Module
Neuroscience & Theological Anthropology

Science Module for existing university or seminary level courses.
Drop in to a course syllabus (with modifications) in
   Philosophy: Mind/Brain Problem
   Religious Studies
   Metaphysics: Epistemology
   Pastoral Care
   Systematic Theology: Anthropology
1 week's assignment for 3 hours of class meeting

NEUROSCIENCE & THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

This unit clarifies a misleading impression growing in the cognitive sciences as a byproduct to recent advances in neuroscience. The byproduct is a tendency to reduce conscious operations to preconscious or subconscious determinants. Director of the Cognitive Neuroimaging Unit in Saclay, France, Stanislas Dehaene, for example, startles us by declaring that in everyday activity we fail to realize just how much of our activity is guided by "an unconscious automatic pilot...We constantly overestimate the power of our consciousness in making decisions--but, in truth, our capacity for conscious control is limited" (Dehaene, 2014, 47). It is true, to be sure, that our neurocircuitry is responsible for this automatic pilot, but we need not jump to the unwarranted conclusion that this automaticity is exhaustively responsible for every cognitive process. It is premature to
overemphasize the brain's automatic pilot, allowing the higher levels of consciousness to drift to the margins if not off stage. It is more accurate to say: human cognition relies on our automatic pilot to clear a mental workspace wherein symbolic discourse and abstract reasoning can engage in activity the brain could not, by itself, have thought of.

This discussion within neuroscience and cognitional theory has implications for tenets within theological anthropology such as free will, the relation of the body to the soul, and resurrection of the body.

DLO (Desired Learning Outcomes)
Added to the set of DLOs for the entire course. The student should also demonstrate...
1. knowledge of deterministic claims associated with neuroscience;
2. ability to describe issues at stake;
3. awareness of theological commitments regarding body and soul.

REQUIRED READING


*This comprehensive volume is valuable for almost all modules.*
RCRS 26 Michael L. Spezio, "The Cognitive Sciences and Religious Experience"


RFECOMMENDED READING

RCRS 29 Stephen, Kaplan, "Hinduism and the Cognitive Sciences"

**This comprehensive volume is valuable for Science classes.**

OHN 8 T.M. Preuss, "The Human Brain: Evolution and Distinctive Features"
OHN 14 S.N. Austad and C.E. Finch, "Human Life History Evolution: New Perspectives on Body and Brain Growth"
OHN 20 S. Hameroff, "The Quantum Origin of Life: How the Brain Evolved to Feel Good"
OHN 21 M. Reimers and B. Oakley, "Empathy, Theory of Mind, Cognition, Morality, and Altruism"
OHN 32 T.W. Deacon, "Human Variability and the Origins and Evolution of Language"
OHN 34 R. McDermott, "Culture, Brain, and Behavior: The Implications of Neural Plasticity and Development on Social Contexts and Political Structures"

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

CTNS Website: ctns.org
Ted Peters' Website: TedsTimelyTake.com
Biologos: http://biologos.org/blogs/chris-stump-equipping-educators/series/this-week-in-creation