MSc Computational Cognitive Neuroscience

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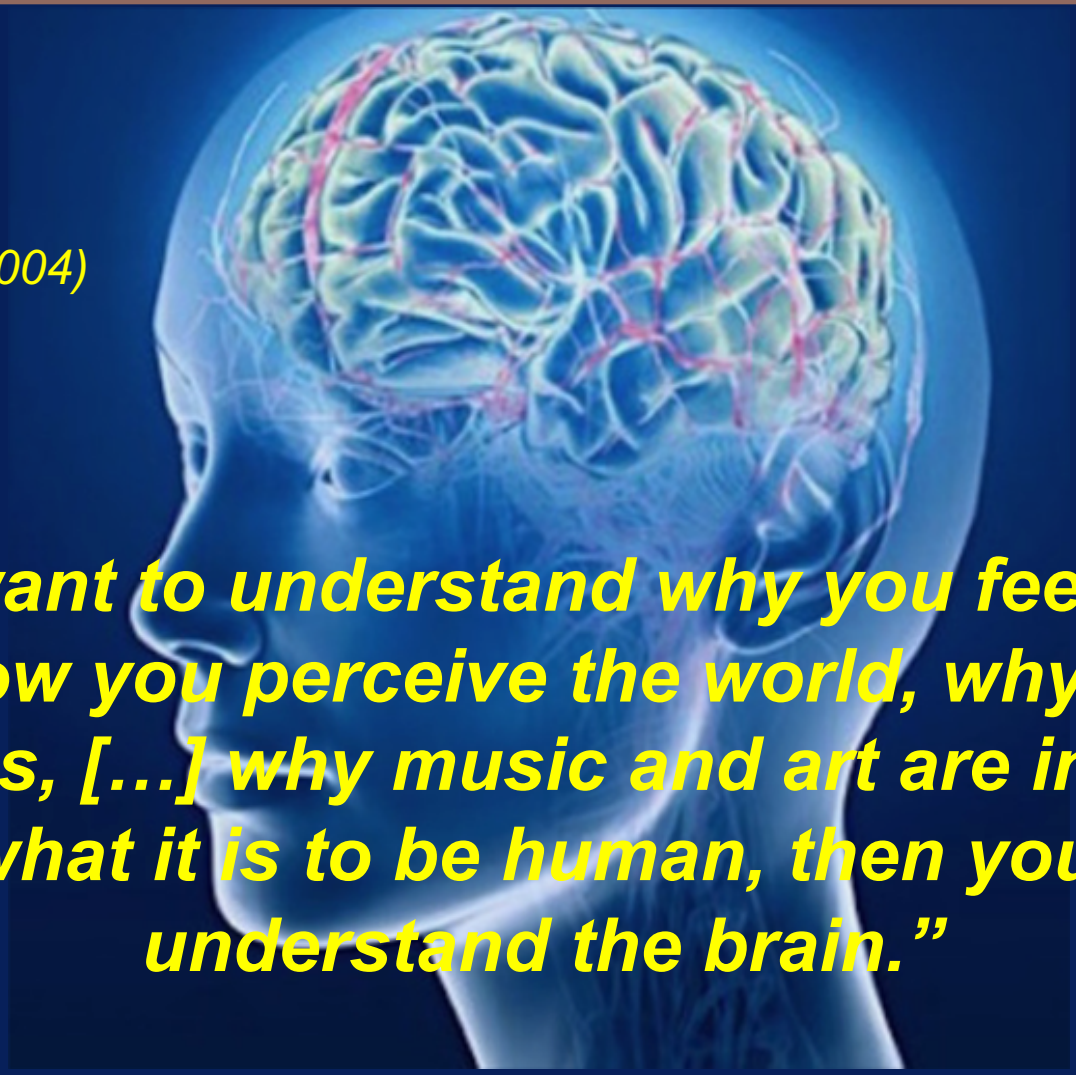
Postgraduate Open Day

24th November 2020
Goldsmiths, University of London

“You are your brain”

