Course Plan / Readings (subject to change):

**Course Structure/Delivery:**

The course will revolve around student discussions. The effectiveness of the course will depend on student participation and debate. Hence, it is crucial that all students do the readings for each weekly topic, as questions will be asked about the readings. It is expected that students be prepared to talk about and answer questions about methodology, findings and theories. Honours students would need to demonstrate an ability to think critically and to develop a scientific mind. These abilities will be established through summary and essay writing and, further, research proposal writing.

Expected Background: PSYC324 – Child Development (or an equivalent course)

Learning Objectives:

1. Be familiar with the theory of mind research findings (points of consensus and differences);
2. Be familiar with verbal and non-verbal experimental research techniques used to study theory of mind;
3. Be able to critically review, succinctly discuss, and creatively innovate the research pertaining to specific topics on theory of mind development;

These three objectives relate to completing three different styles of academic assessments: critical summary writing, critical essay writing and research proposal writing.

There will be assigned readings. At the beginning, the coordinator will lead discussions on the development of theory of mind. From then, this course will revolve around student discussions. The effectiveness of the course will depend on student participation and debate. Hence, it is crucial that all students do the readings for each weekly topic, as questions will be asked about the readings. It is expected that students be prepared to talk about and answer questions about methodology, findings and theories. Honours students would need to demonstrate an ability to think critically and to develop a scientific mind. These abilities will be established through summary and essay writing and, further, research proposal writing.

Course Structure/Delivery:

1. Student seminar presentations (with commentary from academic staff member) on seminal research publications on theory of mind development;
2. Students will be expected to read key references with the aim of answering / addressing various questions or issues and be ready to discuss them (there is no group work).

The sessions (marked in grey fields) are open for formalized student presentation and summary writing. Each student must select 1 session for power-point presentation (12 minute power-point covering the GIST of the TWO papers set in a particular slot). Each student presenter for that session must also write up a summary (20%) that critically discusses both TWO of their respective papers in that slot. The written summary is due on the day of the presentation after class.

Course Plan / Readings (subject to change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>07/03</th>
<th>14/03</th>
<th>21/03</th>
<th>28 March</th>
<th>16 April</th>
<th>25 April</th>
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<td>He et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Surtees &amp; Apperly (2012)</td>
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02 May
Low & Simpson (2013)
Theory of Mind: Coda
10 May
Newton & de Villiers (2007)

09 May
Iao et al. (2011)
Research Proposal Clinic Day
16 May
Perner et al. (2011)
Research Proposal Clinic Day
23 May

Critical Thinking Essay Due (40%)

Research Proposal Due (40%)

07 June

*********************************************** ANZAC Day Holiday ***********************************************


Course Readings & Materials:

There is no set textbook. All sessions are based on assigned readings. PDF copies of each article can be found in the PSYC415 folder in the Blackboard portal (https://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp) and students are expected to download a copy of each article for themselves. Any additional readings that may be suggested by the coordinator may be found from the library’s on-line journal collection. There are no other materials needed for this course.

ADDITIONAL MUST-READ REFERENCES (useful for essay and research proposal; available in Blackboard)


Assessment Requirements:

There is no final exam. All three assessments are internally based (a total of 100%) and relate to course objectives 1 to 3. All of the internal assessments are compulsory. Please note that the coordinator will NOT read any drafts beforehand. You are, however, free to talk about how you will approach the assignment with the coordinator. The three assessments are:

1. Critical Summary (20%) (due March 28 or May 2, depending on specific papers) (due immediately after class)

Summary should integrate and critically discuss the TWO specific set papers that the student presented on (3 pages maximum devoted to text; 1.5 spacing; 12-point Times New Roman font; 2.54cm margins all sides; references on page 4; APA style).

Summary Grading Scheme

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 10</td>
<td>Inadequate summary of the research; sloppy work; faulty interpretation of the research</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 10</td>
<td>Adequate summary of the research (but tends to be mere description in a list-like fashion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 12</td>
<td>Clear summary of the research, with some attempt at explication of connections between each of the articles, with some intelligent commentary or extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>Clear summary of the research with clear and convincing explication of connections between articles, with clear links to extant and new findings, and with meaningful and insightful commentary or interesting proposals for follow-up research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 16</td>
<td>As above, but flawlessly written, a pleasure to read, and shows exemplary critical analysis of theory, methodology and, further, integration with modern broader literature – all of this whilst writing succinctly (i.e., you will need to astound me)</td>
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2. Critical Thinking Essay (40%) (due April 16 12 noon sharp)

Write an essay answering the following question: Should it be so contentious for developmental scientists to – theoretically, methodologically and empirically – accept that theory of mind understanding has an innate basis? Your essay should be 5,000 words maximum (excluding references; double spacing; 12-point Times New Roman; 2.54cm margins all sides; APA style – word limit must be stated in essay; anything over 5000 words will incur an automatic 10% deduction of marks). Your essay should critically address the theoretical issues component (10%), the methodological issues component (10%), the empirical issues component (10%); a further 10% is allocated to writing, integration of components, and depth and innovativeness of thinking. Please submit your essay in hard-copy to Jason’s mailbox (mailbox in Easterfield Building on Level 5) (no e-mails accepted).
3. Research Proposal Assignment (40%) (due June 6, 11am sharp)

Over the years, Perner has challenged that scientists cannot arrive at decisive test for the early development of the understanding that people act as a function of their beliefs by demonstrating more and more of infants or toddlers’ precocious responses in situations where one thinks theory of mind apply. This strategy will not help because each of the demonstrated responses can, in principle, be based on some general behaviour rule (e.g., people look where they last saw, last reached, last felt, last heard etc. where an object was located). In tackling the above conceptual problem, write a research proposal that specifies your own original idea for a more sensitive measure assessing the nature of infants’ false-belief understanding.

