**MAKING OF THE MODERN MIND**

**HSSP: Summer, 2013 at MIT**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Hello Everyone! This course integrates philosophy of mind, cognitive sciences and humanities. *Psychology* is the study of how the mind operates, especially in the production of behavior, and how its operation can be influenced. *Philosophy of Mind* studies what the mind is and how nature lets us function in the ways psychology says we do. *Humanities* is how we apply science and give it meaning in our personal life.

It is a mystery as to what minds are and how they inter-connect and relate with a world, using ‘unthinking matter;’ as a person with actions, intelligence and emotions. Understanding this interaction is to understand what it means to be human. During the course we’ll use different perspectives and the principles of critical thinking to study that mystery, the nature of the mind and learn different theories. The class is divided into four sections of philosophy of mind, cognitive sciences and the workings of the mind with a close look at famous psychology studies, and finally a closing section to summarize.

**Section One Philosophy of Mind**

Introduces students to the three approaches of philosophy of mind and asks the question: What is mind. Next we define dualism and the Mind|Body problem, and why this is still relevant today and how it applies to the modern mind. We also compare behaviorism vs. cognitive psychology, look at embodied cognition and how this applies to humans and may or may not differ from robots and computers. We also look at how this ‘big theme’ is portrayed in pop culture and movies such as *Avatar.* This section includes Rebecca Saxes’ MIT research on Theory of Mind.

**Section Two: Workings of the Mind: The Conscious, Subconscious and Unconscious**

This section covers the science of learning and memory, conditioning and priming, and how we make decisions. It also compares the perspective of behaviorists vs. cognitive science, and introduces the science, main theories and vocabulary. We’ll also consider the difference between how an individual might act, compared to an individual in a group. Nature vs. Nurture?

**Section Three: A close look at some experiments on behavior**

In this section we examine three or four studies, depending on the interests of the class. One option might be “The Problem of Good and Evil”, why good people make bad decisions, which can be studied in the Milgram Experiment, or the Stanford prison Experiment. There are many to choose from, but other options might be false memory or conditioning.

**Section Four: Conclusions and Finishing up questions: Man’s Search for Meaning**