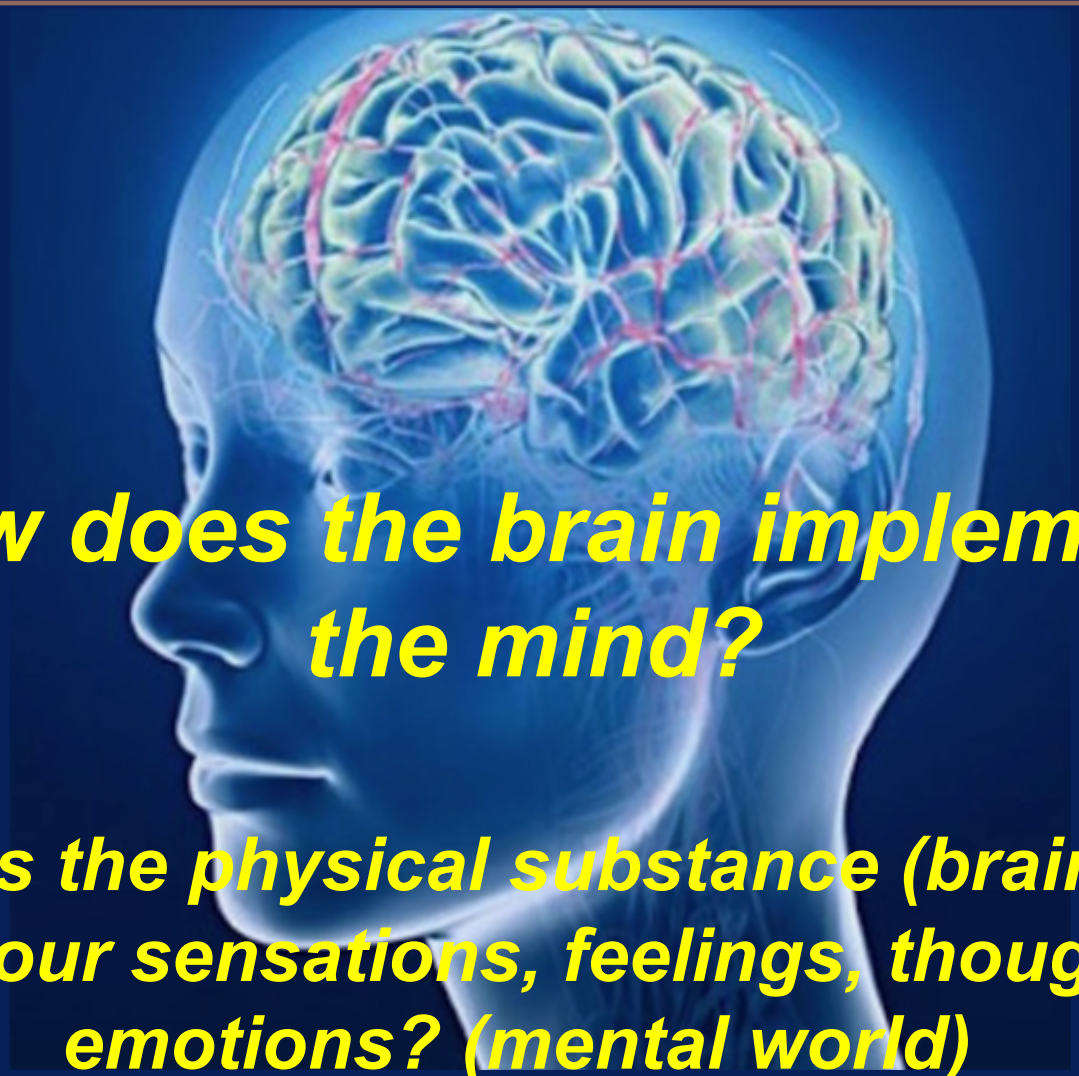
J. Hawkins,
On Intelligence (2004)



“If you want to understand why you feel the way you do, how you perceive the world, why you make mistakes, […] why music and art are inspiring, indeed what it is to be human, then you need to understand the brain.”

