

PHIL 1440: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Spring 2016

Instructor

Robert Howton

(robert.howton@pitt.edu)

Office Hours

M 1–2, Th 11–12

1028-A CL

Course Website

CourseWeb

(courseweb.pitt.edu)

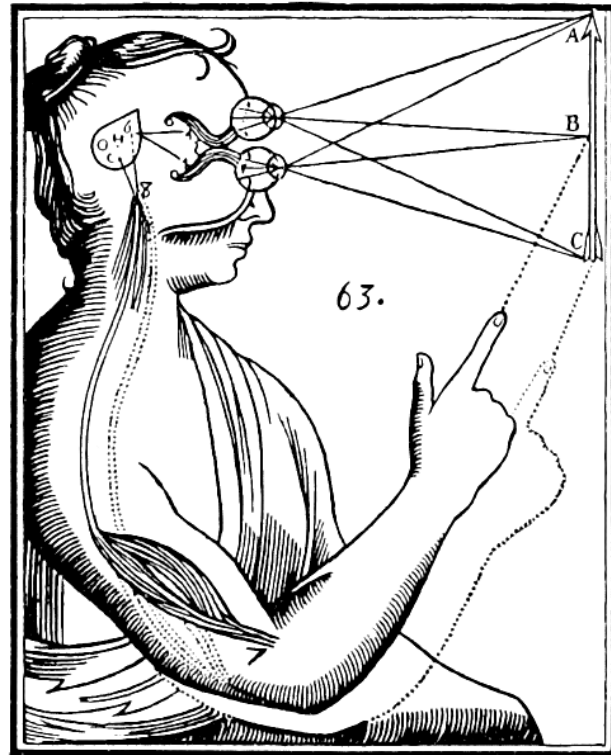
Lectures

TuTh 9:30–10:45

226 CL

Prerequisites

Any other PHIL course



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Many of the attitudes we ordinarily take to ourselves, to each other, and to the world around us presuppose a distinction between the *mental* and the purely *physical*. We take ourselves to have *minds*—to have experiences, beliefs, desires, intentions, and emotions—and we distinguish ourselves in this regard from purely physical things, which we take to *lack* mental attributes. We also regard our behavior as in some important sense *caused* by mind: we think what we do is often the *result* of our possessing certain beliefs, desires, intentions, and emotions; and we interpret the behavior of others as in some important sense the result of *their* possessing certain (and often very different) beliefs, desires, intentions, and emotions. What is the basis for these attitudes? Can we give an account of mind that justifies carving up the world between the mental and the non-mental as we do, and supports our ordinary ways of understanding ourselves and others?

The philosophy of mind is the discipline devoted to the study of these and related questions about the nature of mind. This course is an advanced survey in the philosophy of mind, covering such topics as folk psychology, understanding other minds, the relationship of mind to body (the so-called *mind-body problem*), mental causation, and the nature of consciousness and its relation to the physical (the so-called *hard problem*).

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.*

EVALUATION

Students will be expected to write **two term tests** and a **final paper**. The term tests are designed to evaluate comprehension of the major ideas presented in class, as well as to prepare the student for the final paper, which will take the form of an analysis and criticism of an argument for one of the major positions discussed in class. Additionally, there will be a series of **in-class quizzes** covering the reading assigned for that meeting. There will be thirteen in total, but only ten will be counted toward the final grade. (The astute reader will notice that this policy permits a maximum of *three* “no penalty” absences; with the exception of University excused absences, which must be supported by official documentation, students are expected to attend all other course meetings.) Finally, to promote in-class participation, students will alternate as **lead discussants** in meetings when we discuss primary literature (see schedule below). The role of the lead discussant is to present and act as primary advocate for the position articulated in one of the papers assigned for that discussion session. In preparation for this role, she will be expected to submit to me, *by midnight on the day before the meeting*, an “executive summary” of the assigned paper—you are encouraged to seek my help in drafting your executive summary.

