



Department of Philosophy

PHIL*3180

"Philosophy of Mind"

Winter 2009

TR 10:00–11:20, MINS 300

COURSE OUTLINE

Please read this outline carefully and retain it for future reference.

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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:30–2:30, or by appointment.

Course prerequisites: 1.50 credits in philosophy.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will cover some of the more central issues and positions in contemporary philosophy of mind. In lectures and class discussions we will deal with the following topics:

- The ontology of the mind and its relation with the brain. Are mental states such as beliefs to be identified with states of the soul, chunks of brain-matter, with a certain pattern of brain processing, or what?
- The metaphysics of phenomenal consciousness experience. How can a grey soup of chemicals and electrically active cells produce sensations of pain, colour experience, the emotion of infatuation, or vivid memories of last summer's holiday in Marrakesh?
- The nature of mental content. How can a brain state be *about* the 'outside' world? What is the structure of thought—is it, for example, structured just like a language, or more like a sequence of images, or what? What kind of access do we have to the contents of our own thoughts?

Our primary objectives are to:

- understand and critically evaluate some of the principal theses advanced by important contemporary philosophers of mind;
- acquire some overall understanding of the main issues in modern philosophy of mind—issues which are fairly complex and inter-connected, and which are best understood by thinking about a sequence of central problems; and to
- develop skills in reading and writing about complex and abstract ideas.

REQUIRED TEXT:

- David Chalmers (ed.), *Philosophy of Mind—Classical and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford University Press 2002, ISBN: 0-19-514581-X).

All of the required readings will be from this text. There are 34 readings assigned for this class, totalling about 325 pages (averaging 27–28 pages a week).

Week 1: 13 pages

Week 2: 32 pages

Week 3: 25 pages

Week 4: 26 pages

Week 5: 16 pages

Week 6: 36 pages
 Week 7: 21 pages
 Week 8: 46 pages
 Week 9: 28 pages
 Week 10: 40 pages
 Week 11: 30 pages
 Week 12: 14 pages

The readings are often challenging, and you should allow yourself plenty of time to work through them before class.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND RESOURCES:

- Neil Campbell, *A Brief Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Broadview Press 2005, ISBN: 978-1551116174)
- John Searle, *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (Oxford University Press 2004, ISBN: 978-0195157345)
- *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/V038>
- MindPapers: <http://consc.net/mindpapers/>.

There is also a one-chapter summary of philosophy of mind, written by myself, available on the course website(s).

EVALUATION:

The evaluation for this course will consist of two exams (a midterm worth 20% and a cumulative final exam worth 40%) and two short essays (each worth 20%).

A: Essays.

The essays will be due *in-class* on the following dates:

Essay 1: Thursday, February 5th

Essay 2: Thursday, March 26th

Each of these essays is to be an exegesis and critique of one of the papers we will be reading for the class. They should be four to six pages long (or roughly 1,500 to 2,000 words). More detailed evaluation criteria and advice will be provided in a handout with the essay topics. Papers written on an unapproved subject will be considered 'off-topic' and graded accordingly.

In grading the essays, I will take into consideration your ability to use correctly and effectively the language appropriate to the assignment: in particular, you should strive to write grammatically, accurately, clearly, precisely and concisely.

Please note that essays cannot normally be submitted or returned via the department administrative office or through the campus mail system. Papers can be submitted by e-mail only in an emergency. Assistance with writing essays is also available from the Learning Commons (www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/) and from Writing Services (http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/writing_services/).

B: Exams.

The in-class midterm will take place on Tuesday, February 24th.

The registrar-scheduled final exam will take place on Monday, April 6th, from 2:30 to 4:30, in a location to be announced (probably our usual classroom).

This course outline includes a list of twenty questions. None of these questions will appear on either exam; however, if you can answer all of these questions (in sufficient detail) you should be able to answer any question that may appear on the exams. The exams will not be open book, but you can bring a 'cheat sheet.' On both sides of a standard sheet of 8½"×11" paper you can write anything at all that you think might help you, and you can refer to that sheet (but nothing else) during the exams.

