Philosophy 167B/267B—Philosophy, Biology, and Behavior

Spring Quarter, 201
Cubberley
T/Th 3:15-4:30

Helen Longino
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Office hours:
T/Th 11-11:50
and by app’t

Course description: We will be considering the kind of knowledge certain approaches in the biology of behavior provide and how this matters socially. There will be three principle philosophical questions under discussion:
1) how to understand the relations among apparently competing, but in any case quite different, approaches and
2) how behavior itself is understood in the different approaches.
3) what differences different answers to these questions (should) make in our thinking about relations between science and society.
The first question is an epistemological question about the kind of knowledge these approaches provide, the second is an ontological question about just what these approaches take themselves to be explaining. The third is a social question about the role of scientific knowledge in public life. In pursuit of these issues, we will read and analyze representative research articles and review essays in the biology of behavior as well as philosophical papers defending different perspectives on both the epistemological question and the ontological and social questions. Our focus will be on approaches offering what are called proximate explanations, rather than ultimate or evolutionary explanations, and the particular behaviors (or behavioral dispositions) whose study we will be examining include aggressive behavior and sexual behavior.

Outcomes: Students should expect to improve their ability to read and analyze a scientific research article critically and to identify the philosophical assumptions it may rely on. They will become familiar with a range of philosophical thinking about the scientific study of human behavior and will expand the range of topics they can use a philosophical perspective to illuminate. In addition students will gain an understanding of the nature/nurture dichotomy and its implications for how we think about human behavior and action. As in all philosophy classes, there will be an emphasis on clarity and precision of thought and communication.

Text: All reading will be available via Coursework or online journals.

Expectations: Students are expected to have read the material assigned prior to coming to class and to be prepared to discuss it. I will indicate which readings we will focus on in advance. A Midterm paper will be due on February 5. The final paper (2,750 to 3,250 words) will be due on Friday, March 13. Late papers without a documented medical explanation will be marked down. Students will be expected to come to class with written questions for discussion.
Approximate weights: midterm papers: 30%; final paper 40%; participation: 30%.
Schedule:

January 6:
   Introduction

January 8:
   Longino *Studying Human Behavior*, (University of Chicago Press, 2013) Chapter 1

CW

Part One: Approaches to understanding human behavior

January 13: Genetic Approaches 1

January 15: Genetic Approaches 2

January 20: Social-environmental Approaches
   Harry, Joseph. “Parental Physical Abuse and Sexual Orientation in Males.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 18, 3: 251-261

Opt’l:
   DiLalla and Gottesman,”Biological and Genetic Contributors to Violence: Widom’s Untold Tale” *Psychological Bulletin* 109, 1: 125-129.

January 22: Neurobiological Approaches
   Article on neuropeptides/neurotransmitters and aggression TBA
   Raine, Adrian, et. al. “Selective Reductions in Prefrontal Glucose Metabolism in

January 27: Integrationist Approaches 1  
Gottlieb, “Experiential Canalization of Behavioral Developmental: Theory”  
Developmental Psychology 27, 1: 4-13.  
Gottlieb, “A Developmental Psychobiological Systems View: Early Formulation and Current Status”  
Granic, Isabela, & Alex V. Lamey. “Combining Dynamic Systems and Multivariate Analyses to Compare the Mother-Child Interactions of Externalizing Subtypes.”  
Stotz, “With Genes Like That, Who Needs an Environment?”  

January 29: Integrationist Approaches 2  
Opt’l:  

February 3: Ecological Approaches  

February 5: Review/Catch-up  
**First paper due**  

Part Two: Philosophical perspectives on behavioral sciences  

Competition, complementarity, or plurality?
February 10: Monist perspectives
   Alexander Rosenberg, selection TBA
   Schaffner – Griffiths exchange in Philosophy of Science 65 (June 1998)

February 12: Forms of pluralism
   Dupré, selection TBA
   Mitchell, “Integrative Pluralism” Biology and Philosophy (2002) 17: 55–70,
   Tabery, review of Longino Metascience
   Longino reply

What is behavior, anyway?

February 17:
   review Levitis, et al.
   Longino, “Defining Behavior” Studying Human Behavior, Ch. 9, pp. 151-166
   Optional:

February 19:
   Longino, “Defining Behavior” Studying, Ch. 9, pp. 166-177
   Alex Preda, Review of Longino, Metascience
   Optional
   Longino reply

February 24:

Social Implications

February 26: Science, responsibility, and law
   Greely, article TBA

Optl:

March 3: Science and social responsibility
  Program of the Institute of Justice Conference

March 5:

**Conclusion**

March 10: Preview of student final papers in class
March 12: Preview of student final papers in class

**Final paper due, Friday, March 13, 11:59 PM. [to be submitted by email]**