Final grades will be determined according to the following rubric:

Term Test 1	25%
Term Test 2	30%
Final Paper	25%
Quizzes	10%
Lead Discussant	10%
Total	100%

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

NB: All work submitted to me outside of class, i.e. executive summaries and final papers, *must* be submitted in PDF format. Work not submitted in .pdf format will *not* be graded. Instructions on how to convert .doc files to .pdf format may be found here:

office.microsoft.com/en-ca/word-help/convert-a-document-to-pdf-HA102850064.aspx

IMPORTANT DATES

Term tests and quizzes will be administered in class; executive summaries are due by midnight (i.e. no later than 11:59 P.M.) the night before the student is to serve as lead discussant; the final paper will be due by midnight on the Friday following the end of term.

3/17	Term Test 1
3/8, 3/10	No Class (Spring Break)
4/21	Term Test 2
4/29	Final Paper Due

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no course packet. Our primary “textbook” will be drawn from entries in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP)*, a peer-edited, open-access reference resource authored by recognized specialists in the relevant subdisciplines. Other required readings are either readily available online via the Pitt Library or excerpted and posted to CourseWeb. Students looking for additional material are encouraged to consult

Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011.

This text is available for free online via the Pitt Library and linked in CourseWeb; a few paper copies are also available at the Bookstore.

DISABILITIES AND DIFFERENT STYLES TO 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 class 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.

Assigned sections from SEP entries are TBA.

1/7	<i>Introduction: Syllabus + Course Basics</i>
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UNIT 1	<i>Setting Up the Problem: The Place of the Mental in a Physical World</i>
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1/12	Kim 2011: Chapter 1, pp. 1–17
1/14	Kim 2011: Chapter 1, pp. 17–28

UNIT 2	<i>Mindreading: Using Mind to Understand Behavior</i>
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1/19	SEP: Folk Psychology as a Theory (Ravenscroft 2010)
1/21	SEP: Folk Psychology as Mental Simulation (Gordon 2009)
1/26	Discussion: Goldman 1989 & Gopnik and Wellman 1994

UNIT 3	<i>Are There Mental Properties?</i>
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1/28	SEP: Eliminative Materialism (Ramsey 2013)
2/2	SEP: Eliminative Materialism (Ramsey 2013)
2/4	Discussion: Churchland 1981 & Kitcher 1984

UNIT 4	<i>The Mind-Body Problem I: Dualism</i>
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2/9	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> II, VI
2/11	SEP: Dualism (Robinson 2012)
2/16	Discussion: selections from Descartes and Elisabeth of Bohemia 2007

UNIT 5	<i>The Mind-Body Problem II: Identity Theory</i>
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2/18 SEP: The Mind/Brain Identity Theory (Smart 2007)

2/23 SEP: The Mind/Brain Identity Theory (Smart 2007)

2/25 Discussion: Lewis 1966 & Kripke 1980, lect. 3

UNIT 6 *The Mind-Body Problem III: Functionalism*

3/1 SEP: Multiple Realizability (Bickle 2013)

3/3 SEP: Functionalism (Levin 2013)

3/8 SPRING BREAK

3/10 SPRING BREAK

3/15 Discussion: Putnam 1967/1992 & Churchland 2005

3/17 *No Reading*

Term Test 1

UNIT 7 *Mental Causation*

3/22 SEP: Mental Causation (Robb and Heil 2013)

3/24 SEP: Anomalous Monism (Yalowitz 2012)

3/29 Discussion: Davidson 2001 & Antony 1989

UNIT 8 *Prospects for a Physicalist Theory of Mind*

3/31 Jackson 1986

4/5 Nagel 1974

4/7 Discussion: Levin 1986 & Levine 1993

UNIT 9 *Consciousness, or: Why am I not a Zombie?*

4/12 SEP: Consciousness (Van Gulick 2014)

4/14 SEP: Consciousness (Van Gulick 2014)

4/19 Discussion: TBA

4/21 No Reading

Term Test 2

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