The assignments and exams will be graded using standards described in Section VIII of the Undergraduate Calendar (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-grds.shtml>). Information on Academic Consideration and Appeals appears in the same section.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION:

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

WHEN YOU CANNOT MEET A COURSE REQUIREMENT:

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. Where possible, this should be done in advance of the missed work or event, but otherwise, just as soon as possible after the due date, and certainly no longer than one week later. Note: if appropriate documentation of your inability to meet that in-course requirement is necessary, the course instructor, or delegate, will request it of you. Such documentation will rarely be required for course components representing less than 10% of the course grade. Such documentation will be required, however, for Academic Consideration for missed end-of-term work and/or missed final examinations. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

(<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/co8/c08-ac.shtml>). Also see the BA Counselling Office website (www.uoguelph.ca/baco)

DROP DATE:

The last date to drop one-semester Winter 2009 courses, without academic penalty, is Friday March 6th, 2009. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar.

(<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>)

COPIES OF OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The University of Guelph takes a serious view of academic misconduct, and it is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and to abide by the University's policy. Included in the definition of academic misconduct are such activities as cheating on examinations, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and submitting the same material in two different courses without written permission from the relevant instructors. To better understand your responsibilities, read the Undergraduate Calendar

(<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c01/index.shtml>) for a statement of Students' Academic Responsibilities; also read the full Academic Misconduct Policy

(<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>). You are also advised to make use of the resources available through the Learning Commons

(<http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/>) and to discuss any questions you may have with your course instructor, TA, or academic counsellor.

Instructors have the right to use software to aid in the detection of plagiarism or copying and to examine students orally on submitted work. For students found guilty of academic misconduct, serious penalties, up to and including suspension or expulsion, can be imposed. Hurried or careless submission of work does not exonerate students of responsibility for ensuring the academic integrity of their work. Similarly, students who find themselves unable to meet course requirements by the deadlines or criteria expected because of medical, psychological or compassionate circumstances should review the university's regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration in the calendar

(<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>) and discuss their situation with the instructor and/or the program counsellor or other academic counsellor as appropriate.

STUDENTS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

Resources are available to you if you require additional support in the course (e.g. if you have a learning disability or are dealing with other issues that are impacting on your ability to meet the course requirements). I encourage you to come and discuss this me, and to contact the appropriate university

resource. The Centre for Students with Disabilities (which includes learning disabilities) is on Level 3 of the University Centre (<http://www.slcs.uoguelph.ca/csd/>), as is Counselling Services (<http://www.slcs.uoguelph.ca/counselling/>).

OTHER INFORMATION:

The best resource for general academic counselling (e.g. about degree requirements, or for approval to add/drop a course) is your program counsellor: these are listed at http://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/program_counsellors.shtml. The Philosophy Department's undergraduate coordinator is Prof. Karen Wendling, extension 53229, wendling@uoguelph.ca.

PROVISIONAL Class Schedule, PHIL 3180, Winter 2009

	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
1	Jan. 6 th : Course Outline/Introduction	Jan. 8 th : Dualism <i>Descartes (1-A1, 1-A2)</i>
2	Jan. 13 th : Dualism <i>Huxley (1-A3), Smullyan (1-A4)</i>	Jan. 15 th : Behaviourism <i>Ryle (1-B5), Carnap (1-B6), Putnam (1-B7)</i>
3	Jan. 20 th : Identity Theory <i>Place (1-C8), Smart (1-C9), Feigl (1-C10)</i>	Jan. 22 nd : Functionalism <i>Putnam (1-D11)</i>
4	Jan. 27 th : Functionalism <i>Armstrong (1-D12), Lewis (1-D13)</i>	Jan. 29 th : Functionalism <i>Block (1-D14), Nida-Rümelin (1-D15)</i>
5	Feb. 3 rd : Functionalism and AI <i>Searle (4-63)</i>	Feb. 5 th : Anomalous Monism <i>Davidson (1-E17)</i> SHORT ESSAY 1 DUE
6	Feb. 10 th : Supervenience/Reduction <i>Fodor (1-D18), Kim (1-D19)</i>	Feb. 12 th : Supervenience/Reduction <i>Horgan (1-D20)</i>
	Feb. 17 th : READING WEEK	Feb. 19 th : READING WEEK
7	Feb. 24 th : EXAM	Feb. 26 th : Consciousness <i>Block (2-A24), Nagel (2-A25)</i>
8	Mar. 3 rd : Consciousness <i>Dennett (2-A26)</i>	Mar. 5 th : Consciousness <i>Chalmers (2-A27)</i>
9	Mar. 10 th : Knowledge Argument <i>Jackson (2-B28), Lewis (2-B29)</i>	Mar. 12 th : Knowledge Argument <i>Loar (2-B30)</i>
10	Mar. 17 th : Explanatory Gap <i>Levine (2-B35), Churchland (2-B36)</i>	Mar. 19 th : Explanatory Gap <i>Block and Stalnaker (2-B37)</i>
11	Mar. 24 th : Intentionality <i>Dretske (3-A46), Millikan (3-A47)</i>	Mar. 26 th : Intentionality <i>Brandom (3-A48)</i> SHORT ESSAY 2 DUE
12	Mar. 31 st : Intentionality <i>Horgan and Tienson (3-A49)</i>	Apr. 2 nd : Last Class!

