



**Psychology 339L (528552)**  
**Origins of the Mind**  
Fall 2021

Lecture Location: Seeley G. Mudd Building (SGM) 124  
Days and Time: Tuesday & Thursday; 2:00 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.

Online portion at <https://blackboard.usc.edu> and <https://tophat.com>

**Instructor Information**

Dr. Clayton L. Stephenson  
Assistant Professor (Teaching) Psychology  
[clstephe@usc.edu](mailto:clstephe@usc.edu)

Office Location: SGM 525A  
Office Hours: Monday, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Virtual Office Hours: Friday, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
at <https://usc.zoom.us/my/cog.guy>

**Lab and TA Information**

Lab Day	Lab Time	Lab Location	TA Name	TA Email
Monday	10:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	VHE 206	Peter Wang	<a href="mailto:peterpwa@usc.edu">peterpwa@usc.edu</a>
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.	KAP 113	Matthew Pilgrim	<a href="mailto:mpilgrim@usc.edu">mpilgrim@usc.edu</a>
Wednesday	10:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	VHE 214	Matthew Pilgrim	<a href="mailto:mpilgrim@usc.edu">mpilgrim@usc.edu</a>
Thursday	8:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.	GFS 220	Lin Zhang	<a href="mailto:zhan306@usc.edu">zhan306@usc.edu</a>
Friday	10:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	GFS 109	Peter Wang	<a href="mailto:peterpwa@usc.edu">peterpwa@usc.edu</a>
Friday	12:00 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.	SGM 226	Lin Zhang	<a href="mailto:zhan306@usc.edu">zhan306@usc.edu</a>

**Syllabus**

**Course Description**

Exploration of ancient philosophical questions concerning the origins of human knowledge through empirical studies of infants, animals, and adults from diverse cultures.

**My Course Summary**

We, homo sapiens, have been around for approximately 300,000 years out the 4.5 billion years that the Earth has existed. In that short amount of time, we have changed the planet drastically more than any other animal (that we know of). But, how did humans do this? Is there something special about humans vs. other animals? In this class we will look at some of philosophy, science, and psychology’s biggest questions about the human condition. Is there a natural order to the emergence of our mind? What is consciousness? Is there something about our vision and mental representations of space that allow us to be so mobile? Humans do, after all, live across the globe in *every single type of climate possible*. No other animal has done that. While the focus will be on the cognitive mechanisms of the mind, we will also make comparisons to other animals, make cross-cultural comparison, and investigate how our early develop as infants can help answer such complex questions.

**Prerequisites**

None

### Teaching Objectives

- 1) Provide the background philosophy, theories, and empirical findings related to the mind.
- 2) Guide students through the density of research on the origins of the mind.
- 3) Improve students' critical thinking skills in a range of complex topics in psychological science.

### Student Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to . . .

- 1) recall and define the terms related to vision, cognition, language, problem solving, social cognition, and intelligence.
- 2) explain how modern theories and empirical research answer (or don't) philosophical questions about the origins of the mind.
- 3) demonstrate your ability to write scientifically about empirical research.
- 4) synthesize information from multiple areas in psychology, anthropology, and neuroscience to explain the origins of the mind.

### Required Materials

There are no required textbooks for this class. The required readings will be various articles posted on Blackboard and Top Hat.

An access code to Top Hat is required! You will not be able to complete the exams or participation unless you have Top Hat. You may purchase it at <https://tophat.com/> or at the bookstore.

