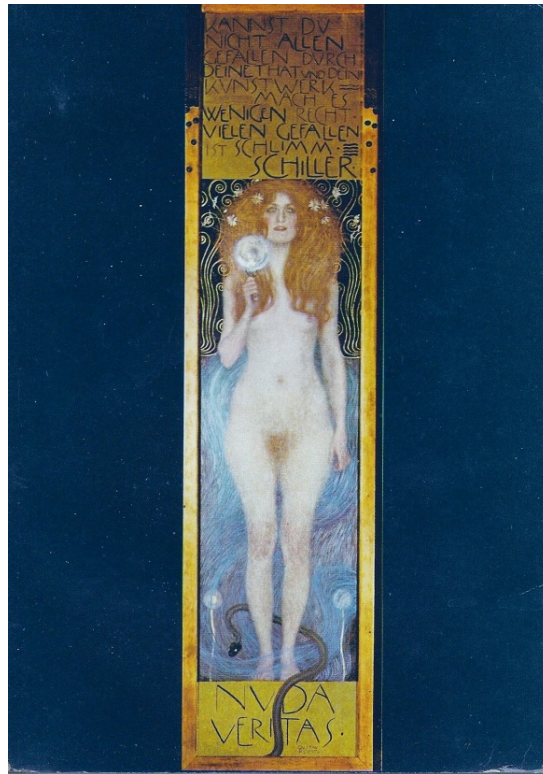


Psychology 4400A

Capstone in Psychology

15:05-17:45, Tuesday, C674



Nuda Veritas ("Naked Truth"), Gustav Klimt

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Office Hours:

Tuesdays 12.45–2.45pm and by appointment.

Objective:

Scientific thought is rich in metaphor. On the one hand, the use of metaphor can be seen as the means by which we extend the boundaries of scientific knowledge through a process known as “catachresis” – of intentionally using a word to denote something for which, without the catachresis, there is no name – and, in so doing, bringing into being entirely new ways of thinking. In this view, as a field develops, so the need for metaphorical usage falls away. On the other hand, one could argue that metaphor forms the core of science

(and the core metaphysical world-views of scientists themselves) and that metaphorical usage does not – and indeed cannot – give way to literal understanding. Instead, the original metaphorical usage simply is reified (creating the impression of literal usage) or replaced by a new metaphor that provides greater potential for scientific exploration. In this view, our scientific understanding inevitably remains fundamentally metaphorical, even as it becomes more precise in its explanations and accurate in its predictions. (Note that this does not mean that our understanding of the world is ungrounded. Accepting that all scientific knowledge is metaphorical is not to deny that there is an external reality that is amenable to accurate prediction and explanation, via application of the scientific method. Nor does it imply that there are many equally valid “truths” about the world (i.e., accepting this view doesn’t mean one has to embrace a crude form of “relativism”). It does, however, raise some interesting questions about the nature of objectivity, and also the notion of what it means to say we have made scientific progress, and we will explore during the course.)

Issues like these are made all the more interesting when we consider the use of metaphor in psychology. How has our ability to engage in metaphorical thought – a capacity one could argue is the defining feature of human cognition – influenced the history and development of a scientific field that aims to understand the nature of thought and cognition?

A consideration of how and why particular metaphors come into play across time and space also helps reveal is that science is, above all else, a human activity: one that is produced by people “with bodies, situated in time, space, culture and society and struggling for credibility and authority” as the historian, Steven Shapin, has written. The world views of different scientists inevitably have shaped the way they have conducted their studies and generated new ideas: in some cases, this had led them (and us) up blind alleys; in some, it has led to great leaps of the imagination. Many metaphors meet with the instant approval of other scientists, and some just never catch on. How and why this should be so are interesting questions to explore.

Understanding science as a human activity also means recognizing that it is an on-going process; our own ideas – that is, those of the people who have been teaching you these last four years – have been informed by others in ways that reflects the nature of our own time, place, culture and society. You too are part of this process and so, as the course develops, you should come to see how you fit it into the history of psychology and, potentially, how you might shape its future.

Structure of the Course

The course is lecture/seminar-based, and works best if you come to class fully prepared (i.e., having read the assigned papers for that particular week) and ready to participate in class discussions and debates. This isn’t a course where you can just sit back, snooze and then wing it at the end. If you have the right attitude, and understand that you’ll be responsible for your own learning, then it should all work extremely well. No whining or wimping allowed.

Readings

There is no set text for this course. Instead, you will be given a series of readings that will form the basis for class discussions. Readings will be posted on Moodle. You are also encouraged to seek out readings on topics of interest for yourself, and we will place more emphasis on this towards the end of the course, when you have greater familiarity with the course structure and the subject area.

Course Web Sites

The class website is on Moodle. Here you'll find the course outline, readings, announcements, suggestions for paper topics and guidelines for researching and writing your paper.

Evaluation

The course will be assessed by a single paper worth 100% of your mark. This may sound daunting but you should view this paper as a semester long project, and you will have the opportunity to discuss, re-draft and revise your work (as often as you like) throughout the course. You can write a paper on whatever topic you like as long as it is relevant to the themes of the course. If need be, I will supply a list of suggestions for those who need a bit of help and inspiration, but we're counting on you to develop your own ideas and pursue your own interests.

To provide some structure throughout the semester and help keep you on track, you will need to supply the following on the dates given below:

Tuesday October 9th: PROPOSALS FOR ESSAY TOPIC

You are required to hand in a clear and concise description of THREE completely DIFFERENT potential topics for your paper. All three should receive equal treatment at this stage (in other words, don't get your heart set on one topic, or list three that are just variations on the same theme). The aim here is to get you thinking as broadly as possible about what interests you, and to help you identify a productive topic that will produce a good essay.

