

C&P Proseminar – Final Paper

Option #1

One theme of this course has been to contrast two broad approaches to cognition that (typically) take opposing views on the following set of issues:

<i>Cognitive Representation:</i>	Abstract, symbolic vs. modal, non-symbolic, associationist
<i>Architecture:</i>	Modular systems vs. interactive systems
<i>Origins:</i>	Nativism vs. empiricism
<i>Learning:</i>	Multiple specialized mechanisms vs. domain-general learning mechanism
<i>Embodiment:</i>	cognitive systems described independently of perception/action vs. Cognitive systems as integrated with perception/action

For the final paper, select one domain in which these approaches have been contrasted (e.g., perception, categories/concepts, spatial cognition, or language).

- 1) Discuss both views within your chosen domain, with particular attention to why certain claims tend to go together (e.g., why empiricist approaches typically assume an interactive architecture).
- 2) Argue, with empirical evidence as support, which approach is most likely to be correct. Note that it is perfectly acceptable to argue, e.g., that neither approach is useful, or that a hybrid approach is to be preferred.

Option #2

A second theme of the course has been the relationship between perceptual processing and higher-level forms of cognition. Choose one perceptual domain (e.g., color perception, visual object recognition, speech perception) on which to focus.

- 1) How does one draw a principled distinction between perception and higher-level forms of cognition?
- 2) Mechanistically, what types of processes would qualify as the modulation of perceptual operations by higher-level cognition?
- 3) What is the state of the extant evidence regarding whether these mechanisms exist and are functional?

The paper should be no longer than 12 pages double-spaced. It is due by Friday of finals week (Dec 16th) at 5 pm by email.