NOTE: Readings are to be done *by the class date indicated*.

Date of Final Exam: Monday, **April 6th, 2:30–4:30**.

ONE-SENTENCE PAPER SUMMARIES

A. METAPHYSICS OF MIND

Descartes (1-A1, 1-A2)

Mind and matter are distinct substances that interact causally.

Huxley (1-A3)

Mind and matter are distinct substances, but while the mind is causally affected by the body it has no effect on the body (i.e. the mind is *epiphenomenal*).

Smullyan (1-A4)

If there are sufficient physical (e.g. neural) causes for all our behaviour, then if dualism is true the removal of the mind should make no difference at all to behaviour.

Ryle (1-B5)

Substance dualism is a myth based on a category mistake: the mind should not be seen as something distinct from the body and steering it 'from the inside,' but as an aspect of the body's own behaviour.

Carnap (1-B6)

All meaningful claims about the mind can be translated into—i.e. mean the same as—claims about observable behaviour.

Putnam (1-B7)

At least some mental states (e.g. pain) are distinct from any given behavioural disposition, so behaviourism cannot be true.

Place (1-C8)

Mental states are type-identical with brain states (in the same way as water is identical with H₂O); the objection that mental states have properties brain states could not have is dismissed as a 'phenomenological fallacy.'

Smart (1-C9)

Mental states are type-identical with brain states (in the same way as water is identical with H₂O); the objection that mental states have properties brain states could not have is dealt with by arguing that we can characterise mental concepts in a 'topic neutral' way.

Feigl (1-C10)

Mental states are type-identical with brain states (in the same way as water is identical with H₂O); the objection that mental states have properties brain states could not have is dealt with by arguing that physics characterises only the extrinsic properties of things, which allows the possibility that mental states are tied to the intrinsic aspect of some neural states.

Putnam (1-D11)

Neither behaviourism nor identity theory are empirically plausible, and instead mental states are best thought of as functional states of a computational machine.

Armstrong (1-D12)

Mental states are defined in terms of their causal role, and so functionalism is analytically true.

Lewis (1-D13)

Mental states are defined in terms of their causal role as theoretical entities of folk psychology, and so functionalism is analytically true.

Block (1-D14)

A system could have the same functional states as a conscious system while having no qualitative mental states at all, so functionalism is false.

Nida-Rümelin (1-D15)

Two systems could have the same relevant functional states as a conscious system while having different qualitative mental states, so functionalism is false.

Searle (4-63)

Merely programming a computer in the right way will not suffice for a mind, since computers have syntax but no real semantics; so computational functionalism is false (and Strong AI is impossible).

Davidson (1-E17)

Any given mental event is identical to a physical event, but there are no strict laws that connect mental events to physical events, or mental events to each other; so although physicalism is true the mental cannot be reduced to the physical.

Fodor (1-D18)

Theories—laws and categories—of high-level sciences (such as psychology) are not reducible to the theories of a low-level science (such as physics).

Kim (1-D19)

Multiple realizability does not pose an obstacle to the reduction of psychology to physics at a species-specific level, so high-level sciences (such as psychology) might be reducible to the theories of a low-level science (such as physics).

Horgan (1-D20)

Horgan critically discusses the notion that the mental-physical relationship is best analyzed as one of supervenience rather than reduction, and concludes that in fact what is needed is superdupervenience.

B. THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Block (2-A24)

There are multiple senses of 'consciousness': phenomenal consciousness, access consciousness, self-consciousness and monitoring consciousness.

Nagel (2-A25)

Phenomenal consciousness is particularly hard to explain because of its subjective nature (while standard explanations in science and philosophy are objective).

Dennett (2-A26)

Qualia do not exist: qualia are standardly taken to be ineffable, intrinsic, private and directly apprehensible, and there is no reason to believe that mental states have properties of this sort.

