

Philosophy of Mind: Mind, Brain, and Mental Illness

Section: PHILOS/LPS 143, Summer 2014

Day/Time: **Classroom:**

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Office hours: TBA

Description: This course addresses philosophical perspectives on fundamental issues for the scientific study of the mind and behavior. The first part of the course examines traditional questions in philosophy of mind including the relationship between the mental and the physical and what a theory of the mind might look like. Once that background is in place, the course examines empirical literature that challenges traditional notions that humans are rational and conscious of what affects their decision-making. The class concludes by examining different conceptions of mental disorders and what is at stake in classifying certain behaviors as “mentally ill.” A recurring concern throughout the course will be (a) how are philosophic concerns rooted in contemporaneous developments outside of philosophy; (b) do scientific accounts of the mental give us answers to questions we are asking or divert our attention to “easier problems;” and (c) what justifies the methods that are being employed and evidence being marshaled to answer these questions. The class should be of interest to philosophers of mind and those majoring in cognitive science or psychology who wish to examine foundational issues in their discipline.

Requirements:

1. Readings

Instead of everyone reading all the readings, each week everyone will read a common core and then take special responsibility for one of the three remaining readings. This effectively reduces each student’s reading load by half! Consider for example the reading assignment for class 3 below. The “(C)” means that the material is “common core” material and will be read/watched by everyone. The common core material is generally a textbook overview of the topics to be covered and as a general rule should be a gentle introduction to the material. In this case the reading is three different sections from the *Matter and Consciousness* text book and a 7 minute video. In addition, students will also be responsible for reading one additional primary reading each week. Students in group 1 read: Place, “Is consciousness a brain process?”. Students in group 2 read Block, From “Troubles....” and students in group 3 read Searle, “Minds...” The Lycan is optional reading for anyone that gets super excited about the topic! For various reasons (see below), **readings must be read before the class that covers them.**

3	Reductive materialism (aka identity theory), Classical AI, Functionalism and objections.	(C) Matter and Consciousness (p. 40-45;157-190; 63-72) (C) Bisson (v) “They’re made out of meat” (1) Place, “Is Consciousness a brain process” (2) Block, From “Troubles with Functionalism” (3) Searle, “Minds, brains, and programs” (OPT) Lycan, “Introduction” to Mind and Cognition”
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2. Participation (Bonus)

Active and informed participation: Students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to engage in an informed discussion of the material. Students are expected to actively participate in classroom discussions. Participation includes asking questions, raising objections, offering defenses, commenting on the significance of a point, clarifying an argument or a claim, and drawing out the connections between an issue from our current discussion and issues raised in our other readings. Substantial contributions can raise your grade.

3. Class Wiki (70% of final grade)

Creating the Wiki: Weeks 2-4	25%
Creating the Wiki: Weeks 5-10	45% (30% page owner, 15% page associate)
Total Class Wiki	70%

Over the duration of the course the class will collectively create a wiki on the material covered in class. The end product will be a collective account of what we have covered in the course (i.e. a study guide for the final!).

Each student will be assigned to one of three groups for each class session. These groups will change twice over the course of the quarter and will be randomly assigned. Responsibilities are slightly different for classes 2-4 than for 5-10.

A. Creating the wiki: Weeks 2-4 (25% of final grade)

During the first few classes (weeks 2-4) students will create a summary of the articles as a group. A summary contains 3 sections. The first identifies the central philosophical question(s) addressed by the piece, the second (and main portion) summarizes the author's argument, the third briefly states the author's position on the question they address.

Summaries should be roughly 400-600 words, though some summaries will naturally exceed this boundary on one end or the other. Consider this a helpful guideline as opposed to a requirement. Other guidelines can be found in the "Writing Good Summaries" document on the class website. The purpose of these summaries is to learn to digest and understand philosophic arguments (i.e. these are not research papers). Accordingly, students **should not** use outside resources. Evidence of outside research will be considered cause to reduce a grade, or in extreme cases be considered a violation of academic integrity and can warrant further action (see: Academic Integrity Policy below).

Summaries must be finalized by **11:59pm the night before the lecture** to give classmates from other groups the opportunity to read the summary. Work can be distributed within your group in any manner the group can agree to. Grades will be assigned to the group. In extreme circumstances where a group member fails to abide by their agreed contribution, students can petition for separate grades by sending me an

email. Group members should take other steps to avoid such situations (email the student, etc.) and such petitions should be seen as a last resort.

