

UH 300 Section 037: Primate Religion & Human Consciousness

Spring, 2011

3 Credit Hours

Primary Instructor: Christopher Lynn

Core Designation: University Honors, Writing

Syllabus subject to change.

Office Hours

Office: 12 ten Hour

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Prerequisites (Updated 2011-01-10)

From the Student Records System:

Prerequisites for this course cannot be retrieved automatically. See the course schedule or any additional notes from the instructor for further information.

Course Description

Human consciousness is often held aloft as one of the distinguishing characteristics of humanity with higher consciousness, self-awareness, and truth generally considered worthwhile lifelong pursuits. But at what cost? Have evolutionary mechanisms propelled humans toward “analysis paralysis”? Do cultural and psychological adaptations maintain the blinders of blissful ignorance? We will consider these questions in reading about the 'religious' behavior of non-human primates and the chemistry of altered states of consciousness, and engage in experiments and activities to expand and limit our own consciousnesses.

The course will consist of readings and discussions of three main texts, in addition to supplementary articles that may be assigned to complement the directions discussions take. We will make use of technology and active learning activities to enhance the class and facilitate a dynamic multi-sensory environment that is conducive to better learning for most people. This will entail, in part, the designing of relevant research projects that can be piloted in class, followed by the write up and presentation of the results of these projects.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to

- Define a complex system like human consciousness in operationalizable terms—that is, define it by the parts that comprise it and how to test for them
- Provide examples for elaborated culture (such as religious behavior) in non-humans and humans and examples of behavior that does not require consciousness in human behavior.
- Collaborate with a group to design and conduct a pilot study, write up the results as a scientific paper, and give a presentation to an educated audience.
- Recognize the synergistic outcomes of mind/body processes in behavior and culture.

Attendance Policy

As this course involves active participation and activities, attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences (or excessive tardiness) will lower your grade by 5 course point for every absence or two tardies.

EXCEPTION: You cannot be late on a presentation day, even if you are not presenting. Unless you are sick and can prove it or have prearranged your absence with me, you will be penalized 10 course points for missing a presentation day. You will be penalized 25 points if you miss your own group presentation day. However, you will receive 5 bonus course points if you have no absences.

Required Texts

UA Supply Store Textbook Information:

- **GORE, BELINDA / ECSTATIC EXPERIENCE**
(Required)
- **KEENAN, JULIAN / FACE IN THE MIRROR:HOW WE KNOW WHO WE ARE**
(Required)
- **KING / EVOLVING GOD**
(Required)

Hobson, J. Allan, 2002. *The Dream Drugstore: Chemically Altered States of Consciousness*. MIT Press. [This title is available as an ebook through the library site]

Other Course Materials

The following readings will be posted to eLearning:

Boyer, Pascal

2008 Being Human: Religion: Bound to Believe? *Nature* 455(7216):1038-1039.

Brereton, Derek P.

2000 Dreaming, Adaptation, and Consciousness. the Social Mapping Hypothesis. *Ethos* 28(3):379-409.

Crick, Francis, and Christof Koch

2003 A Framework for Consciousness. *Nature Neuroscience* 6(2):119-126.

Lewis-Williams, J. David

2004 Neuropsychology and Upper Palaeolithic Art: Observations on the Progress of Altered States of Consciousness. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 14(01):107-111.

Newberg, Andrew B., Michael Pourdehnad, Abass Alavi, and Eugene G. d'Aquili

2003 Cerebral Blood Flow during Meditative Prayer: Preliminary Findings and Methodological Issues. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 97:625-630.

Siegel, Ronald K. P.

1989 *Intoxication: Life in Pursuit of Artificial Paradise*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Sosis, Richard

2004 The Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual. *American Scientist* 92:166-172.

Storm, Ingrid, and David Wilson

2009 Liberal and Conservative Protestant Denominations as Different Socioecological Strategies. *Human Nature* 20(1):1-24.

Wilson, David Sloan

2007 *Evolution for Everyone : How Darwin's Theory can Change the Way we Think about our Lives*. New York: Delta.

