

**PhD Course. The Norwegian Summer Institute on Language and mind:
Cognition, acquisition and representation**

Course code: (at UiO)

Time: July 30 - August 9, 2019

Place: University of Oslo

Credits: 5 ECTS

Course website: <http://folk.uio.no/nicholea/summerinstitute/>

Course instructors:

Robyn Carston (UCL)

Elizabeth Spelke (Harvard)

Stephen Crain (Macquarie)

Rosalind Thornton (Macquarie)

Steven Gross (Johns Hopkins)

Jennifer Culbertson (Edinburgh)

Nicholas Allott (UiO)

Anna Drożdżowicz (UiO)

Terje Lohndal (NTNU & UiT)

Georges Rey (Maryland)

Course organizers:

Nicholas Allott, UiO

Terje Lohndal, NTNU

What is the summer institute and who is it for?

The institute brings graduate students (MA-level and doctoral researchers) and postdocs from around the world up to date with developments in work on language and mind by presenting classes with leading researchers in the relevant fields. These include linguists, psychologists and other cognitive scientists open to philosophical issues, and philosophers focused on linguistics and the cognitive sciences. One of the key aims of the summer institute is to foster connections between students in all these areas.

The summer institute focusses on work that is committed to: i) realism about the mental representations postulated in theories of language and communication, perception and other mental faculties; ii) exploring the consequences of such realism. We therefore aim for a balance between theoretical and experimental topics. The theoretical work presented is carefully chosen to prioritise research that is in dialogue with experimental and developmental work and work on processing. Likewise, we choose experimental work that has interesting consequences for higher-level theories.

What do students say about the institute?

“An incredible opportunity to learn about a great variety of topics, and hear from a fantastic array of speakers – thank you so much! I have learned a huge amount from the discussions and readings.”

“Great topics, lectures and students!! Fantastic organization – everything worked really smoothly.”

Students like the way that:

“Lectures are intertwined, yet distinct, so that not only a good overview is provided but also the different standpoints of the theories are clearly conveyed.”

“Overall, it was a great opportunity to think outside of one’s narrow field and consider the ‘big questions’ of cognition. At the same time, I feel like I also learned a lot in my narrow field of study, so it was a good combination of ‘big picture’ issues and more specialized questions.”

Students particularly praise the friendly, open atmosphere and the interactions between lecturers and students, and among students, both in and out of class:

“The institute is one of the most engaging and stimulating learning/academic environments I’ve ever attended. Students’ questions are taken very seriously and are the basis for discussion, which is more lively than average, by far. The lecturers are all extremely open to debates and discussions, also outside the framework of their lectures.”

“Very friendly atmosphere that stimulated discussions.”

“this Institute has the most engagement with the topics outside of the lectures of any institute I’ve been to.”

“the school is/was an excellent experience for me. [...] I had such an outstanding time here, and really felt an improvement in my understanding. Also, it is wonderful to have the lecturers so readily accessible and open to questions posed at any level of expertise.”

The teaching

Classes are from Tuesday – Saturday and then Monday – Friday.

The first day will have introductory lectures to get everyone up to speed with the relevant parts of linguistics, philosophy and psychology.

For the rest of the course, days will include 90 minute classes on each of the three "strands" (see below). Teaching will be discursive, with plenty of time for questions and answers in each class.

There will also be three round-table discussion sessions, where we will discuss issues across the strands, guided by student questions.

We are also planning to have a student poster session, where you can present your own work.

Lectures

Words and concepts

Invited Lecturers: Robyn Carston (UCL) and Agustín Vicente (IKERBASQUE)

Lecturer/convenor: Nicholas Allott

Topics to include: the relationship between language and thought; lexical semantics, concepts and the semantics-pragmatics interface; polysemy; polysemy and co-predication; inner speech

The acquisition of linguistic structure and meaning

Invited Lecturers: Stephen Crain (Macquarie University) and Rosalind Thornton (Macquarie University)

Lecturer/convenor: Terje Lohndal

Topics to include: Poverty of the stimulus; children's acquisition of hard-to-observe properties such as disjunction, quantifiers and scope, negation, long-distance dependencies. The interplay between nature and nurture in language acquisition, child language experiments and design.

Investigating the language faculty and other mental faculties

Invited Lecturers: Steven Gross (Johns Hopkins) and Michael Rescorla (UCLA)

Lecturer/convenor: Anna Drożdżowicz

Topics to include: The Perception-Conception Distinction; Perception and Probability; Mental Representation; Mental Computation; The Computational Representational Theory of Mind; Bayesian modelling of the mind