This graduate seminar, open also to senior honors students, will investigate the causes and consequences of human laterality in multi-disciplinary perspective as they relate to the "mind" and to the functioning of the brain. The seminar will examine laterality and the findings of neuroscience through the lens of handedness, in historical, philosophical, and psychological perspectives. Students will explore the possible ways in which seemingly contradictory explanations for laterality can be understood as complementary rather than contradictory.

The seminar is designed to enable student collaboration across disciplines and stages of education. Students are drawn from graduate programs in Psychology, History, and the Graduate Institute for Liberal Arts; undergraduate honors students in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology (NBB), Psychology, and History; and graduate professional degree students from the Rollins School of Public Health, the School of Medicine, and the School of Law.

There is substantial reading and writing required of all students enrolled in this course. If, for any reason, you will be unable or unwilling to meet the demands of this course, you should not enroll in it.

NOTE:

- This syllabus is designed for modifications of readings and topics when appropriate
throughout the semester. THUS, you should check the blackboard course site regularly for updates.

**Student Involvement:**

In order to facilitate a high level of discussion, students are required to:

- Come to all class meetings on time. If you are unable to attend class, or will be late, please inform the instructor or teaching assistant in advance. Unexcused absences and lateness will impact your final grade.

- Read the assignments prior to the seminar meeting. This is absolutely mandatory.

- Write and post your weekly assignments on the course **Blackboard** site no later than 5 pm on the Tuesday prior to our class meeting.

- Participate in classroom discussions

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

(Available at the Emory Campus bookstore or for purchase online)


McGilchrist, Ian. *The Master and his Emissary: the divided brain and the making of the Western world.* Yale University Press, 2009. (Kindle edition is also available)


Also, assigned readings, not from the texts above, will be available on the course Blackboard site.

**Recommended Texts:**


ASSIGNMENTS AND LECTURE TOPICS:

Weekly Postings:

Each week (except when noted) you will be required to post a succinct, approximately 1-page, single-space exposition of the week’s readings. Initially you will be asked to identify the thesis or main claim of each reading; later you will be asked to respond to a specific question about the week’s assignment. Your postings should reflect underlying themes or issues arising from the specific readings for the week in the context of issues that emerge across the semester as they are reflected in a given week’s readings. Your postings must be placed on the Blackboard Discussion Board (NOT the Assignments tab) by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the class meeting.

Final Projects:

Students will be required to produce a final synthetic project, drawing extensively on the readings and the discussions throughout the semester. The final project will examine a question or a problem (developed by the seminar participants) on the general issues investigated throughout the course.

The specific requirements and the scope of the final paper will be elaborated on during the semester. It will vary by how students are enrolled in the course:

Grading:

1. Seminar participation, 10%
2. Weekly postings, 50%
3. Final paper project 40%

Honor Code

All students in this course will be expected to adhere to the Emory University Honor Code that is in force for all the schools at Emory. Information about the honor code can be obtained at the following web site: http://college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html. Violations of the honor code will be dealt with as dictated by policies in place at the University for the particular school that the student is attending.
Weekly Assignments

18 January 2012: Introduction

Readings:


No post due.

25 January 2012: The Discovery of Laterality

Readings:


Post: In no more than 2 pages, identify the take home message (or thesis) of each of Harrington's 4 chapters.

1 February 2012: The Rise and Fall of the Double Brain

Guest speaker: Dr. Marjorie Lorch, Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication, Birkbeck College, University of London

Readings:


Post: Harrington argues that studying the history of the brain tells us as much about how science works as how the brain operates. Do you agree? Do Hellal and Lorch agree? Base your answer on your understanding of her arguments in chapters 5-end.
8 February 2012: The Left Hand: Biology or Culture?

Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Post: Based on this week’s assigned readings, is left-handedness a biological or cultural phenomena? Make one PowerPoint slide for each reading, including the takeaway message from each article, and be prepared to elaborate on your slides for the class.

15 February: Handedness in History

Guest speaker: Dr. Lauren J. Harris, Department of Psychology, Michigan State University

Readings:


Recommended readings:


Post: Write 3 questions for Dr. Harris based on your reading of his articles and on what you have learned so far in this course. These questions should not be informational, but rather about how his history does or does not help explain the anomalies of handedness.

22 February 2012: Hands and Brains: Two Views?

Guest Speaker: Dr. William Hopkins, Professor of Psychology, Agnes Scott College and Yerkes Primate Center

Readings:


McManus, I. C. “The Left Brain, the Right Brain, and the Whole Brain,” Chapter 8 of Right hand, Left hand: the origins of asymmetry in brains, bodies, atoms, and cultures, pp.168-201.


**Post:**
1) Create 3 questions for Dr. Hopkins to ask during class.
2) Do McManus and Coren agree with one another? Does Hopkins agree with either of them? How and why?
3) Submit one slide on the Hopkins 2012 article. Many of you already did this for 2/8.

29 February: Hand Preference and Left-Handedness: A Hazard to Your Health?

**Guest speaker:** Dr. Clare Porac, Department of Psychology, Pennsylvania State University, Erie

**Readings:**


**Post:** Write 3 questions for Dr. Porac based on the week's readings and what you have learned so far in this course.

7 March 2012: Reactions

**Readings:**
McManus, I. C. “Vulgar Errors,” Chapter 12 of *Right hand, Left hand: the origins of asymmetry in brains, bodies, atoms, and cultures*.


**Recommended Readings:**


**Post:** Based on this week’s readings and previous discussion, how strong is the evidence that learning disorders are connected to handedness and laterality?

**14 March: NO CLASS: Spring Break**

**21 March: Measurement: Why There are No Left-Handers in China (Kushner, Lecture)**

**Readings:**


**No post due, but** prepare at home for in-class assignment: Working in groups of 3, make 6 PowerPoint slides outlining these two chapters. Your final 2 slides should be your evaluation of the arguments. Post slides on BB Discussion Board when finished (for the rest of the class to access).

**28 March Laterality Revisited:**

**Readings:**
McGilchrist review article, TBA

Post: TBA

4 April Laterality: Lecture on Metapsychology of Laterality

Instructor will discuss: Jaynes, Julian. The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, Houghton-Mifflin, 1977

No post due, but be prepared to discuss ideas for projects, and begin to work on in class.

11 April 2012: How the Brain Has Shaped Our World

Readings:

McManus, I. C. “The World, The Small the Great, Chapter 15 of Right hand, Left hand: the origins of asymmetry in brains, bodies, atoms, and cultures

Post: Does the McManus chapter agree with McGilchrist’s book, based on what we discussed about the review article? Why or why not?

18 April 2012: Projects

TBA

25 April 2012: Projects

TBA

2 May 2012: Final papers due by 5 pm