

PHL340: ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

PERCEPTION, COGNITION AND ACTION

Instructor

Robert Howton, JHB 422

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Office hours

T 12:30–14:00 and by appt.

Course website

Blackboard (portal.utoronto.ca)

Lectures

TR 10:30–12:00

LM 157

Prerequisites

COG250, UNI250, PHL240,

or 7.5 courses/1.5 philosophy

Course description Our contact with the external world is mediated by perception. In performing this role perception is at least partly responsible for our ability to conceive of, form beliefs about, and interact with the world outside ourselves. How does perception underwrite these cognitive abilities? What, in other words, must our perceptual experience be like in order to explain our various modes of engagement with the world, both theoretical and practical?

This course will explore a range of philosophical approaches to perception and its relation to our cognitive lives. The course will be divided into two units. In the first unit we will consider in detail a number of contemporary views of perceptual experience, focusing in particular on two dominant theories: representationalism and direct realism. In the second unit, we shall build on the material presented in the first to explore how perception influences our various modes of engagement with the world: thought, belief, desire and action. Special attention will be paid to singular thought and acquaintance, perceptual belief and the role of perception in the knowledge of one's own actions. Readings will be taken from the work of Anscombe, Campbell, Evans, Peacocke, and Siegel among others, with further material from relevant empirical literature in the psychology of perception.

Readings There is no course packet for this course. All readings are either readily available online (either journal articles or entries in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*) or will be excerpted and posted to Blackboard.

Course requirements Students will be expected to write two term tests and a final paper; students with at least an A- average going into the latter part of the course will have the option to choose the topic of their final paper. In addition, students will be write four short (250 word) argument analysis papers, two per course unit. The total mark for the course will be calculated as follows:

PHL340: Issues in Philosophy of Mind

Term Test 1	25%
Term Test 2	25%
Final Paper	30%
Short Papers	20%
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Total	100%

Instructions for turning in papers Papers may be turned in digitally to Robbie (see email above) with the subject heading 'PHL 340' followed by some indication of the assignment (e.g. 'Short Paper 1'). Late papers will be deducted one plus/minus letter grade (i.e. A+, A, A-, . . .) per day.

All papers must be submitted in .pdf format. Papers not submitted in .pdf format will not be marked. 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 will be administered in class; short papers will be distributed via Blackboard intermittently throughout the course and will be due one week after they are assigned; the final paper will be due the Monday following the end of term.

13 February	Term Test 1
18, 20 February	No Class (Winter Break)
9 March	Drop Date
25 March	Term Test 2
7 April	Final Paper Due

A note on academic honesty Plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty will be treated with the greatest severity. Students should make themselves familiar with the University of Toronto's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters. See www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students.

A note on the final paper Philosophical writing is a difficult skill to develop. Students are encouraged to seek help from the Philosophy Essay Clinic. For more information or to schedule an appointment, see <http://undergraduate.philosophy.utoronto.ca/philosophy-essay-clinic/>.

A note on accommodation The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs.

For information on services and resources, please contact Tanya Lewis, Director, Academic Skills and Accessibility Services at 416-978-6786; [tanya dot lewis at utoronto dot ca](mailto:tanya_dot_lewis_at_utoronto_dot_ca).

Course outline and schedule of readings (This schedule is tentative and subject to revision. NB: '**' indicates that the reading is difficult, '***' indicates that it is *very* difficult. Only readings listed as required reading will be covered in the term tests. Optional readings are intended as suggestions for further reading and research material for the final paper.)

Week 1 Introductions

Required reading: Crane 2011

UNIT 1: THE NATURE OF PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE

Week 2 Content views of perception

Required reading: Siegel 2010*
Tye 2000, ch. 3

Optional reading: Siegel 2013
Heck 2007**
Anscombe (1965)**

Week 3 Nonconceptualism about perceptual content

Required reading: Crane 1992

Optional reading: Evans 1982, ch. 5 and pp. 226–30*
Peacocke 2001

Week 4 Objections to nonconceptualism

Required reading: Peacocke (2001)

Optional reading: McDowell 1994, selections;*
Evans (1982), selections*

Week 5 Does perception have content?