Exams and Assignments

Midterm & Final Exams (50 points): Each exam will consist of five short answer questions worth 5 points each. Exams will cover all material included in the course, including that covered in readings, lectures, discussions, and activities.

Group Research Presentation (25 points): Class will be divided into groups. Each group will design a research project, collect data, and present the results to the class. Research hypotheses and designs will be relevant to the course, and data will be collected in class (at least in part). A group research hypothesis is due in class on January 27. Your hypothesis should be in the form of a paragraph that briefly outlines the theoretical background of your proposed project, a problem or question that exists with regard to this background, and a prediction as to the resolution of this problem that is falsifiable (i.e., can be tested and found invalid). Your hypothesis will not be graded, but you will lose 1 point for each day your hypothesis is late. Hypotheses often change as research designs are developed, data is collected, and even as results are interpreted. That said, it is okay if your results do not support your hypothesis—do not change your hypothesis after the fact so that your data will support it. However, your data or literature searches may lead you to a more interesting or incisive research question, in which case it is okay to change it, provided your data addresses this question.

A group research design is due in class on March 8. Research designs will be critiqued but not evaluated. However, you will be penalized 1 point for each day your design is late. We will be exploring several research methods in class. You are not required to use any of these methods for your project, but you can if they are appropriate to your research project. However, this is a pilot study and will use the small biased sample of your classmates to provide data, so your methods must be appropriate to this context. You may collect additional data outside class, but, as we will not be going through institutional review procedures, your results cannot be made available to the public. This design should be in the form of a few paragraphs that outlines the materials, procedures, and analytic strategy your group will use to test your hypothesis.

Each group will give a scholarly presentation of research results. Group presentations will be scheduled for April 21 and 26. This will entail a 15-minute presentation with 5 minutes Q&A and should be done in PowerPoint format with introduction, background, research design (methods and materials), results, discussion/implications, and conclusion. Exceptions can be made to this format with permission. Creative alternatives will be welcome. The overall emphasis will be on the creative integration of theory and methods and collaborative work ethic. Each presentation must demonstrate evidence of collaboration. That means, it must be clear that every group member was equally involved in the overall project (however, each group decides to divide the labor) and that all group members participate equally in the presentation. Presentations will therefore be evaluated as follows:

	1=poor	2=fair	3=satisfactory	4=good	5=exceptional
Hypothesis (testable, on time, relevance, importance, creativity, basis in theory, timeliness)					
Research design (validity/appropriateness of methods, clarity of explanation, timeliness)					
Results & discussion (clarity of explanation & implications)					
Collaborative ethic (equal participation of all group members)					
Overall (creativity, spelling/grammar, savoir fair)					

Research Paper (25 points): Research papers should be 10-12 pages and use a scholarly style guide. Every scholarly journal published its "author guidelines," which include a style guide. Here is an example from *Ethos*, the journal for the Society for Psychological Society: <http://www.wiley.com/bw/submit.asp?ref=0091-2131>. These guidelines will give you the required manuscript style of the respective scholarly journal (obviously, the page count specified here supersedes those of your respective style guide). When you turn in your report, you will include a professional cover letter that indicates what journal's style you are using for your report and the roles taken by each group member in your collaboration. I recommend you use RefWorks bibliographic software, as it will drastically improve your efficiency and accuracy and is free through the UA library (<http://refworks.ua.edu/>). In using RefWorks, I also recommend choosing a journal style that is loaded in RefWorks.