B. Creating the wiki: weeks 5-10 (Total: 45% of the final grade)

Each student will choose one article and will then “own” the relevant wiki page for that article. The sign-up sheet will be available through eee starting Aug 7th. Students must have chosen a article by Aug 14th. Students will also be “associated” with 5 other articles (one per class, except the class that you are an owner of). As can be seen in the schedule of readings, there are two sets: (a), (b), and (c) is the first set; (i), (ii), (iii) is the second. There are three groups in each set. Students will be in the group that the article that they own is in and they will be randomly assigned to a group in the other set.

For example, if a student signs up to be the owner of:

Class 6: (b) Chalmers, “The puzzle of conscious experience”

They will also be associates for the two other (b) articles:

Class 5: (b) Holman, “Restrictive materialism and the propositional attitudes”

Class 7: (b) Nisbett & Wilson, “Telling more than we can know”

The student will also be randomly assigned into group (i), (ii) or (iii) for classes 8-10. Groups will be assigned on Aug 15th.

i. Contribution #1: Page Owner (30% of final grade)

Initial summary (20% of final grade) Post a summary of the article roughly **three days in advance** of the class that covers the article. Specifically, if the class is on a Tues, the article should be posted by 11:59 pm Saturday and if the class is on a Thurs, the article should be posted by 11:59 pm Monday

Moderating and finalizing (10% of final grade) The owner is expected to be the class expert on the article. Between the time the summary is posted and the class when it is covered, the owner will answer questions raised in discussion posts, moderate discussions from other students, and attempt to address interpretive questions (i.e. figure out what an author means when it is unclear or when there is dispute between students). Within a day **after class**, the owner is responsible for finalizing the wiki page and incorporating into it any insight gained from class lecture and discussion. Lastly, the owner should expect to answer questions about the article as students prepare for the final exam.

ii. Contribution #2: Page Associate (15% of final grade)

For each class, students are associated with a one of three readings. Students are expected to acquire a solid understanding of that article and to ensure that quality of the corresponding wiki page. Ways to fulfill this responsibility are much the same as class participation and include: participating in discussion threads (asking questions, raising objections, offering defenses, commenting on the significance of a point, clarifying an argument or a claim, and drawing out the connections between an issue from the current discussion and issues raised in our other readings). In addition, if you think that the

owner has misinterpreted or neglected a particular section or that their writing is unclear you can leave a comment suggesting a change (be specific) or asking for clarification.

3. Final exam (30% of final grade):

Includes short answer and essay questions. The short answer responses will involve summarizing the main argument of a paper read for class (i.e. exactly what each wiki page is intended to be). The essay questions will ask you to summarize one of the main positions explored in the class, explain objections to that position, and explain whether you think the objections are successful (i.e. justify your own position). The exam covers the entire term's required material, as well as any additional material covered in lectures, but with greater emphasis on the latter part of the term. A list of possible essay questions will be distributed one week before the final.

Class policies:

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism, cheating, etc. will not be tolerated and the University policy on Academic Honesty will be followed strictly. Students who have any questions or uncertainty whatsoever about this policy are responsible for meeting individually with the instructor to discuss the policy. Anyone found violating this policy will receive an F for the course and will be reported to the appropriate University officials. I am extremely firm on this matter.

Late assignments: Because your fellow classmates depend on your contributions late assignments **will not be accepted**. In severe circumstances (i.e. hospitalization, death of a family member etc.) accommodations can be made given the student can provide supporting documentation.

Disabilities: It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in advance of the need for accommodation of a University verified disability. I will gladly provide the required accommodations.

Preferred names and gender pronouns: I would like to make every effort to create a safe space. If you have a preferred name or gender pronoun that is not reflected in the roster, please let me know.

Students should also refer to the University General Catalog about standard policies and procedures

Materials:

1. All the required readings listed below are available as PDFs or links from the course's webpage.

Schedule of Readings and notation:

(C) indicates common core material that everyone should read.

The (1), (2), (3); (a), (b), (c); and (i), (ii), (iii); indicate which groups that will be associated with that reading for the purposes of creating the wiki,

(v) indicates video, (OPT) indicates an optional reading.

