

PHIL 0460: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Fall 2016

Instructor

Robert Howton
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Office Hours

M 11–12, Th 4–5
1028-A CL

Course Website

CourseWeb
(courseweb.pitt.edu)

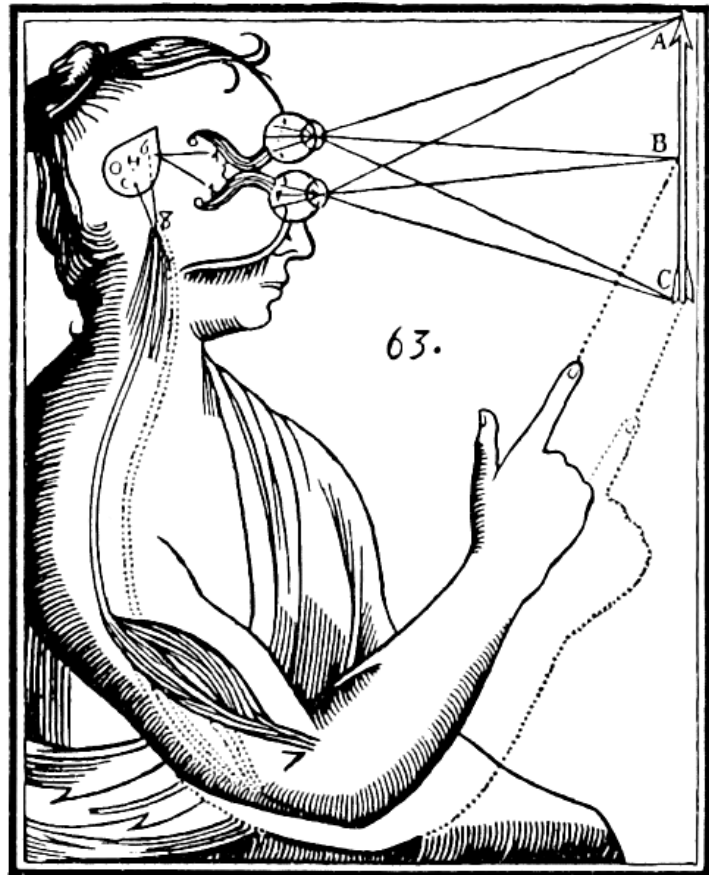
Lectures

MW 9:00–9:50
324 CL

Section Leaders

Alessandra Buccella
(a1b319@pitt.edu)

Alison Springle
(alisonspringle@gmail.com)



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is about a conflict between two very familiar pictures of the world and our place in it. According to one—our ordinary, unscientific picture of the world—we are creatures with **minds**. We see, hear, and feel pleasure and pain, desire and satisfaction, joy and sadness; we also think, wonder, believe, and wish; and in general we regard ourselves as **subjects** of a wide variety of **experiences** and **mental attitudes**. In so regarding ourselves we may believe we are like certain other creatures, for instance dogs and cats, elephants and dolphins, and perhaps even advanced forms of extraterrestrial life and artificial intelligence, each of whom we may also regard as having a sort of mind. More importantly, we take ourselves to be significantly *different* from other things, for instance stones, bacteria, plants, continents, and planets, which we take to *lack* mind and the experiences and mental attitudes to which we are subject.

According to the standard scientific picture of the world, however, we other “minded” creatures are fundamentally *like* mindless things in being **physical** objects. We—or at any rate our *bodies*—

are ultimately made up of the same stuff as stones and plants and planets, namely of atoms, and even more basically of quarks, leptons, and bosons, the fundamental particles thought to make up *everything* in the universe. Viewed at the level of our ultimate bodily components, there appears to be *no* appreciable distinction between minded and mindless things. We are faced, then, with a difficult question: does our ordinary unscientific picture of ourselves as creatures with minds fit with the standard scientific of us as fundamentally physical? *Can mind be incorporated into a physical world?*

These questions touch on many of the central issues in the discipline we know today as the **philosophy of mind**. Our aim in this course is to survey a number of the most important philosophical theories of mind developed in response to these questions, as well as to consider other philosophical issues arising from them and from the scientific study of mind.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to establish a broad understanding of core issues in philosophy of mind and to develop the skills necessary for appreciating these and other topics in contemporary philosophy. The successful student will demonstrate the ability:

- to state and articulate verbally and in writing major ideas and positions in the philosophy of mind,
- to read and critically assess philosophical literature in recent philosophy of mind,
- to identify the elements of an argument and assess it for soundness and validity, and
- to apply these skills to novel cases.

The key to success in this course is to keep up with the assigned readings and to attend and participate regularly in class activities. *If you keep up with the course you will not be assigned anything for which you are unprepared.*

COURSE COMPONENTS

The course has *two* components: twice-weekly lectures led by me and weekly (or twice-weekly for writing section students) recitation sections led by your section leader. Both components are *mandatory*, and will moreover be crucial for your success in this course. The point of the lecture is to introduce you to the theories, concepts, and problems that make up the content of the course. The recitations are there for you to discuss and interrogate those ideas, as they arise both in lecture and in the required readings for the course, through conversation with your fellow students and the recitation leader.

