

**The Development of Social Perception:
Understanding Animacy, Agency, and Intention
PSY 722**

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Wednesdays, 10:30am. Room 204
January to April 2011

In this class, we will read about very early competencies in social perception and social cognition. We will examine and critique theoretical perspectives, and read and discuss important empirical contributions to the field.

Tentative Timeline

- Week 1 - January 5th – Class Organization; Intro to Theory and Methods in Early Social Perception
- Week 2 - January 12th – Introductory readings
- Week 3 - January 19th – Perception of Biological Motion
- Week 4 – January 26th – Perception of Animate Motion
- Week 5 - February 2nd – Perception of Behaviour in impoverished stimuli
- Week 6 – February 9th - Who can act?
- Week 7 - February 16th - Who can be acted on?
- February 23rd READING WEEK
- Week 8 - March 2nd – Action Parsing
- Week 9 - March 9th – Recognition of Goal Directed Behaviour in people
- Week 10 - March 16th – Factors influencing goal perception
- Week 11 - March 23th – What about autism?
- Week 12 – March 30th – Comparative Social Cognition

January 5: Class Organization; Intro to Theory and Methods in Early Social Perception

Assigned Reading:

Carey, S. Core Cognition: Agency (2010) In Carey, S.. *The Origin of Concepts*. New York: Oxford University Press.

January 12: Introductory Readings

Assigned Reading:

Carey, S. Representations of a Cause (2010) In Carey, S.. *The Origin of Concepts*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reading for Presentation

Poulin-Dubois, D., Brooker, I., Chow, V. (2009). The developmental origins of naïve psychology in infancy. *Adv Child Dev Behav.* 2009;37:55-104.

January 19th – Perception of Biological Motion

Assigned Reading:

Reading for Presentation

Csibra, G., Gergely, G., Biro, S., Koos, O., & Brockbank, M. (1999). Goal attribution without agency cues: The perception of 'pure reason' in infancy. Cognition, 72, 237–267

February 16th: Who can be acted on?

Assigned Reading:

Kosugi, D., & Fujita, K. (2002). How do 8-month-old infants recognize causality in object motion and that in human action? Japanese Psychological Research, 44, 66–78.

Spelke, E. S., Phillips, A., & Woodward, A. L. (1995). Infants' knowledge of object motion and human action. In D. Sperber, D. Premack, & A. J. Premack (Eds.), Causal cognition: A multidisciplinary debate (pp. 44–78). New York: Oxford University Press.

Reading for Presentation

Kosugi, D., Ishida, H., & Fujita, K. (2003). 10-month-old infants' inference of invisible agent: Distinction in causality between object motion and human action. Japanese Psychological Research, 45, 15–24.

March 2nd: Action Parsing

Assigned Reading:

Baird, J.A., & Baldwin, D.A. (2001). Making sense of human behavior: Action parsing and intentional inference. In Intentions and Intentionality: Formulations of Social Cognition, ed. B.F. Malle, L.J. Moses, and D.A. Baldwin. MIT Press.

Baldwin, D.A., Baird, J.A., Saylor, M.M., Clark, M.A. (2001). Infants parse dynamic action. Child Development, 72, 708-717.

Reading for Presentation

Saylor, M., Baldwin D., Baird, J., & LaBounty, J. (2007). Infants' on-line segmentation of dynamic human action. Journal of Cognition and Development, 8(1), 113-128.

March 9th: Recognition of Goal Directed Behaviour in people

Assigned Reading:

Hamlin, J.K., Hallinan, E.V., & Woodward, A.L. (2008). Do as I do: 7-month-old infants selectively reproduce others' goals? Developmental Science, 11, 487–494.

Hamlin, J.K., Newman, G., & Wynn, K. (2009). Eight-month old infants infer unfulfilled goals, despite ambiguous physical evidence. Infancy, 14 (5), 579–590.

Reading for Presentation

Assessment

Reading Log (15%): For every week (except the week when you are presenting a paper and leading a discussion) you will submit a reading log. The reading log should be approximately 3/4 to one page, double spaced, for each reading. You should first briefly summarize the central points, and then offer commentary, critique, and future directions. This assignment is due at the end of each class meeting, *including the first meeting*.

Participation (15%): Attendance is mandatory, and your active participation in the discussions of the readings is a course requirement.

Oral Presentation and Discussion (20%): Each student will present a reading and then lead the class discussion one time. Each week includes a "reading for presentation." It is your job to prepare a presentation of this reading that is detailed enough to cover the information for a group of people who have not read the paper. Then lead the class in a discussion of the assigned readings. Your discussion might start with a 15 to 20 minute summary and critique of the readings for the week. Preparing discussion questions ahead of time will be helpful. However, I will leave you a lot of freedom regarding the format of the presentation, so long as the major theses of the readings are covered.

Final Paper (50%): The final assignment is a 10 page paper synthesizing your learning in this class. You have a lot of freedom regarding the content. My first choice is that you model your paper after a grant proposal, presenting new research ideas motivated by extant controversies in the existing literature. My second choice is an analysis of two (or more) sides of a debate. Other formats are possible, but check with me first if you plan to do something wild. The important thing is to show me that you have learned in this class. The final paper is due at the beginning of the final class meeting.