

PSYCHOLOGY 456

THEORY OF MIND

Winter 2013

Mon: 10:00-11:30 Wednesday: 8:30-10:00 H223

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Syllabus

Introduction

Theory of mind is the everyday understanding that people do things because of their mental states such as intentions, beliefs, and desires. We call it a "theory" because we cannot see these mental states. They are theoretical constructs. These theoretical constructs, though, are powerful and allow us to understand the proximal causes of human behavior. Using our theory of mind, we can both explain what a person has done, and predict what that person will do in the future. Some researchers and theorists use the term "folk psychology" to describe theory of mind. It is our everyday, non-scientific, understanding of the basic psychological mechanisms that cause everyday behavior.

For some time now, developmental psychologists have been studying the developmental timetable and trajectory of young children's theory of mind. Hundreds of studies have been published investigating young children's understanding of psychological states and how they affect behavior. This literature is diverse yet coherent, and arguably we know more about this one particular aspect of human cognitive development than any other. Because of its richness, researchers have used theory of mind as a window on children's cognitive development more generally; as the basic phenomena that constitute theory of mind reasoning are gradually uncovered, so too are fundamental insights into the very mechanisms by which development takes place. Clinicians have also found theory of mind to be useful. Difficulties in theory of mind development have been linked to Autism, conduct disorder, language delays and a host of other developmental difficulties. Thus, theory of mind development is not only an interesting topic of study, it is also of practical importance. This class

will serve as a survey introduction to this large body of research.

integrity), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitatio
forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an

Schedule of Class Meetings, Topics and Readings

Week 1: What is a theory of mind?

Monday, Jan7: Introduction to the Class

WednesdayJan9: Social cognition in the wild

Dally, J. M., Emery, N. J. & Clayton, N. S. (2006). Foraging western scrub jays keep track of who was watching who. *Science*, 312, 1662-1665.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/621344411/13414AB9E6DEE884B6/7?accountid=6180>

Weeks 2 & 3: Diagnosing theory of mind in children

Monday, Jan14: The false belief task

Moses, L. J. & Flavell, J. H. (1990). Inferring false beliefs from actions and reactions. *Child Development*, 61, 929-945.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/617883185/13414C716C4268ED908/1?accountid=6180>

Gopnik, A. & Astington, J. W. (1988). Children's understanding of representational change and its relation to the understanding of false belief and the appearance reality distinction. *Child Development*, 59, 26-37.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/617422195/13414C35E3353688A4/1?accountid=6180>

WednesdayJan16: Competence/Performance: Executive functioning and false belief understanding

Carlson, S. M. & Moses, L. J. (2001). Individual differences in inhibitory control and children's theory of mind. *Child Development*, 72, 1032-1053.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/619586206/13414C8016739A6C75D/3?accountid=6180>

Monday, Jan 21: Maybe infants "understand" false belief?

Onishi, K. H. & Baillargeon, R. (2005). Do 15-month-old infants understand false beliefs? *Science*, 308, 255-258.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/620728097/13414D9B6F477C27DBF/1?accountid=6180>

Wednesday, Jan 23: Well, for preschooler's, it's more than inhibitory control

Sabbagh, M. A., Xu, F., Carlson, S. M., Moses, L. J. & Lee, K. (2006). The development of executive functioning and theory of mind: A comparison of Chinese and U.S. preschoolers. *Psychological Science*, 17, 4-81.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/621015343/13414DC99C1D7CD7D6/1?accountid=6180>

Week 4: Theory of mind is ~~more~~ false belief...

Monday, Jan 28: Desire understanding in very young children

Repacholi, B. M. & Gopnik, A. (1997). Early reasoning about desires: Evidence from 14- and 18-month-olds. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 2-21.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/619037672/13414DE97AA6F02FC67/1?accountid=6180>

Wednesday, Jan 30: Emotion and attention understanding in very young children

Philips, A. T., Wellman, H. M. & Spelke, E. S. (2002). Infants' ability to connect gaze and emotional expression to intentional

action.Cognition, 853-78.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/619921419/13414DF3A3E40501715/1?accountid=6180>

Week 6: Theory of mind and moral development

Monday, Feb 11: Mens rea.

Killen, M., Mulvey, K. L., Richardson, C., Jampol, N. & Woodward, A. (2011). The accidental transgressor: Morally relevant theory of mind. *Cognition*, 119, 197-215.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/867315613/13414E342BCC647092/1?accountid=6180>

Wednesday Feb 13: Reciprocal associations

Smetana, J. G., Faber, M., Conry-Murray, C., & Sturge-Apple, M. L. (2011). Reciprocal associations between young children's developing moral judgments and theory of mind. *Developmental Psychology*

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/898672266/13414E3EBBA25B2B346/1?accountid=6180>

Week 7: Peer relations

Monday, Feb 25: Being good at playing with others

Astington, J. W. & Jenkins, J. (1995). Theory of mind development and social understanding. *Cognition and Emotion*, 19, 151-165.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/618704337/13414E4752F6EE03852/5?accountid=6180>

Watson, A. C., Nixon, C. L., Wilson, A. & Capage, L. (1999). Social interaction skills and theory of mind in young children. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 985-991.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/619415764/13414E59C8B7FB04CCF/1?accountid=6180>

Wednesday Feb 27 Being popular and making friends

Slaughter, V., Dennis, M. J. & Pritchard, M. (2002). Theory of mind and peer acceptance in preschool children. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 42, 545-564.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/619779207/13414E645C4AE3D3B9/1?accountid=6180>

Moore, C., Bosacki, S. L., & Macgillivray, S. (2011). Theory of mind and social interest in zero-acquaintance play situations. *Child Development*, 82, 1163-1172.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/8823971/13414E6B1953558B2F/1?accountid=6180>

Week 8: Biological bases of Theory of Mind

Monday, Mar4: Brain development

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=Observant,nonaggressive temperament predicts theory of mind development.](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=Observant,nonaggressive+temperament+predicts+theory+of+mind+development)

Week 9: Experience and Theory of Mind development.

Monday, Mar11: Language

Ruffman, T., Slade, L., & Crowe, E. (2002). The relation between children's and mothers' mental state language and theory of mind understanding. *Child Development*, 73, 475-481.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/619882220/13414EC784361929EA7/1?accountid=6180>

Pyers, J. E. & Senghas, A. (2009). Language promotes false belief understanding: Evidence from learners of a new sign language. *Psychological Science*, 20, 802-812.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/622056015/13414ED35FE14D15E42/1?accountid=6180>

Wednesday Mar 13: Siblings and Peers

McAlister, A. & Peterson, C. C. (2006). Mental playmates: Siblings, executive functioning, and theory of mind. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 34, 475-481.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/621506597/13414EDCF064E212802/1?accountid=6180>

Wang, Y. & Su, Y. (2009). False belief understanding: Children catch it from classmates of different ages. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 33, 331-336.

<http://search.proquest.com/psycinfo/docview/622058794/13414EEA5214984B74C/1?accountid=6180>

Weeks 10, 11, & 12: Group Presentations