Assessment	Focused Learning Objective(s)	Due Date	Percent of Final Grade: Points
Exams	1, 2	9/23, 10/12, 11/04, 12/09	50% (individual grade): 100 points each
Labs	2, 3	Every Other Week (See Tentative Schedule of Topics)	25% (individual/group grade): 10 points each
Short Research Paper	3, 4	Tuesday, November 23 <sup>rd</sup>	15% (individual grade): 100 points
Participation	1, 2, 4	Each Lecture Session	10% (individual grade): 10 points each

### Exams

There are four exams that will test your understanding of the concepts in the course and will focus on both the details and "the big picture." Exams are based on a combination of lecture material, assigned readings, video-presentations, assignments, and handouts. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and short essays. **The regular exams are scheduled for 9/23, 10/12, and 11/04 during our regular class time. The Final Exam is on December 9<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

### Labs

In addition to the lectures, there will be bi-weekly section meetings (see Tentative Schedule of Topics for exact weeks labs will take place). These section meetings will consist of hands-on laboratory activities that involve collecting data, analyzing the results, and discussing how the results bear on competing hypotheses. After each of the 7 section meetings, students are required to submit a report (2-3 double-spaced pages, in 12-point Times New Roman font). The report should discuss (1) the research question being addressed by the experiment, (2) the experimental design, (3) the hypotheses, (4) the results, and (5) the conclusions that can be drawn from the results. Your report should have separate sub-headings for each of these topics. The reports are due one week after the section meeting. Students should NOT work in groups on these reports. Each report will be worth 10 points. You will *NOT* be allowed to submit a report if you did not attend the section. If you need to miss your assigned section for some reason, please contact your TA to arrange to attend one of the other sections in the week. It is your responsibility to ensure that you can attend one of the section meetings, so please plan ahead if you foresee needing to miss your scheduled discussion section. **Your lowest lab report will be dropped from the your overall grade calculation.**

### **Short Research Paper**

You will write a 3-page research paper on the topic of your choice related to the origins of the mind. You may expand on a topic that we covered in class, or you may write on a topic we did not cover or that I may have mentioned in passing. Whatever topic you choose, it must be related to the origins of the mind, and you must clearly frame your paper so that it is clear how the topic relates to the class. You may write the paper on your own or with one other person who is enrolled in the class. Absolutely no groups of three or more. If you do write the paper with another person in the class, then you and your co-author will receive the exact same grade. More specific information about the short research paper is available on Blackboard. **Your research paper is due Tuesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

### **Participation in Lecture**

Reading the assigned material and completing the assignments before class and lab are important to understanding the lecture topics and to participating in the discussions. Participation will be assessed through in-class exercises, activities, and discussion. Exercises may occasionally be assigned in class in order to help you to understand the course material. **Participation is completed on Top Hat and is by the end of each lecture session. Your lowest THREE participation points will be dropped from the calculation of your overall grade.**

### **EXTRA CREDIT: Participate in Research Studies**

You may participate in research studies conducted in the psychology department to earn extra credit. All points will be applied to your Final Exam. However, you *cannot* earn more than 100 points on your Final Exam, and any leftover extra credit points *will not* be applied to any other assignments. You can view and sign up for studies through the SONA system at <https://usc.sona-systems.com/>. You may complete up to 6 points of credit on SONA. Please note that your participation in research is voluntary and you have the right to NOT participate in research studies. If you do not want to participate in studies, then you may complete the alternative, which is writing two five-page papers on two topics, which are also posted on Blackboard. **All credits and/or papers are due by 11:59 p.m. on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. No exceptions!**

### **Grading Scheme**

**Please Note: I do NOT curve the grade. Whatever grade you have on Blackboard is your grade in real-time that you earned to that date. I do round up (e.g., 93.45 = 93.5%) for your final grade. Finally, it is NOT appropriate for you to ask to make up an assignment at the end of the semester that was due past what is outlined in the late policy or to ask for extra credit beyond what is described above, so please do NOT ask for either.**

A = 100 - 93.5%; A- = 93.4 - 89.5%; B+ = 89.4 - 86.5%; B = 86.4 - 83.5%; B- = 83.4 - 79.5%; C+ = 79.4 - 76.5%; C = 76.4 - 73.5%; C- = 73.4 - 69.5%; D+ = 69.4 - 66.5%; D = 66.4 - 63.5%; D- = 63.4 - 59.5%; Below 59.5% = F

### **Instructor Student Communication and Blackboard**

Blackboard (Bb) will be used to post announcements, send e-mails, and post all grades and course materials, so it is the student’s responsibility to frequently visit the course on Blackboard (website: <http://blackboard.usc.edu>). Bb transactions will follow the below guidelines.

