PHIL 190
Senior Seminar: Gender and the Brain
Spring 2016
R 06:00pm–09:30pm
Cowell Acad 216

Nico Orlandi
Cowell Faculty Annex 112
Office hours: R 2–4, or by appointment
norlandi@ucsc.edu

Course Description:
Is there a female brain and is it inherently different from the male brain? The claim that there are differences in attitude, ability, and temperament is not new. The further claim that such differences ground and justify differences in role, employment and remuneration, is also not new. What is somewhat new is the recent appeal to neuroscience to ground such claims. Methods of brain imaging, together with a host of research in cognitive science, allegedly provide new tools to explain the observed behavioral differences between females and males. Such differences are hypothesized to be due not to different cultural and social influences, but rather to different innate cerebral endowments. The differences are presumed to be essential. The female brain is said to be naturally prone to sympathizing, while the male brain to systemizing. This position has marshaled a number of supporters, but also some important criticism.

This class is devoted to shedding light on this debate by reading the work of its leading participants, together with some relevant empirical research. The aim of the class, in addition to evaluating the debate, is to get acquainted with some foundational issues in the philosophy of neuroscience and of cognitive science, such as the issue of innateness.

Readings:
There are two books assigned for this class:

- *Delusions of Gender* by Cordelia Fine.
The following book is recommended but not assigned because we will not be able to read it all during the quarter:

- *Whistling Vivaldi* by Claude M. Steele.

These books are available in Santa Cruz at The Literary Guillotine. They should also be on reserve at McHenry’s Library. Readings that are not from the books are available on Ecommons. For a complete list of readings see the tentative schedule of classes below.

**Assignments and Grading:**
This class aims to train students to write book reviews. The main assignment for the class consists in two book reviews. Each registered student is also required to give one in-class presentation (either as an author or as a commentator). You will receive grades on the presentation, on your overall performance as a participant in the class, and on the book reviews.

- **Book Reviews:** 35% each, due on Monday 6/6 by end of day.
- **Presentation:** 20% See below for due dates.
- **Participation:** 10%

**Book Reviews:**
Each review should be of no more than 2500 words and it should center on each of the books assigned for the class (*The Essential Difference* and *Delusions of Gender*). Book reviews offer both a description and an evaluation of the target book. They are not mere summaries. Reviewers typically discuss, in a critical yet charitable way the target book by focusing on some key elements. They raise questions of interpretation, present worries and objections, and suggest alternative possibilities. For more information, and for some sample book reviews check the following website: http://ndpr.nd.edu/reviewers-guidelines/

**No extensions will be granted on the reviews.** Reviews should be submitted to the instructor electronically using the email address at the top of this Syllabus. Reviews should be submitted in .doc or .pdf format. The title of the book that is being reviewed and your name should appear in the first page of the review.

**Presentations:**
Registered students are required to give one in-class presentation in the last two weeks of the course. The presenter has the option of taking the role of either the critic of the book, or the author of the book. In either case, the presenter is required to write comments/responses prior to the presentation. Comments and responses should not exceed 2500 words and should be presented in approximately 20 minutes. Critics are to write their comments and turn them in to the author FIVE DAYS prior
to the presentation. Upon receiving comments, authors are to write a response. Responses are due TWO DAYS prior to the presentation. Comments and responses are intended to help students with the final book reviews. They can be drafts of the final book reviews.

The schedule of presentations is to be finalized as soon as possible. Please check the schedule of classes and sign up for your presentation.

Participation:
This is a discussion-based seminar. Students are expected to come to class having read and thought about the readings. Students are expected to raise questions, discuss issues and help each other understand the material.

Late/Makeup Assignments:
Due to the brevity of the quarter, and to how the class is set up, late/makeup assignments are not allowed.

Disability:
If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to me in person outside of class (e.g. office hours) within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or drc.ucsc.edu. for more information on the requirements and/or process.

Honor Code:
You are responsible for being familiar with UCSC’s policies on plagiarism and proper sourcing. Proper sourcing and good scholarship are expected. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. If you have any questions or concerns about how to avoid plagiarism and ensure the originality of your work, please ask the instructor. UCLA has helpful tips on avoiding plagiarism here: http://unitproj.library.ucla.edu/col/bruinsuccess/.

What is Nativism?
R 3.31 Introduction: Innateness and female underrepresentation (see Ecomons).
‘The Female Brain’

R 4.07  NO CLASS. Reschedule on Monday, April 11?: S. BARON-COHEN *The Essential Difference* Chapters 1-4 (60 pages) & SOME EVIDENCE (On Ecommons):

Connellan et al. “Sex Differences in human neonatal social perception” 2001 (5 pages)

Lutchmaya and Baron-Cohen “Human sex differences in social and non-social looking preferences, at 12 months of age” 2002 (6 pages)

‘The Male Brain’

R 4.14  S. BARON-COHEN *The Essential Difference* Chapters 5-6 (40 pages) and chapters 10-11 (65 pages) & SOME EVIDENCE (On Ecommons):

Linn and Peterson “Emergence and characterization of sex differences in spatial ability: a Meta-Analysis.” 1985 (16 pages)

R 4.21  NO CLASS.

Nature vs. Nurture

R 4.28  S. BARON-COHEN *The Essential Difference*, Chapter 7-9 (47 pages) & SOME EVIDENCE (On Ecommons):


Grimshaw et al. “Mental rotation at 7 years: relations with prenatal testosterone levels and spatial play experiences” 1995 (13 pages)

Printzka et al. “Changes in spatial cognition and brain activity after a single dose of testosterone in healthy women” 2016 (11 pages)

The Gender Illusion and Alternative Hypotheses for Exclusion

R 5.05  C. FINE *Delusions of Gender*, chapters 1-8 (98 pages) & C. STEELE chapter 8 (On Ecommons).

Neurosexism

R 5.12  C. FINE *Delusions of Gender*, chapters 9-16 (88 pages)& C. STEELE chapter 9 (On Ecommons).

Recycling Gender

R 5.19  C. FINE *Delusions of Gender*, chapters 17-Epilogue (51 pages) & SOME EVIDENCE (On Ecommons): TBA.
‘Author-meets-critic’ Days
R 5.26 3 Authors & 3 Commentators on *The Essential Difference.*
R 6.02 3 Authors & 3 Commentators on *Delusions of Gender.*

Reviews Due
M 6.06 by end of day