appear every few days throughout the semester; keep checking the board if you cannot find a suitable time slot.

### Historical Perspectives on Psychology

- Historical and philosophical antecedents of our present conceptual frameworks in psychology
- 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day
- What is it that psychology studies?
- What counts as data?

### Historical Perspectives on Psychology

- Is psychology ultimately reducible to biology, chemistry, and physics?
- Are humans mere deterministic machines?
- Do we possess a free will?

### Historical Perspectives on Psychology

- rationalism and empiricism
- the mind/body problem
- the problem of free will
- the scientific status of mental events

### What counts as data in psychology?

**Reductionism:** *“The attempt to explain objects or events in one domain by using terminology, concepts, laws, or principles from another domain.”*

(Hergenhahn, 1992: p. 54)

### Origins of psychology

- Philosophical questions:
- **epistemology** (how do people acquire knowledge of the world)
- **metaphysics** (what kinds of objects exist in the universe)
- perception, memory, thought and emotion

### Elements of scientific explanation

- **Description**
- **Prediction**
- **Control**
- **Falsifiability**

### Key concepts

- **Empiricism vs. rationalism**
- Empiricism: the philosophical belief that all knowledge is derived from experience of the outside world.
- Rationalism: the belief that knowledge can only be attained by mental activity.

### Problem of free will

- **Free will vs. determinism**
- Determinism: the view that everything occurs as a result of known or identifiable causes.
- Free will: the opposite position; a belief in human control of events.

### Mind-body problem

- **Dualism vs. monism**
- Dualism: the philosophical position that the world is made up of two kinds of things, the *physical* and the *mental*.
- Monism: the position that there is only one kind of substance (mental *or* physical).

### Zeitgeist

- **Zeitgeist** (spirit of the times) – the idea that progress in science is linked to previous discoveries and theories. The prevailing ideas, concepts, and habits of thought of a period in history are referred to as its Zeitgeist.

### The Renaissance (1450-1600)

- Major advances in science, art, humanities
- Religious reforms and religious conflicts
- Rediscovery of classic Greek & Roman writings
- Rejection of **Scholasticism** – dominant philosophical position, derived from Aristotle (384-322 BC).