

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

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Bill Schlotter

Prize-Winning Author/Psychologist Steven Pinker to Open 4-Day Philosophy of the Mind Conference at UC Santa Barbara

Harvard psychology professor Steven Pinker, whose books have won numerous prizes, will open a four-day conference on the philosophy of the mind at the University of California, Santa Barbara, with "So How Does the Mind Work?" at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 13 in Corwin Pavilion.

The talk, whose title plays off Pinker's 1997 book "How the Mind Works," will present Pinker's thoughts on the original purpose and ensuing evolution of the human mind, melding computational theories with the theory of natural selection.

The talk is the first event in "Concepts and Content: A Conference in the Philosophy of Mind," which runs Friday Feb. 13 through Monday, Feb. 16 at UCSB.

All sessions are free and open to the public.

The conference is sponsored by the Steven Humphrey Fund for Excellence in Philosophy and UCSB's Department of Philosophy. Humphrey is a philosopher of physics who periodically teaches at UCSB.

Pinker has earned an international reputation as a linguist, cognitive psychologist, and theorist of the mind.

His research has examined the nature-nurture debate, the implications of evolutionary science for culture and politics, the origins and explanation for language, the nature of sight and visualization, and the general structure or cognitive architecture of the mind.

His four books---"The Language Instinct" (1994), "How the Mind Works" (1997), "Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language" (1999), and "The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature" (2002)---have been widely recognized and honored.

His books have won the William James Book Prize (three times), the Los Angeles Times Science Book Prize, and the Eleanor Maccoby Book Prize.

After many years on the faculty at MIT, Pinker recently became the Johnstone Family Professor of Psychology at Harvard.

Following Pinker's talk, the conference moves to the MultiCultural Center at UCSB. A schedule of events follows:

- 9 a.m. Saturday, "Manipulating Color," John Campbell, Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford. Comments by Kevin Falvey, UCSB.
- 12:30 p.m. Saturday, "Mental Action and Mental Concepts," Christopher Peacock, NYU. Comments by Michael Rescorla, UCSB.
- 3:15 p.m. Saturday, "Revenge of the Given," Jerry Fodor, Rutgers University. Comments by Katalin Balog, Yale University.
- 9 a.m. Sunday, "Experience Without the Head," Alva Noe, UC Berkeley. Comments by Benj Hellie, Cornell University.
- 12:30 p.m. Sunday, "An Epistemic Theory of Acquaintance," James Pryor, Princeton University. Comments by Aaron Zimmerman, UCSB.
- 3:15 p.m. Sunday, "Color and the Fall from Eden," David Chalmers, University of Arizona. Comments by Susanna Siegel, Harvard University.

- 7:30 p.m. Sunday, UCSB Faculty Club, "Perceptual Anti-Individualism," Tyler Burge, UCLA. Comments by Daniel Stoljar, the Australian National University.
- 9 a.m. Monday, MultiCultural Center, "The Way Things Appear," Sydney Shoemaker, Cornell University. Comments by Sean Kelly, Princeton University.

Coordinating the conference is Aaron Zimmerman, an assistant professor of philosophy at UCSB. Zimmerman can be reached at (805) 893-2632 and at azimmerman@philosophy.ucsb.edu

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.