Your research proposal must be written in the specific MS-Word template provided (found on the PSYC415 folder on Blackboard). The template has specific instructions for each section regarding spacing and margins and 12-point Times Roman font. You cannot and may not adjust these settings. If you do, an automatic zero will be incurred. After writing the Background and Aim of your research proposal, you then go onto the Proposed Research section where you will explain your specific hypotheses and how they were generated. For this section, you should discuss the mechanics of how you would go about testing your hypotheses. You may wish to create tables or graphs with projected data. Here, you should discuss what support or disconfirmation of your hypotheses would mean theoretically. The last section of your proposal should be the References.

Constraints you MUST adhere to when writing the research proposal:

CONSTRAINT 1: Your task is to design and write a research proposal to address and solve the broad conceptual problem that Perner has identified relating to current approaches measuring false-belief understanding in infants. Hence, when coming up with your original design, you need to show that you have taken into account differences between Perner’s view in comparison to competing accounts of the nature and development of false-belief understanding by Baillargeon and Apperly. As such, cognitive developmental variables must be paramount in your experimental research design (e.g., you should not focus on variables relating to, for example, siblings, gender or SES). Before you start the actual write-up you must seek approval with respect to the approach you will take to try and solve Perner’s challenge.

CONSTRAINT 2: Your research proposal must only include typically developing infants (deaf children, bilingual children or children with autism and other clinical groups are not permitted).

Breakdown of marks allocated to various sections of research proposal:
Appropriate Title – 1%;
200 word Abstract/Summary – 1%;
One page Background of literature – 7%;
One-page of Aim (State the general goals and specific objectives of the research proposal and emphasise how the research will advance knowledge and increase understanding of the development and nature of infants’ early sensitivity to belief) – 7%;
Three pages (and only three) filled of Proposed Research (Hypotheses – 1%, Participants – 1%, Procedure – 4%, Projected Results & Data Analyses – 5%; Discussion of implications of potential findings for theories – 5%);
Exhaustiveness of References (i.e., journal search) – 1%
Originality and Inventiveness of Research Design: 4%;
Overall Writing: 3%

Please submit your research proposal in hard-copy to Jason’s mailbox (mailbox in Easterfield Building on Level 5) (no e-mails accepted).

More about assessment and penalties:

As this is a 15-point course, the expected number of student hours devoted to the course is 150 hours (approximately 10-15 hours per week). These hours cover course attendance, reading and preparation for assignment work. The expected workload recommendation is only based on averages for an average grade.

What should I do if I cannot attend session to present on the research articles because I am ill or there is a disastrous emergency? You may be excused for the specific day your presentation if you provide the course coordinator a detailed doctor’s certificate. It would be ideal if you informed the course coordinator of these circumstances before the actual day of your presentation. Remember, waking up late, forgetting, missing the bus and so on, are not considered legitimate reasons for being absent for the presentation. Under these latter circumstances, you will be given a straight zero for that presentation assignment.

What will happen if I have a legitimate reason for not being able to attend the scheduled day of the presentation? If this is the case, you will have to arrange with me to schedule a time that you will make the presentation to the class. If you miss the second opportunity, you will get an automatic zero for the presentation.
Can I choose not to hand in some assignments or do presentations?
You must complete all assessments. The mandatory requirement of PSYC415 is: In order to earn a final mark for the course you must have marks for each internal assignment. You do not have to pass each item of assessment, but you MUST hand them in. Failure to comply will result in the appropriate fail grade.

Where should I hand in my written assignments, and are there relevant penalties for lateness and not adhering to word limits?
The essay and research proposal assignments are to be handed directly in hardcopy format to the coordinator in his mailbox on Level 5 (Easterfield) (no e-mails accepted). The summary in hardcopy should be handed to the coordinator during class. You will lose marks for turning any assignment late (10% reduction for each day late). All assignments will no longer be accepted three days past the due date. Students need to always ensure that they keep an exact, electronic copy of an assignment. With respect to the word or page limits for assignments, material going beyond specified limits will incur an automatic 10% deduction. A request for an electronic copy of an assignment may occur after a hard copy has been submitted.

What are my chances of obtaining extensions?
The chances are very slim unless there is a medical emergency (doctor’s certificate must be provided) or major life event emergency. Under these circumstances, you need to inform the course coordinator before the actual due date or as soon as you are able to do so. A few days extension may be provided under these exceptional circumstances. Having too many assignments to do will not count as a legitimate reason for an extension. The chances for extensions are typically slim because students already know of the assignment questions at the start of the course and are expected to start working on them from then as well as to plan ahead.

General Class Policies & Attendance
Given the amount of information covered in this class, it will be assumed that you will be in regular attendance when there are formal sessions. Note that if you do not attend a session you are still responsible for learning material presented during that period. The coordinator may be contacted for matters regarding the course, assessments, and grades.

Mandatory Course Requirements
In order to earn a final mark for the course you must have grades each assessment. You do not have to pass each item of assessment, but you MUST hand them in. Failure to comply will result in the appropriate fail grade.

Communication of Additional Information
If there is any information pertaining to the PSYC415 sessions, it may be found at the Blackboard site in the PSYC415 folder.

Class Representative: A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person’s name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Academic integrity and plagiarism
Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work. Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University’s learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University’s reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification. The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else’s work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. ‘Someone else’s work’ means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University’s website: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Use of Turnitin
Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine http://www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.
Where to find more detailed information
Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. The University’s statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar (See Section C). Further information about the University’s academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/default.aspx.