“Is music really just a useless spin off from language, or something more profound? Why do we have language, anyway? For communicating? For thinking? If not, for what purpose, then? Why are we right handed (or left-handed) rather than ambidextrous? Is the body essential to our way of being, or just a useful fueling and locomotor system for the brain? Is emotion really just an aid to cognition, helping us to weigh our decisions correctly, or is it something a bit more fundamental than that? Why does it matter if one hemisphere tends to see things in context, while the other as carefully removes them from it?”

Iain McGilchrist

Course Objectives:

In the 19th and early 20th century, psychologists frequently addressed emotion, cognition and motivation as if they were separate entities, systems or dimensions of the human psyche, each with its own distinctive properties or characteristics. However, in defiance of the prevailing consensus, existential-phenomenology, humanistic psychologists and a handful of like-minded psychoanalysts during the 20th century always insisted that cognition, motivation and emotion are always intricately intertwined. Nowadays, most leading neuroscientists freely concede that efforts to analyze emotion, cognition and motivation in isolation from one another tend to obscure more than they reveal about the complexities of human experience. Recent work on left and right hemispheric dominance underscores the complexity of these issues, and the need to factor the structure of the brain into our understanding of how these various “faculties” or “systems” evolve and intertwine.
**Course Format:**

We approach the relationship between emotion, cognition and motivation in light of works by four neurologically trained and philosophically sophisticated theorists. R.D. Laing was a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and existential psychotherapist whose book *The Divided Self* (1960) posited the existence of two fundamentally different ways of understanding psychopathology, and of knowing and relating to others. He treats empathy as the *sine qua non* of developing an effective therapeutic rapport, and addresses crucial issues of 1) embodiment, 2) the emotional and ethical implications that flow from adopting different “existential positions” in relation to others and 3) the perils and attractions of a schizoid or disembodied subjectivity. Karl Stern was a neurologist, psychiatrist and psychodynamic psychotherapist who leaned strongly on existential-phenomenological philosophy and psychiatry. His book *The Flight From Woman* (1965) represents an early synthesis between psychoanalysis and phenomenology, and addresses 1) the dangers of a hyper-masculine and hyper-rationalist culture, and 2) the notion of gendered epistemologies, or of different ways of knowing and engaging the world through abstract or discursive reason, on the one hand, and empathy and intuition on the other.

Louis Sass is a phenomenological psychologist whose landmark book *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in Light of Modern Art, Literature and Thought* (1992) argues that modernism (and modernity in general) exhibit many characteristic symptoms of left-hemispheric dominance, and the atrophy of or disconnection from right-hemispheric competences, resulting in pervasive tendencies toward dehumanization low-grade, chronic schizoid tendencies – a kind of “pathology of normalcy.” Iain McGilchrist is an Oxford trained psychiatrist whose recent book *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (2012) updates, deepens and develops Sass’ initial reflections on the perils of left-hemispheric dominance and its implications for human development and functioning.

Our overarching objective for this course is to identify the core similarities and differences between these theorists as regards 1) the role of the brain in mediating and shaping our emotions, cognitions and motivations, 2) the place of infancy, childhood and culture in their respective theories of a) human nature/development and b) psychopathology, 3) the
ways in which contemporary arts and culture can be understood or critiqued in light of 1 and 2.

**Grading Policy:**

Your course grade will be based on class participation (20%) and two major papers (40% each.) Paper topics must be chosen in consultation with Dr. Burston, and entail a close reading of Sass and McGilchrist, using either Stern or Laing (on empathy and intuition) as a point of comparison. Other theorists may be introduced into your papers (and classroom discussion) as well, provided that they engage with the subject matter addressed in the required readings deeply.

**Week One:**

Preliminary Survey:


**Required Reading:** None

**Week Two:**

Freud’s “Psychology for Neurologists” (1895); Freud’s theory of primary and secondary processes (1895-1900); the metapsychology and structural theory; McGilchrist revisits Freud in light of contemporary neurological findings.

**Required Reading:**
McGilchrist, 2009, selected pages.
Week Three:

The role of altruism and empathy in human relationships – evolutionary perspectives.

Objectification versus empathy: The Clinical Gaze versus “A Science of Persons.”

Required Reading:

Week Four:

Embodied and Disembodied Ways of Being in the World

Required Reading:
Laing, R.D. 1960, The Divided Self, chapters 4-7.

Week Five:

The Poetic and Scientific Modes of Knowledge
Empathy, Objectification and The Masculinization of Thought

Required Reading:
Stern, 1965, (chapters 1,2,3,)

Week Six:

Sex Differences, the Human Brain and “Women’s Ways of Knowing”

Required Reading:
Stern, 1965, chapters 5,7,10.