Attending recitations is important for any large lecture course of this kind, but it is especially important for philosophy. That's because philosophy is a discursive enterprise: progress in understanding and evaluating philosophical ideas is most effectively made through interpersonal discussion, where you can test, correct, and improve your understanding of philosophical ideas. Large

lectures do not allow for this sort of discussion. This is what the recitations are designed to facilitate, so you will be doing yourself a major disservice if you elect not to attend.

n.B. My lectures will be accompanied by detailed notes, which I will typically post to CourseWeb before (probably right before) the first lecture of the unit. If you want to follow along with the notes during lecture, you are encouraged to bring a laptop (but also to resist the urge to distract yourself with frivolous internet ephemera), or else to consult the notes after class.

EVALUATION

Recitation Section Students will be expected to write **two term tests** and **two term papers**. *Writing Section Students* will additionally be expected to **revise** their term papers in light of comments from me and from their peers. Additionally, the Section Leaders will administer a series of **reading quizzes** covering the reading assigned for that meeting. (There will be at least 10 quizzes given, though Section Leaders reserve the right to give more, in which case the top 10 quizzes will count toward the student's final grade.) With the exception of University excused absences, which must be supported by official documentation, students are expected to attend all other recitations and lectures.

Final grades will be determined according to the following rubric:

Recitation Section Students		Writing Section Students	
Term Paper 1	15%	Term Paper 1	15%
Term Paper 2	25%	Term Paper 2	20%
Term Test 1	20%	Revisions 1,2	5% each
Term Test 2	30%	Term Test 1	20%
Attendance/Reading Quizzes	10%	Term Test 2	25%
Total	100%	Attendance/Reading Quizzes	10%
		Total	100%

Students must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.

IMPORTANT DATES

Term tests will be administered during lecture meetings, reading quizzes during recitations; term papers are due by midnight (i.e. no later than 11:59 P.M.) on the assigned due date.

Dates subject to change.

DATE	ALL SECTIONS	WRITING SECTIONS
9/5	<i>No Class (Labor Day)</i>	
9/12	Term Paper 1 Posted	
9/28	Term Paper 1 Due	
10/12	Term Test 1	
10/17	<i>No Class (Fall Break)</i>	
10/18	<i>Fall Break Makeup Day</i>	

11/2		Term Paper 1 Revisions Due
11/8	Term Paper 2 Posted	
11/22	Term Paper 2 Due	
11/23	<i>No Class (Thanksgiving Break)</i>	
12/7	Term Test 2	
12/12		Term Paper 2 Revisions Due

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no course packet. Course readings are available on CourseWeb. Students looking for additional material are encouraged to consult either of the following introductory texts:

1. Campbell, Neil. *A Brief Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. 5th ed. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 2005.
2. Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011.

Copies of (1) are available at the Bookstore, and several used copies are available online (e.g. through Amazon). (2) is a more difficult read, but it is available for free online via the Pitt Library and linked on CourseWeb.

DISABILITIES AND DIFFERENT STYLES OF LEARNING

Education is a pluralistic enterprise: there are several and often incompatible styles of learning. If you believe there is an alternative approach to this material that would better suit your style of learning, do not hesitate to bring it up with me. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890 or (412) 383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

The goal of this course is to promote and assess *your* satisfaction of the above-stated course objectives. Plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty will be treated with the greatest severity. Students should familiarize themselves with the University of Pittsburgh's policy on academic integrity, which may be found here: <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>

EMAIL POLICY

Allow me two business days to respond to emails. Please do not email me with questions of philosophical substance—that is what lecture, recitation, and office hours are for—and please consult this syllabus before asking questions about course policy.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Schedule, topics, and assignment due dates are subject to change.

8/29 *Introduction: Syllabus + Course Basics*

UNIT 1 *The Mental and the Physical*

8/31 Anthony 2009, pp. 555–559

9/7 Nagel 1974

9/12 Jackson 1982, pp. 127–130; Jackson 1986

UNIT 2 *The Mind-Body Problem I: Dualism*

9/14 Descartes, *Meditations* II

9/19 Descartes, *Meditations* VI

9/21 Shapiro 2007, pp. 61–73

UNIT 3 *The Mind-Body Problem II: Behaviorism*

9/26 Ryle 1949, Ch. 1

9/28 Putnam 1963

UNIT 4 *The Mind-Body Problem III: the Psychoneural Identity Theory*

10/3 Place 1956

10/5 Levine 1983

10/10 *No Reading: Catch-Up + Review*

10/12 *No Reading*

Term Test 1

UNIT 5 *The Mind-Body Problem IV: Functionalism*

10/18 Fodor 1981

10/19 Hofstadter 1981

10/24 Hofstadter 1981

UNIT 6	<i>Qualia, Consciousness, and the “Hard Problem”</i>	
10/26	Chalmers 1995	
10/31	P. S. Churchland 1996	
UNIT 7	<i>“Mind Reading” and Folk Psychology</i>	
11/2	Gopnik and Wellman 1994	
11/7	Goldman 1989	
UNIT 8	<i>Is Folk Psychology True?</i>	
11/9	Clark 1995; P. M. Churchland 1981	
11/14	Jackson and Pettit 1990	
UNIT 8	<i>Rationality and Animal Minds</i>	
11/16	Andrews 2015, Ch. 1	
11/21	Davidson 1982	
UNIT 9	<i>The Senses</i>	
11/28	Macpherson 2011, Ch. 1	
11/30	O’Callaghan 2012	
12/5	<i>No Reading: Catch-Up + Review</i>	
12/7	<i>No Reading</i>	<i>Term Test 2</i>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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