- 1) **Grades:** All official grades and points will be posted on Bb one to two weeks after the completion of the exam, assignment, or activity. Grades will not be announced in class, via e-mail, or during office hours.
- 2) **Email:** Any email communications from the instructor or TA will be sent via Bb or through the USC’s email service. USC requires that all e-mail communication between the instructor and students be sent via an official USC e-mail address. *Any student communication delivered from a non-USC e-mail address will be automatically discarded.*

### **Notes on COVID**

- 1) Please follow all university policies regarding COVID safe practices.
- 2) Do NOT come to class if you have symptoms!
- 3) If you are sick, stay home.
  - a. If you have to stay home, please let me know.
  - b. Your grade for missed participations will be exempted from the overall calculation of your grade.
  - c. If you are sick during an exam, you will make up the exam once you are able to.

### ***Tentative Schedule of Topics and Assignments***

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Labs</b>	<b>Major Assignments</b>
WEEK 1			
Tuesday 08/24/2021	➤ Overview of course	➤ Syllabus ➤ No Lab	➤
Thursday 08/26/2021	➤ Introduction	➤	➤

WEEK 2

Tuesday 08/31/2021	➤ Vision: Light & Eye	➤ No Lab	➤
Thursday 09/02/2021	➤ Vision: Space Representation	➤	➤

WEEK 3

Tuesday 09/07/2021	➤ Vision: Color Perception	➤ <b>Lab #1</b>	➤
Thursday 09/09/2021	➤ Navigation	➤	➤

WEEK 4

Tuesday 09/14/2021	➤ Navigation	➤ No Lab	➤
Thursday 09/16/2021	➤ Object Representation	➤	➤

WEEK 5

Tuesday 09/21/2021	➤ Object Representation	➤ <b>Lab #2</b>	➤
Thursday 09/23/2021	➤ Exam 1	➤	➤ <b>Exam 1</b>

WEEK 6

Tuesday 09/28/2021	➤ Numerical Representation	➤ No Lab	➤
Thursday 09/30/2021	➤ Number Systems	➤	➤

WEEK 7

Tuesday 10/05/2021	➤ Social Cognition	➤ <b>Lab #3</b>	➤
Thursday 10/07/2021	➤ Language	➤	➤

WEEK 8

Tuesday 10/12/2021	➤ Midterm Exam	➤	➤ <b>Midterm Exam</b>
Thursday 10/14/2021	➤ Fall Break! ➤ No Class!	➤	➤

WEEK 9

Tuesday 10/19/2021	➤ Processing Faces	➤ <b>Lab #4</b>	➤
Thursday 10/21/2021	➤ Agents	➤	➤

WEEK 10

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Tuesday 10/26/2021	➤ Humor	➤ No Lab	➤
Thursday 10/28/2021	➤ Intelligence	➤	➤

WEEK 11

Tuesday 11/02/2021	➤ Culture	➤ <b>Lab #5</b>	➤
Thursday 11/04/2021	➤ Exam 3	➤	➤ <b>Exam 3</b>

WEEK 12

Tuesday 11/09/2021	➤ Scientific Revolutions	➤ No Lab	➤
Thursday 11/11/2021	➤ Biology & Evolution	➤	➤

WEEK 13

Tuesday 11/16/2021	➤ Teaching	➤ <b>Lab #6</b>	➤
Thursday 11/18/2021	➤ Morality	➤	➤

WEEK 14

Tuesday 11/23/2021	➤ No Class	➤ No Lab	➤ <b>Short Research Paper Due by 11:59 p.m.</b>
Thursday 11/25/2021	➤ Thanksgiving!	➤	➤

WEEK 15

Tuesday 11/30/2021	➤ Religion	➤ <b>Lab #7</b>	➤
Thursday 12/02/2021	➤ Conclusions	➤	➤