Picture from: coursera.org

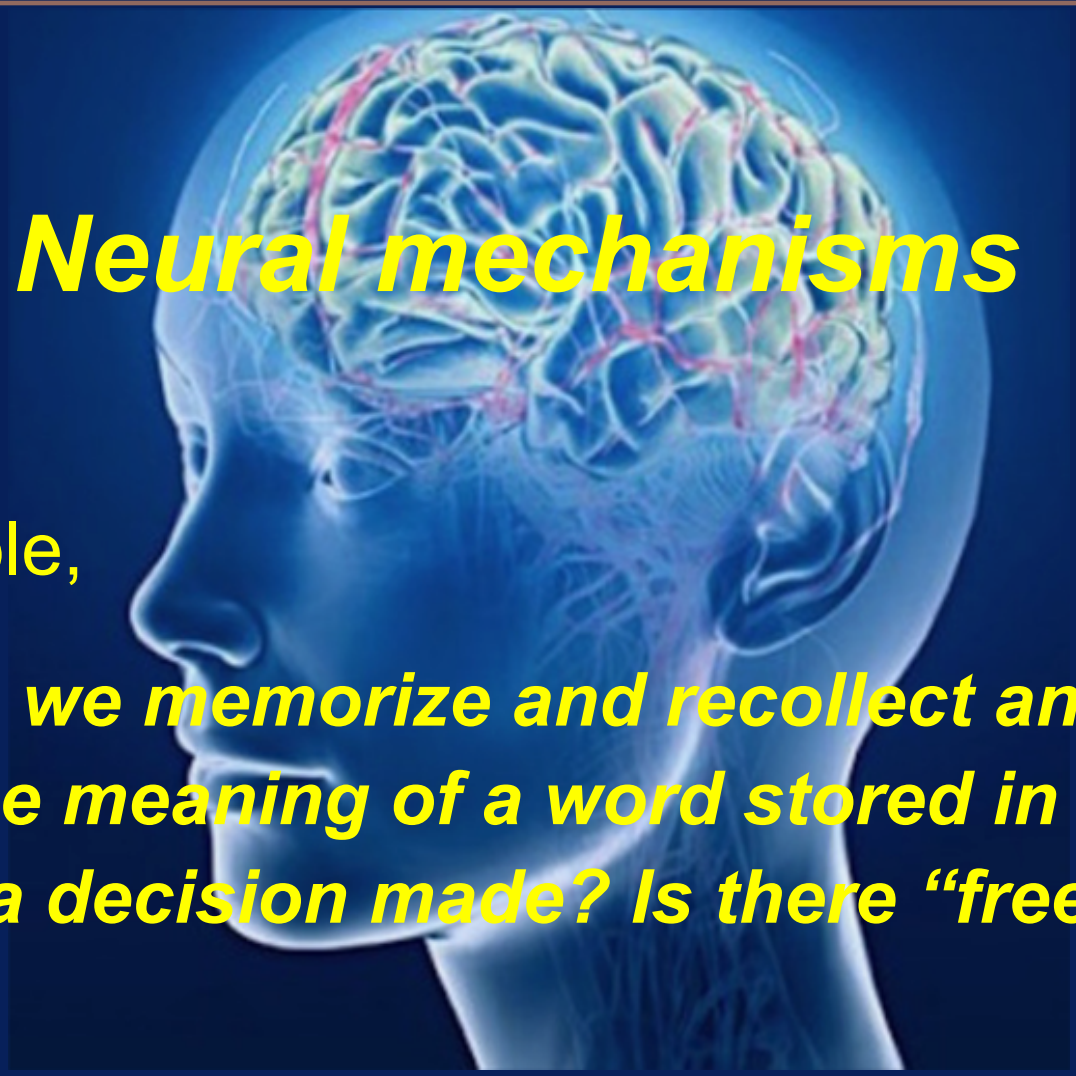
Computational Cognitive Neuroscience



How does the brain implement the mind?

How does the physical substance (brain, body) produce our sensations, feelings, thoughts and emotions? (mental world)

Computational Cognitive Neuroscience



Neural mechanisms

For example,

How can we memorize and recollect an event?
Where is the meaning of a word stored in the brain?
How is a decision made? Is there "free will"?

Why does this matter?

Understanding how the brain works can be used to:

A. Help cure brain-related diseases

- Mental illnesses (e.g, autism, OCD, schizophrenia..)
- Cognitive impairments (e.g., speech, memory...)
- Neurodegenerative diseases (Alzheimer, Parkinson)

HEALTHY BRAIN

BRAIN of FTD PATIENT

Why does this matter?

