Cognitive Science

Program of Study

Cognitive science explores the nature of cognitive processes such as perception, reasoning, memory, attention, language, decision making, emotion, motor control, and problem solving. The goal of cognitive science, stated simply, is to understand how minds work, in humans, animals, and machines. Cognitive science emerged in the latter part of the 20th century at the intersection of computer science, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience, and is an inherently interdisciplinary endeavor, drawing on tools and ideas from the social sciences, the physical and biological sciences, and the humanities. Topics of research include (but are not limited to) cognitive development, cognitive processing, judgment and decision making, language and communication, the neurological bases of cognition, perception, and memory, philosophy of mind, and artificial intelligence. A defining feature of cognitive science is its emphasis on integration among fields, for a truly interdisciplinary study of the mind. Students will be trained in formal methods of analysis and modeling that are common in majors in the physical and biological sciences, but often absent from majors in the humanities and social sciences; at the same time, students will also be trained in the advanced reasoning skills that define humanistic inquiry, but are often absent from more technical or applied majors.

The undergraduate major in Cognitive Science at the University of Chicago is designed to embody this interdisciplinary approach to the study of the mind and brain. Students gain broad knowledge of the field by taking courses in each of the five main disciplinary areas—computer science, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience—and then develop further focus and depth of understanding by taking additional courses in two of these disciplinary areas. Students will form key technical foundations through a Formal Foundations requirement, and will gain critical training in integrating interdisciplinary perspectives through the two core foundational courses: “Mind, Brain, and Meaning” and “Cognitive Models.” A distinguishing feature of the Cognitive Science major at the University of Chicago is the centrality of the humanistic component of the study of the mind: starting immediately with the foundational course sequence, questions about what it means to learn, communicate, and think will be assigned equal significance to, and asked alongside, questions about what it is to learn, communicate, and think. Training emphasizes both engagement with the principal theories of mind and the evidence that bears on choices between them, and development of the conceptual and practical skills needed for understanding and conducting theoretical and empirical work in the field.

Program Requirements

Students majoring in Cognitive Science will receive the degree of bachelor of arts. To qualify for the BA, students must minimally satisfy the general education requirements and take an additional 15 required courses for the major, which fall into four categories: Introductory Courses, which engage students with the core questions, intellectual history, and analytical methods that unify cognitive scientific research (200 units); Formal Foundations Courses, which give students the analytical tools to explore different strands of contemporary cognitive scientific research (200 units); Core Discipline Courses, which provide breadth and depth in the five core disciplines (900 units); and Extra-Disciplinary Courses, which engage students with cognitive scientific work in areas beyond the core disciplines (200 units). These courses and their pedagogical roles in the major are described in more detail below.

Note that some courses may be used to satisfy different requirements; but no single course may be “double counted” towards satisfaction of two requirements. For example, a student who takes PHIL 20100 Introduction to Logic may count it either towards satisfaction of the Formal Foundations requirement or towards satisfaction of the Philosophy Core Discipline requirement, but not both.

Introductory Courses

There are two introductory courses in the Cognitive Science major, COGS 20001 Mind, Brain, and Meaning and COGS 20002 Cognitive Models, which serve two purposes. First, they introduce students to the empirical questions, theoretical concepts, and analytical methodologies that led to the emergence of cognitive science as a distinct field of study and continue to drive contemporary research. Second, they will highlight the ways that these issues manifest in the core disciplines of cognitive science—philosophy, psychology, linguistics, computer science, and neuroscience—and the ways that progress on central questions about the nature of the mind have been informed by interactions, conversations, and collaborations across the disciplines. Ideally, both courses will normally be co-taught by faculty from different fields, with the dual goal of providing substantive disciplinary expertise in more than one area, and of manifesting, in the classroom, the kind of interdisciplinarity that defines the field.

Formal Foundations Courses

The Cognitive Science major requires students to develop expertise in the formal analytical methods used in the field. The specific formal skills that will be most useful to individual students depend on their particular areas of interest, so students are free to select any two courses from an approved set of options from a range of courses in mathematics, computer science, statistics, and logic. Though not formally required, experience with the equivalent of one course in calculus is highly recommended, as expertise in this area is required for many of
the Core Discipline courses. (NOTE: Calculus I-II may be used to satisfy the Formal Foundations requirement only if the courses are not used to satisfy the general education requirement in the mathematical sciences.)