I recommend preparing your paper before your group presentation, as you will use the same material in the presentation. You will then use the constructive feedback you receive the presentation to improve the report. For writing projects, your group will spend about a third of the time researching your topic and the rest composing and revising your presentation and report. The process of writing should inevitably send you back to your sources to clarify points so there is some additional research time folded into writing time. Research papers usually represent approximately 4-8 hours of research and 8-16 hours of writing. You will use primary sources for theoretical background and discussion. This means that, while being integrative and creative, your project will build on research that has come before. This will provide your validity. Reports must be grammatically and carefully proofread and, therefore, not suffer the flawed organization and logical gaps that first and second drafts almost always do. In writing, keep in mind your audience. Papers written "for the instructor" often make unwarranted assumptions about the expertise of the reader. The result is that you may assume the reader "knows what you mean" and you may fall into the trap of obscuring an otherwise good (or hiding poor) results and implications with jargon. Despite all these restrictions in terms of format that have the tendency to suck the life out of an otherwise fun project, I want you to convey the excitement of your results. Given the limited potential for interpreting pilot data from a small, biased sample, I want you to go out on a limb and be more speculative than you otherwise would for a true scholarly publication. Let me know how neat and fun this study or its results are. Finally, you will be evaluated using the following rubric:

	1=poor	2=fair	3=satisfactory	4=good	5=exceptional
Coherence (adherence to style, internal logic, organization, spelling/grammar, prose style)					
Intellectual merit (relevance to course, relevance to previous research)					
Broader impacts (importance or implications to discipline or society)					
Source material (choice of appropriate sources & comprehension of them)					
Overall impression (originality/creativity, collaboration, compelling/convincing, interesting)					

Grading Policy

25 points = Midterm exam

25 points = Group presentation

25 points = Group research paper

25 points = Final exam

Policy on Missed Exams & Coursework

Attendance: If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to utilize Tegrity to view lectures or contact a classmate to get notes. However, I cannot guarantee that every lecture will be posted to Tegrity. Furthermore, discussions will be an important aspect of this course, which is difficult to re-experience via Tegrity.

Exams: If you miss an exam due to legitimate circumstances beyond your control, you may make it up if arrangements are made with me in a timely fashion (i.e., you should be able to get notice to me by the next day or within 3 under extreme circumstances). Legitimate circumstances may include illness sufficient to merit a visit to the Student Health Center (in which case, be prepared to provide proof of visit) or death or illness in the family. Under the latter circumstances, I expect you will be notifying your academic adviser and other instructors of your absence in their classes too, which I may elect to verify.

Research Presentation: If you miss your own presentation for any reason whatsoever, you will make it up by conducting a second but individual research project and submitting a 25-page research paper using the same format outlined for the group research paper above. This will be due by exactly two weeks after the final exam date.

Term Paper: If hypotheses or research design outlines are not received when they are due, I will begin deducting 5% from the paper grade for each group member for each day they are late. Collaboration is essential on this project. No excuses will be accepted. If any group members do not pull their weight, they will be penalized individually, but this will not be an acceptable excuse for not completing assignments as directed.

Late submissions will only be accepted by prior arrangement and/or with a very good reason. Otherwise, I will deduct 10% from each group member's paper grade for each day (or part of a day) they are late. Many assignments being due at the same time is *never* a good reason, and extensions will never be authorized on that basis, so please don't ask. No extensions will be authorized during the 3 days immediately prior to the due date except in the case of a legitimate medical emergency.

Outline of Topics

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Activity/Due</u>
Thurs, Jan 13	Syllabus, research project		
Tues, Jan 18	What is consciousness?	Hobson, part I (chaps. 1-3) "The Scope & Shape of Conscious States"	
Thurs, Jan 20		Damasio, "Feeling and Knowing" (eLearning)	
Tues, Jan 25		Crick & Koch "A Framework of Consciousness" (eLearning); Keenan ch. 1 (eLearning)	
Thurs, Jan 27		Keenan chaps 2-3 (eLearning)	Research hypothesis due
Tues, Feb 1		Self, Other, and Dissociation	Keenan chaps 4-5 (eLearning)
Thurs, Feb 3	Keenan chaps 6-7 (eLearning)		Mind-in-the-eyes

