

**PSYCHOLOGY 4000**  
**LANGUAGE AND CONSCIOUSNESS**  
SPRING 2009

*This course will explore theories of language and consciousness, how the two are related, and how they determine (or are determined by) human experience. These issues may touch on many others, possibly including: whether animals also have language or are conscious; whether either trait in humans is adaptively designed or epiphenomenal; whether people ever think freely; whether they really think at all, or just act; whether language expresses thought, or determines thought, or whether it is just another action; whether babies, or animals, should have rights ...*

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**Class time/place:** Wednesday 15:00 – 17:45 B730

**Course books and additional readings:**

1. Pinker, S. (2007) *The Stuff of Thought*. Penguin Books.
2. Kenneally, C. (2008) *The First Word*. Penguin Books.
3. Clark, A. (2008) *Supersizing the Mind*. Oxford University Press.
4. Papineau, D. (2005) *Introducing Consciousness*. Totem Books.
5. These books will be supplemented by additional readings that will be made available during the term.

**Coursework and expectations:**

This course will be run as a seminar. Accordingly, students are expected to participate regularly in open, thoughtful discussion of course material. Much of this material will come in the form of background readings which students will be required to do IN ADVANCE of class so as to be able to contribute in a sensible and informed way during classroom sessions. In addition, there will be writing assignments in most weeks (50%). These will be due at the beginning of class that week. There will be two longer essays (30%) assigned during the term. Students' in-class contributions will make-up the remainder of the course grade (20%).

**\*\* Note: in all graded components of the course, a very high premium will be placed on critical thinking and argumentation (that is, the ability to articulate logical and coherent arguments both orally and in writing). Students lacking preparation in these skills may have difficulty.**

**Grading:** Final letter grades for the course will be determined using the following scheme:

A+	90 - 100	C+	67 – 69
A	85 – 89	C	63 – 66
A-	80 – 84	C-	60 – 62
B+	77 – 79	D+	55 – 59
B	73 – 76	D	50 – 54
B-	70 – 72	F	< 50