For each topic, the brief description should consist of THREE full sentences, in which you describe (a) the fundamental psychological topic under consideration (b) how it relates to the course themes of metaphor, history or both and (c) the specific angle you intend to pursue with respect to this topic area.

For example:

"The subject of my essay will be construals of the self across different cultures, with an emphasis on the ideas of independence and interdependence. This can be tied to both the history of social psychology as a discipline, and also the metaphors that are used to describe selves, e.g., the self as a narrative. I wish to pursue the idea that even those aspects of the self that are often considered to

be universal may be more “culture-bound” than we suppose.”

These essay proposals will NOT receive a grade, but they will be mandatory to pass the course.

Tuesday November 6th: DRAFT ESSAY SUBMISSION

You are required to hand in a full draft of your essay, on which you can expect comprehensive feedback, and you will also be given a sense of (a) where your essay stands currently with respect to its grade (i.e., what mark it would achieve right then, if that was the final version) and (b) what improvements would be needed in order to substantially improve that grade (assuming this is the case – highly likely).

This option is intended to treat you like the adults you are, in a (probably vain, but nevertheless optimistic) effort to get you to recognize that some things are worth doing because they are rewarding, valuable and educational in and of themselves, and not simply because you receive a grade for them.

Note that because you are being given the option to discuss, revise and go over your paper both formally as outlined above, and informally by meeting with and discussing things with the course instructors, the marking will be tough, but it will be fair and aimed at helping you improve.

For the draft version of your paper, there will be no rubric: the length, number of references, breadth/depth of treatment etc, will be left entirely up to you. We consider this to be part of your assessment: we want to see how well you can use your judgment with respect to providing sufficient detail, supporting references and making a clear, concise and cogent argument, free of unnecessary waffle. You will, however, be able to ask as many questions as you like prior to draft submission, and receive help and feedback on these issues. Below you will find a list of essay expectations, that will give you a sense of what your essay is required to demonstrate in order to receive a particular grade.

Tuesday DECEMBER 11th: FINAL ESSAY SUBMISSION

The final version of your essay will be due on the TUESDAY after the final week of classes, with a deadline of 4 PM. You can hand-in your essay using the drop-box outside the psychology office on the 8th level of U-Hall (Check you know where this is ahead of time: no lame excuses about not being able to find it). At 4 PM, a piece of coloured paper will be placed in the box on top of all the submitted essays. Any essays that are submitted following the deadline on the same day will thus be easily identified, and will be subject to a –5% penalty. Any essays that are handed in on subsequent days will be subject to a –10% penalty for each day (24 hours) that your paper is late.

Grading:

Your final letter grade will be based on your percentage score as given in the table below:

A+	91–100	C+	67–69
A	86–90	C	63–66
A–	81–85	C–	60 – 62
B+	77–80	D+	55 – 59
B	73–76	D	50 – 54
B–	70–72	F	< 50

Basis of Grading for Essays:

To get an A-grade your essay should have:

- a clear topic and clear organization
- provide adequate support and reasoning for its claims
- be interesting and meaningful
- show logical transitions within and between paragraphs that contribute to a fluent style of writing.
- make a cogent and logical argument
- have few, if any, mechanical, grammatical, spelling, or diction errors.
- demonstrate a command of language in a clear and direct manner.
- uses sources and examples intelligently, correctly, and fairly.

B-grade essays share most characteristics of the above but:

- may have some minor lapses in organization and the development of its argument.
- may lack appropriate or adequate evidence for some of its claims.
- may contain some sentence structures that are awkward or ineffective.
- may have minor mechanical, grammatical, or diction problems.
- may be less distinguished in its use of language.
- may make some good points but not really provide any significant insights.

C-grade assignments will show the following, compared to a B-grade assignment:

- may have a weaker thesis and less effective development of ideas and examples.
- may contain some lapses in organization.
- may contain shifts in voice that make the essay harder to follow.
- may have poor or awkward transitions within or between paragraphs.
- may have less varied sentence structures that tend toward monotony.

- may have more mechanical, grammatical, and diction problems.
- is likely to be less distinguished in its handling of the topic.
- may use sources in ways that are inappropriate or awkward.

D-grade or Failed assignments are seriously flawed. They are likely to:

- have no clear thesis or central topic.
- display random organization.
- lack adequate support or specific development.
- include irrelevant details.
- fail to fulfill the assignment or be unfairly brief.
- contain major and repeated errors in diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling.
- plagiarize.

Syllabus:

Date	Instructor	Topic
Sept 11	Louise Barrett	Introduction
Sept 18	Louise Barrett	Minds versus Minding
Sept 25	Peter Henzi	Dead heroes: Sigmund Freud
Oct 2nd	Louise Barrett	Behaviourism isn't Satanism
Oct 9th	Scott Allen	A Non-Freudian Approach to the Unconscious
Oct 16th	Louise Barrett	Reflexivity, Human Kinds & Evolutionary Psychology
Oct 23rd	Louise Barrett	Psychology as Perception
Oct 30th	Louise Barrett	Essay Workshop #1
Nov 6th	John Vokey	Mistaking Constructs for Phenomena
Nov 13th	Louise Barrett	Essay Workshop #2
Nov 20th	Javid Sadr	The Ex-pression of E-motion
Nov 27th	Louise Barrett	What kind of Science is Psychology?
Dec 4th	Sergio Pellis	Ethology and the Selfish Gene