Understanding how the brain works can be used to:

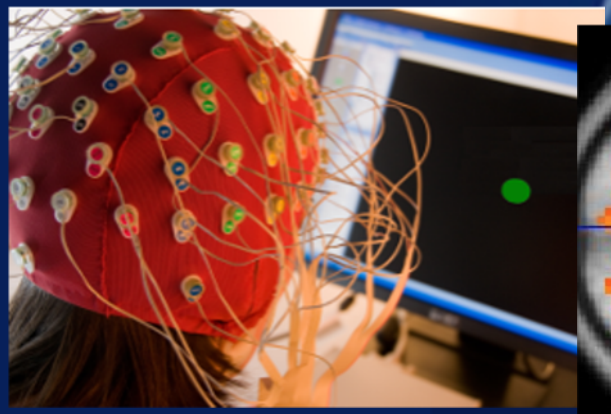
B. Build new, *human-like* cognitive systems

- improve the *quality of our lives* (speech recognition, deep learning applications, robotic assistants…)
- help us *explore* and better *understand* the world (e.g, machines endowed with *creativity*, or "*general*" – i.e. human-like – *intelligence*)

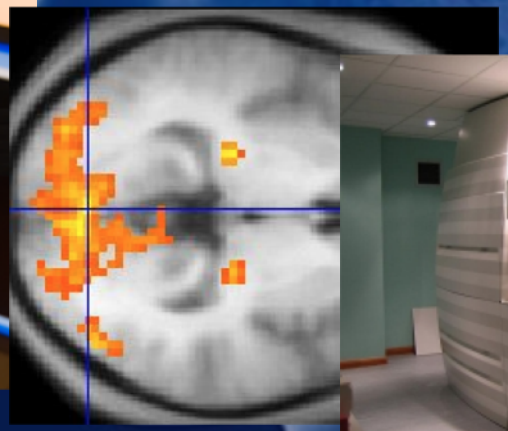
Why **Computational Cognitive Neuroscience?**

1. Cognitive Neuroscience

Uses experimental and computational methods to understand how the **brain & mind work**



ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY



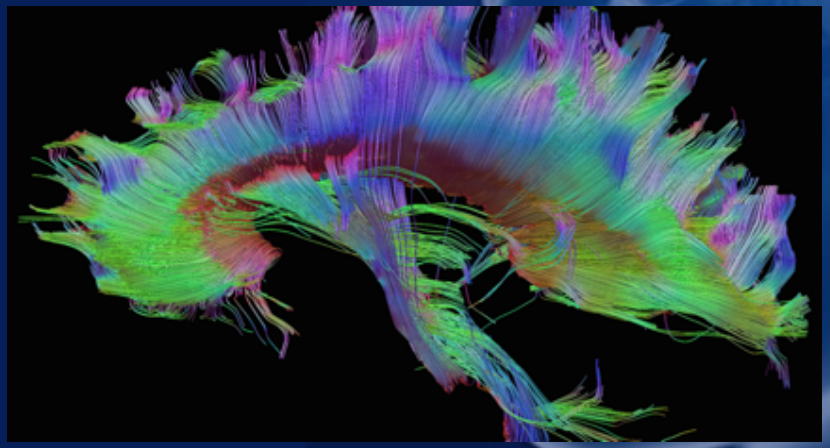
STRUCTURAL & FUNCTIONAL MRI

MAGNETOENCEPHALOGRAPHY

Why **Computational Cognitive Neuroscience?**

2. Computational Neuroscience

Build computer models that mimic structure & function of brain components, to explain how they interact..



ANATOMICAL STRUCTURE

CELLULAR-LEVEL FUNCTION

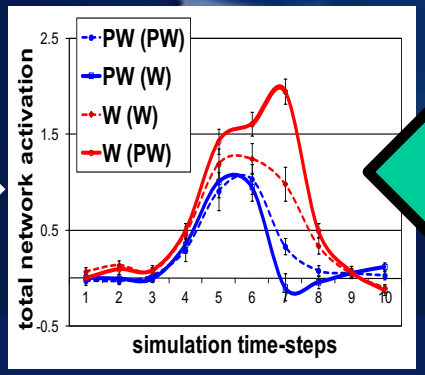
.. and, together, give rise to the ***mind***

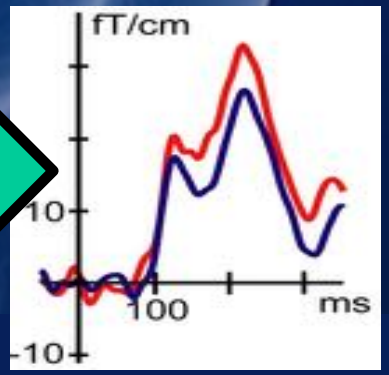
Why **Computational Cognitive Neuroscience?**

1. Cognitive Neuroscience
+
2. Computational Neuroscience

.. Data → Theory → computational model (explains data) →
→ Simulations → Novel predictions → New experiments → Data..