“Sex differences in the response of the human amygdala”
ldc.upenn.edu/myl/llog/Brizendine/Hamann2005.pdf

Inghalikar, Smith et al. 2013. “Sex differences in the structural connectome of the human brain” PNAS; published ahead of print, December 2, (on reserve or)
http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/11/27/1316909110.full.pdf+html?sid=896da6d3-01c3-4ee2-980d-a4c1a796b4e2

http://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/dec/02/men-women-brains-wired-differently


O’Shea, J. 2013. “Gender difference all in the Mind.”
http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/05/gender-difference-all-in-mind

Week Seven:

Schizoid Detachment & Hyper-reflexivity: Emotion, Cognition and Motivation in Schizoid and Schizophrenic Conditions (Modernism and Postmodernism)

Required Reading:
Sass, L. 1999, Madness and Modernism, chapters 1-3,

Week Eight:

Schizophrenia, Hyper-reflexivity & Left Hemispheric Dominance: Merleau-Ponty and Derrida: Language and the Interhuman
**Required Reading:**
Sass, L. 1999, chapter 6, epilogue and appendix on brain imaging

(First essay is due!)

**Week Nine:**

The Divided Brain: Right and Left Hemispheric Functions

**Required Reading:**
McGilchrist, 2009. *The Master and His Emissary*, chapters 1 to 3

**Week Ten:**

The Divided Brain, continued
(Authenticity, the Right Hemisphere and Being-in-the-World)

**Required Reading:**

**Week Eleven:**

Left-Hemispheric Dominance as Factor in Cultural Development

**Required Reading:**
McGilchrist, 2009, chapters 7-10

**Week Twelve:**

Brain and Culture: Enlightenment to Postmodernism

**Required Reading:**

**Week Thirteen:**


**Required Readings:**
**Week Fourteen:**

Student presentations. Final essays are due.

**Essay Writing Guidelines:**

The fundamentals of good writing can be sub-divided into four component parts; content, form, style and mechanics. Content refers to *what* you say. Form, style, etc., describe *how* you say it. An excellent paper demonstrates superior effort or accomplishment in all four categories simultaneously. Here is a brief catalogue of what to look for.

**Content.** The information in your paper, including your research, your reflections or analysis of the data, and so on, should be *accurate* and *relevant* to the question(s) at hand. It should be well documented and/or referenced. Factual errors, lengthy digressions on irrelevant (or barely relevant) items, or arguments that are unsupported by logic or evidence count against you in this category.

**Form** refers to the organization of your paper. Every paper should have an *introductory paragraph* that indicates what is in store for the reader, and a *concluding paragraph* that ties together the various threads of argument or analysis it makes use of along the way. As far as possible, it should also be *free of excessive redundancy and repetition*.

**Style** refers to the *clarity* and *coherence* of your writing. Avoid awkward, vague or elliptical sentences which seem to hint at sophistication
or profundity. More often than not, they suggest that your ideas are not yet fully formed or articulated – that you have not processed them sufficiently to defend them well, and are therefore hiding behind an impressive façade. When summarizing another person’s ideas or attitudes, do not repeat them verbatim for long, but use of brief quotes and skillful paraphrases to keep things lively.

*Mechanics* refers to grammar, spelling and punctuation. To avoid unnecessary errors like these *proof read your paper several hours after it is finished*, or better yet, ask *someone else to proof read it for you.*

**Grading Scale**

*A* Excellent. This paper shows originality and a strong capacity for critical thinking. It is squarely on topic, contains no major factual errors, has been carefully proof read, and has very few (in any) grammatical or typographical errors. It is well organized, and free of redundancy or repetition. The author has a firm grasp of the issues at hand, and as a result, the central thesis or argument is crystal clear, and based on well documented evidence and/or arguments that are cogent and persuasive. The author makes excellent use of the required texts and supplementary readings in making his (or her) case.

*A-* Almost excellent. The author shows a firm grasp of the issues, shows originality and a capacity for critical thinking, but the paper was not proof read properly, or contains significant factual errors, or fails to document sources or use supplementary research, etc.

*B+* Very good. This paper covers the required reading and the overall subject matter competently, but suffers from repetition, redundancy, poor introductory or concluding paragraphs, absent or inconsistent use of references, citations, too many factual or typographical errors, etc., often despite evidence of some originality and critical thinking. Alternatively, this may be an A or A- paper that fails to meet minimum page length
requirements, or veered slightly “off course”, and does not really address the issues at hand.

\textit{B} Good/average. Same as above, but the content is weaker, the thesis sketchier, and there is very little evidence of supplementary research, critical thinking or originality of perspective. Alternatively, the paper may have some of the qualities of a somewhat better paper, but fails to meet minimum page length requirements and/or strays far from the questions or issues at hand.

\textit{B-} Unsatisfactory. No evidence of supplementary research, critical thinking or originality. Moreover, this paper either fails to address some important issues, or does so only in an inaccurate, confused or confusing way.

\textbf{Required Reading :}


**Recommended Reading** :


Web links:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFs9WO2B8uI

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/05/gender-difference-all-in-mind