Required reading: Tye (2000), ch. 4;
Brewer 2006, esp §1;
Soteriou 2010

Optional reading: Campbell 2002, ch. 6*

Week 6 Naïve realism and disjunctivism

13 February: Term Test 1

Required reading: Nudds 2009

UNIT 2: PERCEPTION IN COGNITION AND ACTION

Week 7 Introduction: Acquaintance and Object-Dependent Thought

Required reading: Recanati 2012, ch. 1

Optional reading: Bach 2010

Week 8 Perceptual Demonstratives: the Acquaintance Model

Required reading: Dickie (forthcoming)

Optional reading: Evans (1982), ch. 5*
Campbell 2011*
Recanati 2010

Week 9 Challenges to the Acquaintance Model

Required reading: Harman 1977

Optional Reading: Jeshion 2010*

Week 10 Perception and Self-Knowledge

Required reading: Wittgenstein 1958, selections

Shoemaker 1968

Optional reading: De Vignemont 2012*

Week 11 Course Wrap-Up

25 March: Term Test 2

Week 12 Term Paper Workshops

7 April: Final Paper Due

Tentative reading list

- Anscombe, G. E. M. (1965/2002). "The intentionality of sensation: A grammatical feature". *Vision and Mind: Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception*. Ed. by A. Noë and E. Thompson. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Bach, K. (2010). "Getting a Thing Into a Thought". *New Essays on Singular Thought*. Ed. by R. Jeshion. Oxford University Press.
- Brewer, B. (2006). "Perception and content". *European Journal of Philosophy* 14.2, 165–181.
- Campbell, J. (2002). *Reference and Consciousness*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (2011). "Visual attention and the epistemic role of consciousness". *Attention: Philosophical and Psychological Essays*. Ed. by C. Mole, D. Smithies, and W. Wu. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crane, T. (1992). "The nonconceptual content of experience". *The Contents of Experience*. Ed. by T. Crane. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2011). "The Problem of Perception". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. by E. N. Zalta. Spring 2011.
- De Vignemont, F. (2012). "Bodily Immunity to Error". *Immunity to Error Through Misidentification: New Essays*. Ed. by S. Prosser and F. Recanati. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dickie, I. (forthcoming). "Perceptual Demonstratives". *The Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Perception*. Ed. by M. Matthen. Oxford University Press.
- Evans, G. (1982). *The Varieties of Reference*. Ed. by J. McDowell. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Harman, G. (1977). "How to Use Propositions". *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 173–176.
- Heck, R. (2007). "Are there different kinds of content?" *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Mind*. Ed. by B. P. McLaughlin and J. Cohen. Wiley-Blackwell, 117–138.
- Jeshion, R. (2010). "Singular thought: acquaintance, semantic instrumentalism, and cognitivism". *New Essays on Singular Thought*. Ed. by R. Jeshion. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McDowell, J. H. (1994). *Mind and World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Nudds, M. (2009). "Recent work in perception: Naive realism and its opponents". *Analysis* 69.2, 334–346.
- Peacocke, C. (2001). "Does perception have a nonconceptual content?" *The Journal of Philosophy* 98.5, 239–264.
- Recanati, F. (2010). "Singular Thought: In Defence of Acquaintance". *New Essays on Singular Thought*. Ed. by R. Jeshion. Oxford University Press.

- (2012). *Mental files*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shoemaker, S. (1968). “Self-Reference and Self-Awareness”. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 555–567.
- Siegel, S. (2010). “Do experiences have contents?” *Perceiving the World*. Ed. by B. Nanay. New York: Oxford University Press, 333–368.
- (2013). “The Contents of Perception”. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. by E. N. Zalta. Fall 2013.
- Soteriou, M. (2010). “The Disjunctive Theory of Perception”. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. by E. N. Zalta. Winter 2010.
- Tye, M. (2000). *Consciousness, Color, and Content*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *The Blue and Brown Books*. New York: Harper.