Meeting	Topic	Readings
1 (8/5/14)	Intro to the course/ Materialism	Nagel, "What is like to be a Bat" (see wiki) (OPT) Matter and Consciousness (p. 1-10)
2 (8/7/14)	Substance Dualism, Property Dualism, and Behaviorism.	(C) Matter and Consciousness (p. 11-39) (C) Descartes, From passions of the soul: Articles 1-6,10-13,16,17, 31-41,48-50,136. (1) Descartes, Meditations II (2) Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia" (3) Skinner, A technology of human behavior (p. 3-25) & What is Man? (p. 190-195) (OPT) Descartes, Meditations VI
3 (8/12/14)	Reductive materialism (aka identity theory), Classical AI, Machine Functionalism and its critics.	(C) Matter and Consciousness (p. 40-45;157-190; 63-72) (C) Bisson (v) "They're made out of meat" (1) Block, From "Troubles with Functionalism" (2) Place, "Is Consciousness a brain process" (3) Searle, "Minds, brains, and programs" (OPT) Lycan, "Introduction" to Mind and Cognition"
4 (8/14/14)	Language of Thought (subtype of machine functionalism), Instrumentalism and Teleological Functionalism.	(C) Clark, Chpt. 3 (1) Fodor, Appendix from "Psychosemantics" [this is hard, read carefully] (2) Dennett "True believers" (3) Sober, "Putting the function back into Functionalism" (OPT) Fodor, Chapter 1 from "Psychosemantics"
5 (8/19/14)	Eliminative Materialism, Restrictive Materialism, and Simulation Theory	(C) Matter and Consciousness (p. 73-85) (a) Churchland, "Eliminative materialism and the propositional attitudes" (b) Holman, "Restrictive materialism and the propositional attitudes" (c) Gordon, "Folk psychology as simulation" (OPT) Goldman, From "Simulating Minds" (p. 10-16; 19-20; 23-42)
6 (8/21/14)	Non-Reductive Materialism and "The Hard Problem" of Consciousness	(C) Matter and Consciousness (p. 45-62) (C) Dennett (v): "The... Consciousness" (a) Searle, "Reductionism and the Irreducibility of Consciousness" (I-IV) (b) Chalmers, "The puzzle of conscious experience" (c) Churchland, "The rediscovery of light" [This is dense, the summary will be longer]

		(OPT) Price “Should We Expect to Feel as if We Understand Consciousness”
7 (8/26/14)	Human reasoning & self-consciousness (The Epistemological problem of consciousness)	(C) Matter and Consciousness (p. 111-134) (C) Brown (v) “Astrology” & (v) “The System” (a) Heil, Privileged access (b) Nisbett & Wilson: Telling more than we can know (c) Baugh and Chartrand, “The unbearable automaticity of being” (OPT) Dawes: “A message from psychologists to economists: mere predictability doesn’t matter like it should (without a good story appended to it)”
8 (8/28/14)	Mental illness: The biomedical model	(C) The Stanford encyclopedia: Mental illness (C) Rosenhan, “On Being Sane in Insane Places” (i) Boorse, “What a theory of mental health should be” (ii) Wakefield, “The Concept of Mental Disorder: On the Boundary Between Biological Facts and Social Values.” (iii) Murphy & Woolfolk, “The Harmful Dysfunction Analysis of Mental Disorder.” (OPT) Papinaeu, “About function and mental illness?”
9 (9/2/14)	Postmodernism, Pharmaceutical Companies, and the Social Construction of Mental Illness	(C) Erwin, “Postmodernist clinical epistemology: A critique” (C) Is Emotional Pain Necessary (audio) (i) Moynihan & Cassels, Advertising disease and shaping public perception (premenstrual dysphoric disorder & social anxiety disorder) (ii) Healy, Before Prozac (Depression) (iii) Whitaker, The epidemic spreads to children (ADHD & Bipolar in children)
10 (9/4/14)	Anti-psychiatry and Social construction of mental illness (?)	(C) Hacking, “Kinds of People: Moving Targets.” (C) 81 words (audio) (i) Szasz, From “The manufacture of mental illness” (ii) Mayes & Horwitz “DSM-III and the revolution in the classification of mental illness” (iii) Horwitz, From “Creating Mental Illness”
Final exam		