PSY 304
-Social Cognition: The Psychology of Interactive Minds-

I. WHEN AND WHERE:  
Lecture: Monday/Wednesday: 11:00am to 11:50am  
Location: PSH/PNI, Room A02  
Precept: Wednesday, TBD  
Location: PSH/PNI, Room TBD

II. INSTRUCTOR:  
Alin Coman, Ph.D.  
Peretsman-Scully Hall, Room 529  
acoman@princeton.edu  
Office hours: by appointment

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION/OVERVIEW:  
Individuals are rarely isolated from one another. In our day-to-day lives, interactivity is ubiquitous, from communicating with one another, to jointly remembering the past, to coordinating our actions. Despite the fact that our minds are constantly in an interactive mode, most cognitive scientists investigate the mind/brain in tasks that involve complete isolation from others. Even social scientists who fully acknowledge that humans are social creatures tend to study cognition in isolation by simply presenting stimuli that are social in nature. This course is based on the assumption that exploring humans in interaction will lead to significant advances in understanding the mind. At the same time, it will illuminate the emergent properties of cognition at a collective level.

The Psychology of Interactive Minds brings together several strands of research with three main objectives: a) present interactivity as manifested at different levels, from neuroscience, to communication, to memory, and to action, b) feature novel methodological approaches aimed at studying interactivity in principled ways, and c) create bridges across the different subfields in the cognitive and the social sciences to facilitate the development of new experimental paradigms.

Note: This course will require designing experiments aimed at exploring how social interactions shape cognition, and, through these influences, drive large-scale dynamics. You will not need to conduct these experiments, but you’ll have to present them in class as part of the mid-term evaluation.

IV. GOALS: This course is designed for undergraduate students who have an interest in exploring both how social interactions affect the mind, but also how the mind, through interaction, affects collective level outcomes. Each week, there will be two 50-minute lectures on relevant topics, as well as a precept in which students will have the opportunity to interact with some of the authors whose articles they will read.
By the end of the course, students will:

- Become familiar with experimental methodology investigating the human mind in interaction, from joint attention to joint remembering and to cooperative behavior.
- Become proficient in critically analyzing what constitutes promising research directions in this emerging field.
- Be able to formulate empirical ideas and conduct research to explore minds in interaction.

V. GRADING: Grading is distributed as follows:

1) Precept/Lecture participation: 35%, distributed as follows:
   a. 20% reading summaries due by midnight of the day before the precept is scheduled (8 reading summaries in total)
   b. 15% class participation (both Lecture and Precept)

2) Research project presentation: 30%, distributed as follows:
   a. 15% midterm group presentation
   b. 15% written research report due on December 20th

3) Final take-home exam: 35%

Note: Documents with guidelines for each of the following grading sections will be uploaded on Blackboard by the end of the first week of classes: 1) reading summaries, 2) precept presentations, and 3) research reports.

VI. THE READING LIST: Discussion topics and representative reading assignments are provided in what follows (all readings are posted on Blackboard). On occasion, authors of some of the articles will join us through Skype to tell us more about their work and to answer our questions.
TOPICS & READINGS

Week 1: Introduction to interactive minds

Lecture 1 (Wed 09/14): Introduction to interactive minds


Precept: NO PRECEPT

Week 2: The cognitive perspective on social interactions

Lecture 1 (Mon 09/19): The cognitive perspective on social interactions I


Lecture 2 (Wed 09/21): The cognitive perspective on social interaction II


Precept: Topic of the week: Where is the mind?


Week 3: Perception in social contexts

Lecture 1 (Mon 09/26): Introduction to Social perception


Precept: Topic of the week: Joint attention in group settings
Invited Skype guest: Garriy Shteynberg, University of Tennessee, Knoxville


Week 4: From categorization to stereotyping

Lecture 1 (Mon 10/03): Categorization


Lecture 2 (Wed 10/05): Stereotypes


Precept: Topic of the week: Propagation of stereotypes


Week 5: From individual to collective memories

Lecture 1 (Mon 10/10): Social aspects of memory


Lecture 2 (Wed 10/12): Joint remembering and collective forgetting


**Precept:** *Topic of the week: SoPHIE: a platform to study the emergence of collective emotions, memories and beliefs*

**Week 6: Decision-making**

**Lecture 1 (Mon 10/17): System 1 vs. System 2**


**Lecture 2 (Wed 10/19): Heuristics and biases**


**Precept:** *Topic of the week: Modes of thinking influence religious beliefs*  
*Invited Skype guest:* Eldar Shafir *(Princeton University)* or Anandi Mani *(Warwick University)*


**Week 7: (MIDTERM WEEK)**

**Lecture 1 (Mon 10/24): MIDTERM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**Lecture 2 (Wed 10/26): MIDTERM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**NO PRECEPT**

**Week 8: (FALL RECESS)**
Week 9: Social cognition in the brain(s)

Lecture 1 (Mon 11/07): Neuroscience of social cognition I


Lecture 2 (Wed 11/09): Neuroscience of social cognition II

*Invited Speaker: Diana Tamir, Princeton University*


Precept: *Topic of the week: The interactivity of social cognition*


Week 10: The psychology of social influence

Lecture 1 (Mon 11/14): Social influence: the science of behavior change


Lecture 2 (Wed 11/16): Social influence: the science of information propagation


Precept: Topic of the week: What propagates in social networks? (Facebook exercise)


Week 11: The development of social cognition

Lecture 1 (Mon 11/21): The development of social cognition


Lecture 2 (Wed 11/23): NO CLASS-THANKSGIVING

NO PRECEPT-THANKSGIVING

Week 12: Moral cognition

Lecture 1 (Mon 11/28): Morality and moral communities


Lecture 2 (Wed 11/30): Sacred values and intergroup conflict


Precept: **Topic of the week: Religion and sacred values**


**Week 13: Empathy and its role in social life**

**Lecture 1 (Mon 12/05): Perspective taking/Empathy**


**Lecture 2 (Wed 12/07): Improving theory of other minds**

*Invited Speaker: David Kidd, New School for Social Research*


Precept: **Topic of the week: Empathy**

*Invited Skype guest: Jamil Zaki, Stanford University*


**Week 14: Culture and cognition**

**Lecture 1 (Mon 12/12): Culture and cognition**


**Lecture 2 (Wed 12/14): The social construction of reality: Putting it all together**