



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

*Culture and the Mind*



## Folk psychology and folk epistemology

The first subproject, ran from October 2006 to October 2009, and focused on 'Theory of mind' and 'Folk epistemology'.

In our everyday dealings with one another we often predict, explain, or simply understand actions in terms of the mental states behind them. We attribute to one another such states as beliefs, desires, intentions, emotions, and so on, which we think of as being causally responsible for particular actions.

This capacity for explaining actions and behaviours in psychological terms is known as 'folk psychology'. Likewise, we have an everyday understanding of the norms that govern reasoning and justification, which might be called our 'folk epistemology'.

This subproject examined a cluster of philosophically interesting questions about folk psychology and folk epistemology. Questions here included:

- What aspects of folk psychology and folk epistemics are universal, and what aspects are culturally variable?
- What type of variability is there, and what is responsible for it?
- Do people in different cultures produce systematically different meta-theoretical accounts of folk psychology?
- What can the study of folk psychology and folk epistemics tell us about the fundamental organisation of the human mind and about what features of the mind are distinctively human?
- If folk epistemic norms are culturally variable, what are the consequences of this for traditional philosophical epistemology and theories of rationality?



# CULTURE & THE MIND

## Folk Psychology, Folk Epistemology & Cultural Transmission

### Conference Speakers

<b>Tara Callaghan</b>	(Psychology, St. Francis Xavier University)
<b>Michael Chandler</b>	(Psychology, University of British Columbia)
<b>György Gergely</b>	(Psychology, Central European University)
<b>Tamsin German</b>	(Psychology, University of California, Santa Barbara)
<b>Barry Hewlett</b>	(Anthropology, Washington State University)
<b>David Lancy</b>	(Anthropology, Utah State University)
<b>Douglas Medin</b>	(Psychology, Northwestern University)
<b>Jennie Pyers</b>	(Psychology, Wellesley University)
<b>Ayse Uskul</b>	(Psychology, Essex University)

**Friday, 11 September–Sunday, 13 September 2009**  
**Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield**

This conference is open to the public, but you must register to attend. Registration is £30 for the entire conference (£10 for students and unemployed). To register, or for more information, email [j.lavelle@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:j.lavelle@sheffield.ac.uk).

<http://www.philosophy.dept.shef.ac.uk/CMConf1/>



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield



Hong Kong Centre for Cognitive Studies

RUTGERS

Research Group on Evolution and Higher  
Cognition