MODEL





BRAIN

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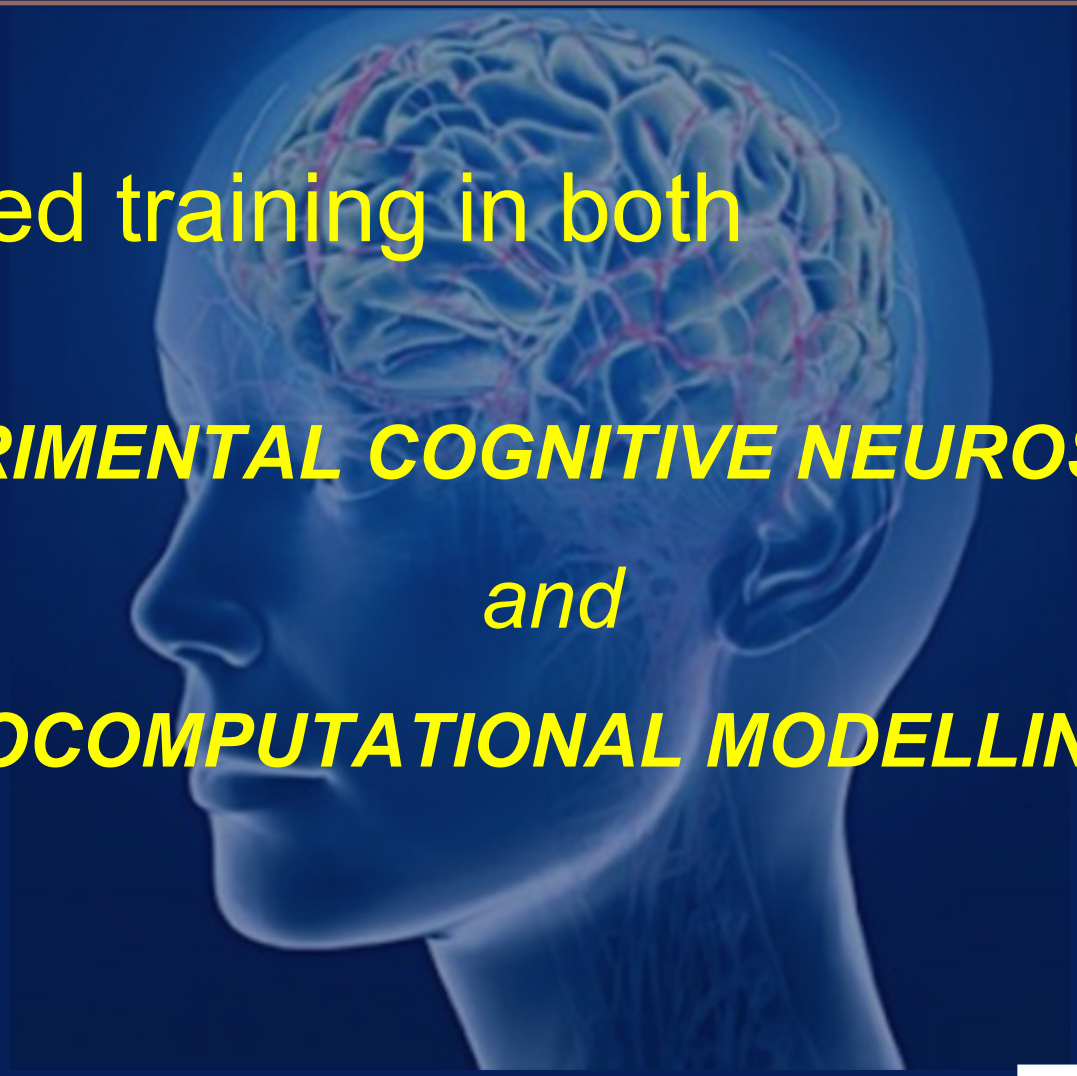

