COURSE TITLE: Advanced Topics in the Study of the Human Mind and Cognition

COURSE CODE: PSY 420

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide an excursion into the most current approaches and perspectives in the field of cognitive science, neuroscience, and cultural studies. The class will cover a variety of topics such as: embodied cognition, sensory deprivation and its effects on cognition, multisensory integration, evolution of cognition and culture, and the role of cognition in rituals and religions, morality, and other topics. Prerequisite(s): PSY 272. Credits: 3 (3,0)

PREREQUISITIES: PSY 272

REQUIRED FOR:

ELECTIVE FOR: All Curriculums

TEXTS CURRENTLY IN USE: Title: Consciousness: An Introduction by Susan Blackmore
**Course Information**

Advanced Topics in the Study of the Human Mind and Cognition will provide an excursion into the most current approaches and perspectives in the field of cognitive science, neuroscience, and cultural studies. The class will cover a variety of topics such as: embodied cognition, sensory deprivation and its effects on cognition, multisensory integration, evolution of cognition and culture, and the role of cognition in rituals and religions, morality, and other topics. This course will offer in-depth exposure to key research studies in cognitive science and affiliated fields such as neuroscience, cognitive science of religion, and experimental anthropology. A plethora of everyday examples and applications will be provided in order to ensure a greater understanding of the topics.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand the role of human brain in the emergence of cognitive processes
- Argue for/against the traditional model of cognition by providing evidence for the role of contextual factors in cognition
- View cognitive phenomena from a more cultural, global perspective
- Report on most contemporary cognitive, cultural-cognitive, behavioral, and neuroscientific research and its strengths as well as potential drawbacks
- Understand the role of cognition in shaping culture, morality, and rituals
- Demonstrate skills acquired due to the format of the course; specifically, presentation skills, critical thinking, and the ability to discuss topics critically

This course will combine seminar, in-class assignments and discussions, presentation of relevant podcasts, and films. Students will be required to read on average two scientific articles for each class.

Tentative schedule for the course:

1. *I can’t live if living is without you…*I-Phone as an Extension of our Brain: Embodied Cognition
2. *It’s a pain where it isn’t*- Phantom Limbs
3. *Pay attention!* Mindfulness and its effects on cognitive processes
4. *She blinded me with science:* The effects of deprivation in vision- from cats to humans
5. *You make me blue:* Synesthesia and other cross-modal effects
6. *Let’s get the party started:* The brain on drugs
7. *Head over heels:* Cognition under the effects of emotion
8. *Monkeying around:* The evolution of cognition
9. *Moral of the story:* Morality in humans
10. *Oh my God!* The role of cognition in ritualized and religious behavior