The following list provides examples of courses that could be used to satisfy the Formal Foundations requirement, but it is meant to be illustrative only and is not exhaustive. Students may petition for approval of a course not on this list as satisfaction of the Formal Foundations requirement by submitting a proposal and rationale to the Director of the Cognitive Science Program.

**Cognitive Science Formal Foundations Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHDV 39301</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 12100</td>
<td>Computer Science with Applications I</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 12200</td>
<td>Computer Science with Applications II</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMSC 14100</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science I</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 14200</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science II</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 14300</td>
<td>Systems Programming I</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 14400</td>
<td>Systems Programming II</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 15100</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science I</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 15200</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science II</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 15400</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Systems</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 25300</td>
<td>Mathematical Foundations of Machine Learning</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMSC 27100</td>
<td>Discrete Mathematics</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>LING 21020</td>
<td>Formal Foundations of Linguistics</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>LING 22500</td>
<td>Quantitative Research Methods in Linguistics</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 13100</td>
<td>Elem Functions and Calculus I (or higher)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 13200</td>
<td>Elem Functions and Calculus II (or higher)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 19620</td>
<td>Linear Algebra</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 27700</td>
<td>Mathematical Logic I</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 28000</td>
<td>Introduction to Formal Languages</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL 20100</td>
<td>Introduction to Logic</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSYC 20200</td>
<td>Psychological Research Methods</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSYC 20250</td>
<td>Introduction to Statistical Concepts and Methods</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAT 24400</td>
<td>Statistical Theory and Methods I</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT 24500</td>
<td>Statistical Theory and Methods II</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAT 27410</td>
<td>Introduction to Bayesian Data Analysis</td>
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**CORE DISCIPLINE COURSES**

The core disciplines of cognitive science are computer science, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience. The Core Discipline requirements are designed to strike a balance between breadth and depth in the core disciplines, while also allowing students a great deal of freedom to construct an individualized plan of study that best matches their interests in cognitive science. Students in the Cognitive Science major must take:

- **Five Core Discipline breadth courses**: one approved course in each of the five core disciplines
- **Four Core Discipline depth courses**: two additional courses in two of the core disciplines

Approved electives from each of the five core disciplines are listed below; students may, in addition, request approval of a course that is not on this list by submitting a proposal and rationale to the Director of the Cognitive Science Program.

**Cognitive Science Core Discipline Courses: Computer Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 13600</td>
<td>Introduction to Data Engineering</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 14100</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science I</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 14200</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science II</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 14300</td>
<td>Systems Programming I</td>
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<td>CMSC 14400</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMSC 15100</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science I</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMSC 15200</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Science II</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 15400</td>
<td>Introduction to Computer Systems</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 20600</td>
<td>Introduction to Robotics</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSC 21800</td>
<td>Data Science for Computer Scientists</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CMSC 23900  Data Visualization  100
CMSC 25300  Mathematical Foundations of Machine Learning  100
CMSC 25400  Machine Learning  100
CMSC 25500  Introduction to Neural Networks  100
CMSC 25700  Natural Language Processing  100

Cognitive Science Core Discipline Courses: Linguistics
LING 20101  Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology  100
LING 20201  Introduction to Syntax  100
LING 20301  Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics  100
LING 21020  Formal Foundations of Linguistics  100
LING 27010  Psycholinguistics  100
LING 28610  Undergraduate Computational Linguistics  100

Cognitive Science Core Discipline Courses: Philosophy
PHIL 20100  Introduction to Logic  100
PHIL 23000  Introduction to Metaphysics and Epistemology  100
PHIL 22960  Bayesian Epistemology  100
PHIL 23501  Philosophy of Mind  100
PHIL 24010  Meaning and Reference  100
PHIL 26000  History of Philosophy II: Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy  100

Cognitive Science Core Discipline Courses: Psychology
PSYC 20400  Cognitive Psychology  100
PSYC 20500  Developmental Psychology  100
PSYC 20700  Sensation and Perception  100
PSYC 21510  Neuroscience of Communication  100
PSYC 23200  Introduction to Language Acquisition  100
PSYC 23820  Attention and Working Memory in the Mind and Brain  100
PSYC 25101  The Psychology of Decision Making  100
PSYC 28990  Constructing consciousness: From matter to mind, through the lens of seeing color  100

