

## Thinking About Thinking

The how, what, and why of thinking

<b>Course #</b>	20FTH
<b>Format:</b>	Seminar
<b>Moderator:</b>	Francie Borden
<b>Date and Time:</b>	Monday, 1:30-3:30 10 weeks, starting September 21
<b>Location:</b>	UMass/5 College Credit Union, Hadley
<b>Maximum number of participants:</b>	12
<b>Auditors accepted:</b>	No

**Purpose:** The purpose of this seminar is to explore through research and practice a deeper understanding of the practice of thinking: its implications for decision making and education; its structures and varieties; and how it can be manipulated or improved.

**Description:** Since the Enlightenment, we have prided ourselves on our unique and rational brains and their capacity for improving our world and our lives. Recently, through the research of Kahneman Tversky and others and the evidence of the current state of political discourse in the US and elsewhere, that confidence in our rationality has been challenged. This seminar will look at suggestions for improving thinking from Plato to the present, consider whether and how we can avoid bias, and perhaps speculate about the relationship between AI and human brains. Possible topics also include the role of language in thinking, whether thinking is hierarchical, different kinds of thinking, and others of your choosing.

**Role of participants:** Participants will choose an area of interest, either to make a presentation, lead a discussion based on a short reading, or present an activity that demonstrates or expands our thinking or understanding of it.

**Resources:** Participants should familiarize themselves with Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow* and/or Dan Ariely's *Predictably Irrational*. The *Hidden Brain* podcasts on NPR offer a variety of relevant topics. All participants are asked to take one or more of the Implicit Bias tests at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/> prior to the first session.

**About the Moderator:** I have been an educator fascinated by how we think all my life.