WEEK 16

Thursday 12/09/2021	<b>Final Exam: 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</b>		
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**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

### **Statement on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, lazy writing, and cheating are violations of the Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards and may be dealt with by both the instructor and the university. Plagiarism is defined as, "the act of presenting the ideas and writings of another as one's own." Lazy writing is defined as, "using quotes or paragraphs with the proper citation, but are used in a manner that a paper is stitched together and clearly has little or no original writing." Cheating is defined as, "the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means." In instances of academic dishonesty, the instructor will take appropriate action as outlined in the Academic Integrity Review Process (SJACS 14.10). For more information on avoiding plagiarism or lazy writing, see Chapter 1, Section 1.10 in the APA Publication Manual or visit [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug\\_plag.htm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm).

### **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me or to the TA as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for OSAS: <https://osas.usc.edu/>; Phone: (213) 740-0776; TDD Only: (213) 740-6948; Fax: (213) 740-8216; email: [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### **Course Notes**

- 1) **Late Assignments**: Assignments turned in late will receive a 5% reduction each day for the first two days turned in late. For the following five days (i.e., after the first two days) the late assignment will result in a 10% reduction for each day it is late. After seven days, an assignment cannot be turned in and will result in a grade of zero. *USC athletes should meet with me as soon as possible regarding their scheduled athletic events that may conflict with course requirements.*
- 2) **Email**: I typically respond to emails within 24 hours or less. However, I rarely respond to emails between 5:00 p.m. on Fridays to 7:00 a.m. on Mondays (i.e., the weekend). I will do my best to email over the weekend if it is urgent, but please note that I cannot guarantee it.
- 3) **Feedback**: Your TA and I will make every attempt to return assignments in a reasonable time by returning them no later than three weeks after the due date.

- 4) Appeal Process: If you find that your answer in an assignment or exam was incorrect, but you think it is correct, you can appeal the decision in writing. The written appeal must have supporting documentation (e.g., reference to a class reading). The appeal cannot be based on your opinion or personal experience, but rather based on the course materials. Appeals must be delivered to the instructor no later than one week after the grade is posted. Appeals will not be accepted via email and no late appeals will be accepted.
- 5) Course Participation: Your best bet at remembering and understanding the material is to complete the required readings BEFORE class. Also, keep in mind that you may need to do *multiple* readings of the textbooks to gain a full comprehension.
- 6) University Escort Service: If you feel that you would like to be escorted to your vehicle, bus, or campus residence after 5:00 p.m., do not hesitate to call (213) 740-4911.

### **Special Notes**

- 1) *All assignments in this course are expected to be word-processed and graphs/tables should be computer-generated.*
- 2) All students are expected to have access to the student computer network. It is your responsibility to ensure that your access is up to date during the semester.
- 3) Tutors are available through the Learning Resource Center (LRC). If you should find that you are not doing as well in this course as you would like, please see your lab instructor or me immediately. *We will help you: It is our job!* You can also arrange short-term or long-term tutoring through the LRC. The Writing Center is also available to tutor students who are having difficulty with writing. For assistance, visit their website at <http://college.usc.edu/writingcenter/> or call (213) 740-3691.

### **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

### **Statement of Course Content as a Copyright**

It is important to know that all material presented in class, labs, or discussion sent via email or posted on Blackboard is “all rights reserved” by the course instructor. In addition, some of it is copyrighted and distributed by a publishing corporation for in-class use only. ***You may not store, post, or distribute any course materials—on paper or electronically--for use by any student not presently enrolled in this course.*** Out of fairness to all current and future students, please do your part to protect our course content.

### **Syllabus as a Contract**

The purpose of this syllabus is to provide a contract between the instructor and the student. By enrolling in this class, you agree that you have read, understand, and will adhere to the syllabus guidelines and complete the assignments given in the class. I reserve the right to change the schedule of topics and readings and I will give notice to you of such changes well in advance of those changes.