Advanced training in both

1. EXPERIMENTAL COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE

and

2. NEUROCOMPUTATIONAL MODELLING

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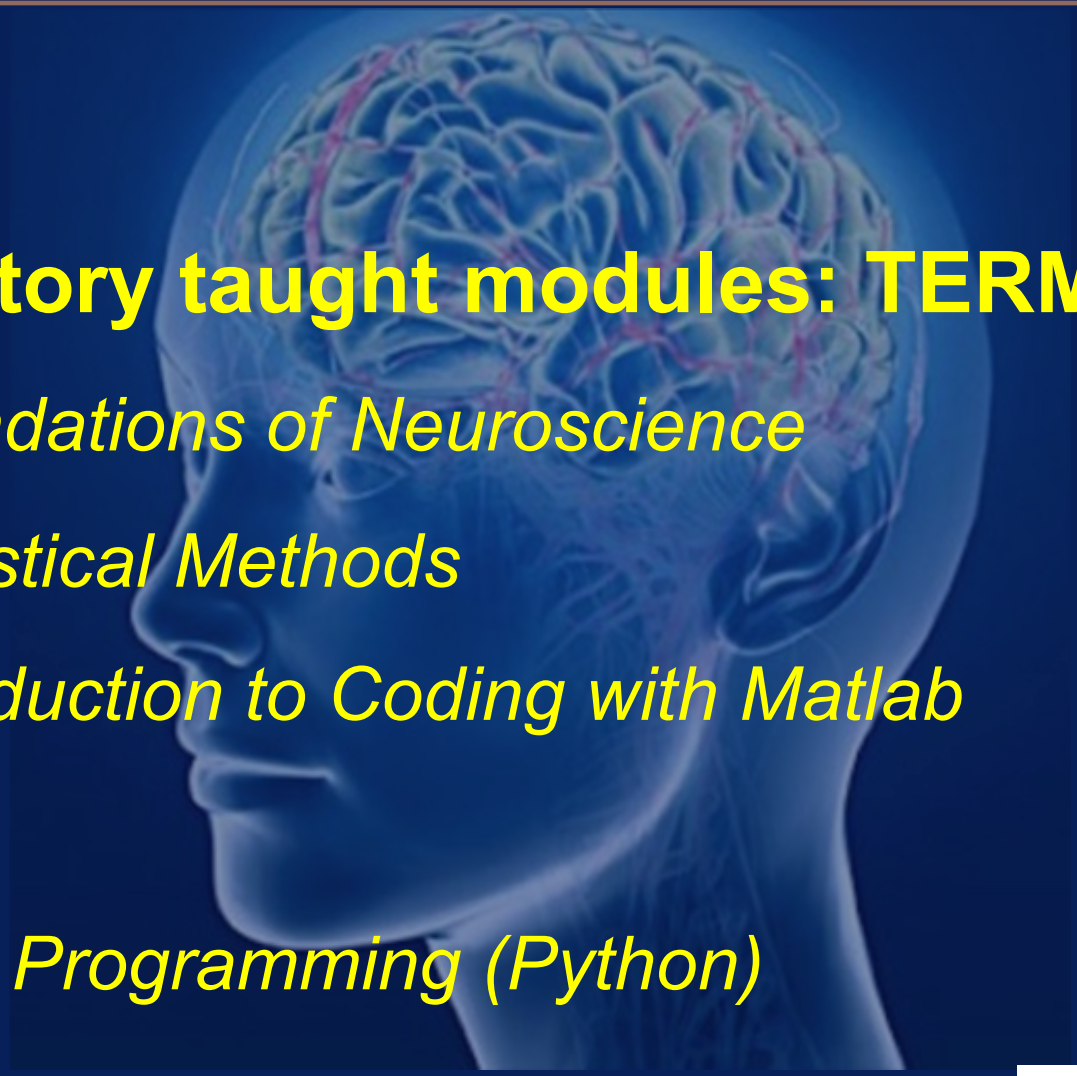

Mandatory taught modules: TERM 1

- *Foundations of Neuroscience*
- *Statistical Methods*
- *Introduction to Coding with Matlab*

OR

Data Programming (Python)

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Mandatory taught modules: TERM 2

- *Cortical Modelling*
- *Modelling Cognitive Functions*
- *Cognitive Neuroscience*
- *Advanced Quantitative Methods*