Tues Feb 8		Keenan chaps 8-9 (eLearning)	SPQ
Thurs, Feb 10		Hobson, chaps. 4-5 ("Beyond Psychoanalysis: Toward a Neurodynamic Theory of Mental States")	DES
Tues, Feb 15	Methods for the study of mind/body relationships and components of "consciousness"	Gore, chaps 1-3	Eye roll test
Thurs, Feb 17		Gore, chaps 4-6	Body postures
Tues, Feb 22		Gore, chaps 7-9	Hypnosis
Thurs, Feb 24	DVD: "Taboo: Sacred Pain"		
Tues, Mar 1	Non-human primate and animal "culture" and analogs of religious behavior	King, chaps 1-2	Neurofeedback
Thurs, Mar 3		King, chaps 3-4	
Tues, Mar 8		King, chaps 5-6	Research Design Due
Thurs, Mar 10	MIDTERM EXAM		MIDTERM EXAM
Mar 15 & 17	SPRING BREAK		
Tues, Mar 22	Religion as an adaptation or an evolutionary by-product	King, chaps 7-8	Group 1 data collection
Thurs, Mar 24		Winkelman "Shamanism & Cognitive Evolution"	Group 2 data collection
Tues, Mar 29		Newberg article(eLearning); Storm & Wilson article (eLearning)	Group 3 data collection
Thurs, Mar 31		Boyer article (eLearning); Sosis article (eLearning)	Group 4 data collection
Tues, Apr 5	Dreaming, hypnosis, and other alternative states of consciousness	Hobson, chaps. 6-9 ("Normal & Abnormal Alterations of Consciousness")	
Thurs, Apr 7			
Tues, Apr 12		Brereton article (eLearning); Lewis-Williams	
Thurs, Apr 14			
Tues, Apr 19	Exogenous and endogenous delimiters of conscious awareness	Hobson, chaps. 10-12 ("The Medical Drugstore")	
Thurs, Apr 21		Siegel "Introduction," "War in Eden," "A Trip of Goats" (eLearning)	Group presentations
Tues, Apr 26		Hobson, chaps. 13-15 ("The Recreational Drugstore")	Group presentations
Thurs, Apr 28		Siegel "A Shrewdness of Apes" (eLearning)	FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER
Thurs, May 3, 8-10:30AM	FINAL EXAM		

Disability Statement

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 348-4285 or visit 133-B Martha Parham Hall East to register for services. Students who may need course adaptations because of a disability are welcome to make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, 133-B Martha Parham Hall East, before receiving academic adjustments.

Policy on Academic Misconduct

All students in attendance at the University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student.

[The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy](#) will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

Severe Weather Protocol

In the case of a tornado warning (tornado has been sighted or detected by radar; sirens activated), all university activities are automatically suspended, including all classes and laboratories. If you are in a building, please move immediately to the lowest level and toward the center of the building away from windows (interior classrooms, offices, or corridors) and remain there until the tornado warning has expired. Classes in session when the tornado warning is issued can resume immediately after the warning has expired at the discretion of the instructor. Classes that have not yet begun will resume 30 minutes after the tornado warning has expired provided at least half of the class period remains.

UA is a residential campus with many students living on or near campus. In general classes will remain in session until the National Weather Service issues safety warnings for the city of Tuscaloosa. Clearly, some students and faculty commute from adjacent counties. These counties may experience weather related problems not encountered in Tuscaloosa. Individuals should follow the advice of the National Weather Service for that area taking the necessary precautions to ensure personal safety. Whenever the National Weather Service and the Emergency Management Agency issue a warning, people in the path of the storm (tornado or severe thunderstorm) should take immediate life saving actions.

When West Alabama is under a severe weather advisory, conditions can change rapidly. It is imperative to get to where you can receive information from the [National Weather Service](#) and to follow the instructions provided. Personal safety should dictate the actions that faculty, staff and students take. The Office of Public Relations will disseminate the latest information regarding conditions on campus in the following ways:

- Weather advisory posted on the UA homepage
- Weather advisory sent out through Connect-ED--faculty, staff and students ([sign up at myBama](#))
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA at 90.7 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over Alabama Public Radio (WUAL) at 91.5 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA 7. WVUA 7 Storm Watch provides a free service you can subscribe to that allows you to receive weather warnings for Tuscaloosa via e-mail, pager or cell phone. Check <http://www.wvua7.com/stormwatch.html> for details.