

*Fall Seminar (Thursdays 10 AM – 12:50, first meeting PCD 4118F)*

## **The Gates of Consciousness**

*Seminar in Perception, Emotion, Cognition, & Neuroscience*

This fall grad/undergrad seminar will take both a “big picture” and “little picture” approach to brain function. The core theme will be the interplay between unconscious and conscious processes, and how this interplay is affected by emotion, attitudes, and other contextual factors. Participants will be free to explore these domains, and will be invited to develop bridges involving (any two or more of) perception, emotion, memory, attitudes, understanding, creativity, conscious/unconscious processing, and neuroscience.

The seminar theme can be elaborated in multiple ways within the science of psychology. For example, neuroscience points to the prefrontal cortex as a gate to consciousness that receives input from centers for emotion, knowledge, and goals. Memory conceptualizes retrieval processes that are pathways and bridges from unconscious content to consciousness. Perception begins with unconscious processing and results in selected entities and interpretations entering consciousness. Creativity can be viewed as a process of allowing new ideas into consciousness, a process that is often aided by the formation of useful bridges. Beneath all of this is unconscious processing, which is getting increasing appreciation for its role in decision making, memory, and perception. And then there is the wild card of emotion, which has strong and newly discovered ties with more cognitive processes.

If this is not enough, there is political motivation for this seminar. The world is at a critical and tense place in history because of the juxtaposition of quite different views and cosmologies brought to us by the processes of integration and globality (which can ultimately be good in my view). The first thing the “world” needs, in my view, is the ability to listen to and appreciate differing points of view, which in turns means “open gates and bridges” to consciousness. Science can help this process.

Participants can expect to read wide and long, share the presentation load, and write about 3 papers (one longer). Participants should have background sufficient to allow them to bridge between these areas. Permission required for admission to seminar. I invite inquiries and suggestions

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*Seminar in Psychology; Cognitive & Neural Sciences Program*  
*PSY 4931-001 and EXP 7099-005,*  
*Seminar in Perception,*  
*Thursdays, 10:00 AM - 12:50*