Cognitive Science Core Discipline Courses: Neuroscience
NSCI 20101  Foundations of Neuroscience  100
NSCI 20130  Systems Neuroscience  100
NSCI 21000  Social Neuroscience  100
NSCI 21015  Biological Psychology  100
NSCI 21625  Cognitive Neuroscience in Humans and Rodents  100
NSCI 21750  Ethics through a Neurobiological Lens  100
NSCI 22010  Neuroscience of Consciousness  100
NSCI 23700  Methods in Computational Neuroscience  100

EXTRA-DISCIPLINARY COURSES

The Extra-Disciplinary requirement ensures that students also engage with cognitive scientific work outside the core disciplines, in areas such as music, anthropology, religion, economics, and political science, and so are exposed to the full breadth of the interdisciplinary study of the mind. Students in the major must take a total of two Extra-Disciplinary courses.

A partial list of courses that could be used to satisfy the Extra-Disciplinary requirement is provided below; as above, students may also request approval of courses not included in this list, or courses from other fields, by submitting a proposal and rationale to the Director of the Cognitive Science Program.

Cognitive Science Extra-Disciplinary Courses
ANTH 21355  Remembering: An Anthropological Approach  100
ANTH 22540  Games: Theory, Practice, and Experience  100
ANTH 24321  Psychological Anthropology  100
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ASTR 23000  Cosmos and Conscience: Looking for Ourselves Elsewhere  100
BPRO 28400  Thinking Psychoanalytically: From the Sciences to the Arts  100
BUSN 20710  Behavioral Economics  100
ENGL 12720  Inventing Consciousness: Literature, Philosophy, Psychology  100
CHDV 20703  Literacy, Language, and Education  100
CHDV 22580  Child Development in the Classroom  100
CHDV 23100  Human Language and Interaction  100
CHDV 27950  Evolution and Economics of Human Behavior  100
MUSI 20719  Music and Mind  100
MUSI 43720  Music and Affect  100
PLSC 24210  Politicizing the Passions: Emotions and Collective Action  100
RLST 23750  The End of Metaphysics and the Future of Philosophy  100

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

COGS 20001 Mind, Brain and Meaning  100
COGS 20002 Cognitive Models  100
Two Formal Foundations Courses  200
Five Core Discipline breadth courses  500
Four Core Discipline depth courses  400
Two Extra-Disciplinary courses  200

Total Units  1500

GRADING

All courses used to satisfy requirements for the major must be taken for quality grades. With consent of the instructor, nonmajors may take COGS courses for P/F grading.

HONORS

Students wishing to receive a BA in Cognitive Science with honors must carry out an independent research project that culminates in an honors thesis. Any student who has maintained a 3.25 or better overall GPA and a 3.5 or better GPA in courses that count towards the major may apply to receive a degree with honors; the deadline for application is the end of the fifth week of the third quarter before the student graduates, canonically Autumn Quarter of the fourth year. Applications must include a research proposal of no more than three pages, which explains the project and its significance, documents the student's preparation for the work, and has been approved by a faculty advisor or advisors. Students are strongly encouraged to identify co-advisors from distinct disciplines. The thesis must be submitted by the fifth week of the quarter in which the student plans to graduate.

This program may accept an honors thesis or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major with the consent of both program directors. Students should consult with the relevant program directors by the earliest BA proposal deadline, or by the end of their third year if neither program publishes a deadline. A consent form, to be signed by both program directors, can be obtained from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's year of graduation.

COGNITIVE SCIENCE COURSES

COGS 20001. Mind, Brain and Meaning. 100 Units.
What is the relationship between physical processes in the brain and body and the processes of thought and consciousness that constitute our mental life? Philosophers and others have puzzled over this question for millennia. Many have concluded it to be intractable. In recent decades, the field of cognitive science--encompassing philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, computer science, linguistics and other disciplines--has proposed a new form of answer. The driving idea is that the interaction of the mental and the physical may be understood via a third level of analysis: that of the computational. This course offers a critical introduction to the elements of this approach, and surveys some of the alternatives models and theories that fall within it. Readings are drawn from a range of historical and contemporary sources in philosophy, psychology, linguistics and computer science. (B) (II)
Instructor(s): J. Bridges; L. Kay; C. Kennedy Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 36520, PHIL 26520, PSYC 26520, PSYC 36520, LING 36520, LING 26520