Chalmers (2-A27)

Chalmers distinguishes between the 'hard' and 'easy' problems of consciousness, and argues against physicalism about consciousness and in favour of something like property dualism.

Jackson (2-B28)

There are truths about consciousness that cannot be deduced from physical truths, and hence consciousness is non-physical and epiphenomenal.

Lewis (2-B29)

Mary, the scientist in Jackson's article, lacks no factual knowledge when she knows all the physical truths—all she gains when she sees colour for the first time are new abilities—and hence consciousness is physical.

Loar (2-B30)

Mary does learn something new when she sees colour for the first time, but this is not a new fact—it is a fact she already knew, apprehended in a new way—and hence consciousness is physical.

Levine (2-B35)

There is a deep explanatory gap between physical processes and consciousness; it seems we could never have a fully satisfying explanation of consciousness in physical terms.

Churchland (2-B36)

There is no deep explanatory gap between physical processes and consciousness; we can expect a fully satisfying explanation of consciousness in physical terms to emerge in due course.

Block and Stalnaker (2-B37)

A reductive explanation of consciousness in terms of physical processes is possible even if high-level concepts (phenomenal concepts) cannot be analyzed in terms of low-level (physical) descriptions, and so there is no need to worry about an explanatory gap.

C. MENTAL CONTENT

Dretske (3-A46)

The intentionality ('aboutness') of mental phenomena is not mysterious but is grounded in relatively simple non-psychological phenomena having to do with the 'natural function' of the system.

Millikan (3-A47)

The intentionality ('aboutness') of mental phenomena is not mysterious but is grounded in relatively simple non-psychological phenomena having to do with the proper functioning of a system within its evolutionarily 'normal' conditions.

Brandom (3-A48)

The intentionality ('aboutness') of mental phenomena is grounded in social practices of reasoning and inference.

Horgan and Tienson (3-A49)

The intentionality ('aboutness') of mental phenomena is grounded in the phenomenological character of conscious experience.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

- 1) Are mind and matter distinct substances? If so, do they causally interact? Also, how would we know about the mental states of others?
- 2) Can all meaningful claims about the mind be translated into claims about observable behaviour? If so, what does this show? How does Putnam argue that behaviourism cannot be true? Is he right?
- 3) Could consciousness be a brain process (and what exactly does this mean)? How do Place, Smart and Feigl argue that it might be? How does Putnam argue that it isn't? How good are these arguments?
- 4) What exactly is machine functionalism? How does Putnam argue for its empirical plausibility? Is he right?
- 5) Are mental concepts also causal concepts? If so, what would this show?
- 6) Are mental terms theoretical terms of 'folk psychology'? If so, what would this show?
- 7) How do arguments from absent and inverted qualia (Block, Nida-Rümelin, Searle) work to try and show functionalism is false? Are they effective?
- 8) What exactly is Davidson's anomalous monism? How does he argue for the truth of this theory? How good is this argument?
- 9) Is psychology reducible to physics? If so, what would this show? If not, what would this show?
- 10) What is supervenience? Is the mind-brain relationship best explained as a kind of supervenience? Why or why not?
- 11) What are the different senses of 'consciousness'? Is there an important difference between phenomenal consciousness and the other sorts (and if so what is it)? Is the problem of phenomenal consciousness particularly difficult?
- 12) What are qualia? Do they exist?
- 13) What is the 'knowledge argument' against physicalism? What are Lewis' and Loar's responses to this argument? Who wins?
- 14) What is the 'explanatory gap'? Does it exist? If so, what would this show?
- 15) What is naturalized semantics (Dretske, Millikan)? How plausible—i.e. philosophically well-defended—is it? Is it better or worse than other candidate theories of mental content?
- 16) What is Brandom's theory of propositional content? How plausible—i.e. philosophically well-defended—is it? Is it better or worse than other candidate theories of mental content?
- 17) What is Horgan and Tienson's theory of intentionality? How plausible—i.e. philosophically well-defended—is it? Is it better or worse than other candidate theories of mental content?
- 18) On the basis of the readings you have done for this course, what do you think is the most adequate account of the metaphysics of mind? Defend your answer.
- 19) On the basis of the readings you have done for this course, what do you think is the most adequate account of phenomenal consciousness? Defend your answer.
- 20) On the basis of the readings you have done for this course, what do you think is the most adequate account of mental content? Defend your answer.