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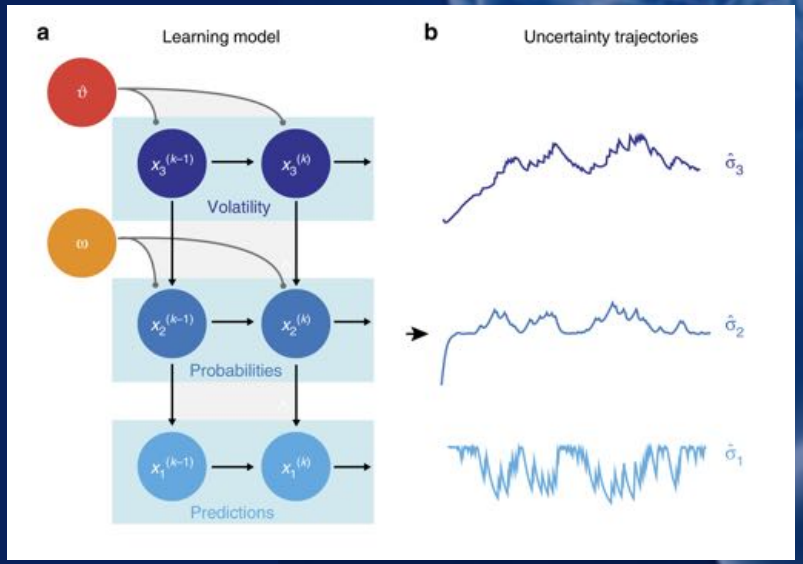
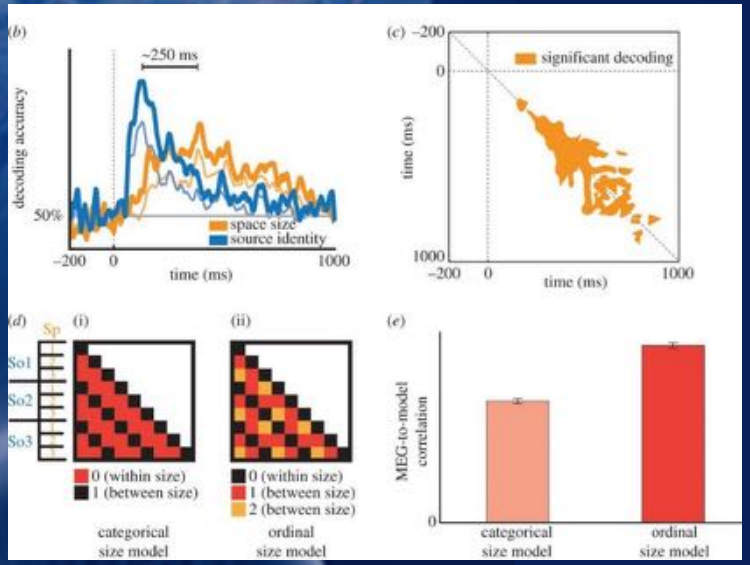
TERM 3 (mandatory):

- *Research Project & Dissertation*





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Optional modules (students to choose **ONE**):

- *Research Design and Analysis (**PSY**)*
- *Neural Networks (**COMP**)*
- *Critical Analysis (**PSY**)*
- *Physical Computing (**COMP**)*
- *Behavioural Genetics (**PSY**)*
- *Artificial Intelligence / Deep learning (**COMP**)*
- *Machine Learning (**COMP**, Term 2)*

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Why enrol on this MSc

- ***CUTTING EDGE topic**, at the forefront of a new, rapidly growing field of research*
- *It covers both **THEORY** and **PRACTICAL** methods*
- *MULTIDISCIPLINARY: it will give you a **competitive edge** over graduates of other "single-theme" programmes (e.g, "Neuroscience", "Computer Science", or "Cognitive neuroscience" only)*

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Links with industry

SONY CSL (Japan)
Bayer (Germany)
LiquidWeb (Italy)
Filament (UK)

- **Research projects in collaboration**
- **Possible POST-MASTER internships**
- **MSc projects examples, alumni's feedback:**

https://coconeuro.com/

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Careers

1. ***ACADEMIA**: Ideal preparation for PhD studies or R.A. positions in computational / cognitive neuroscience, leading to a career in research*

2. ***INDUSTRY**: high-tech companies developing intelligent systems, including cognitive robotics and deep learning applications (e.g., game intelligence, virtual reality, natural language processing, brain-computer interfaces, human-computer interaction, web-search engines,…etc.)*

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THANK YOU!

Any questions?...

For a copy of these slides, see: **https://coconeuro.com/**

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www.gold.ac.uk/pg/msc-computational-cognitive-neuroscience/

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