

# **Philosophy of Mind**

Philosophy 435 – Spring Term 2009 – Purdue University

Instructor: Daniel Kelly

## **1. Course Description**

The main goal of this course is to explore the nature of the mind. We will consider the relationship between the mind and the body, and the mental to the physical more generally. We'll ask, and look at some candidate answers to, questions like "What is a mind, and what are its component parts? How does a mind work? How are minds related to brains, and to the physical bodies that they seem to animate and control? How do minds represent the world around them? What is a self? What is the nature of consciousness? Could other animals, aliens, machines or other types of entities have minds, or be conscious? How would we know? How can empirical efforts like the cognitive sciences help shed light these questions? Could scientific theories of the mind supplant our intuitive conceptions of the mind? If so, what would be the implications?"

In the course of addressing these questions, we'll be reading and talking about immaterial spirits; computers the size of China; what it's like to be a bat; inverted spectrums; factually omniscient neuroscientists who have never seen color at all; doppelgangers living on planets almost identical to our own; a view that suggests your cell phone might, properly speaking, be just as much a part of your mind as your frontal cortex is; an argument that no one really believes anything at all; and a line of thought that concludes that all you really are is the story you make up about our self. We'll work our way through this theatre of the bizarre not just for kicks, but to see what light each case can help shed on our own nature as beings with mental lives.

## **2. Class Meetings**

Class meets Tuesday/Thursday, 9:00-10:15am, in Room 1268 of Beering Hall.

It's early, I know. Have some caffeine and/or nicotine before you come.

## **3. Office Hours and Contact Information**

Office: 7126 Beering Hall

Office phone: 765-494-4290 (4-4290)

Email: [dankelly@purdue.edu](mailto:dankelly@purdue.edu)

Spring Term Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-4:00pm, or by appointment.

## **4. Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading**

Grades on papers and exams will be given on the standard 0-100 point grading scale:

100-90: A

89-87: B+

86-80: B  
79-77: C+  
76-70: C  
69-60: D  
59-0: F

Students will take a midterm exam and write two 4-6 page papers. Potential topics for papers will be distributed roughly two weeks before they are due. Final grades will be determined thus:

Midterm	30%
2 Papers	30% each
Class Participation	10%

EMAILED AND ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Papers not given to me by the end of class (10:15am) the day they are due are LATE. For each day late, 7 points will be deducted.

There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course. Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be handed given to the university authorities. For more on the Purdue University policy on plagiarism, see the following website:

[http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu\\_conduct/stu\\_regulations.html](http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu_conduct/stu_regulations.html)

Classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion focused on the topics raised by the readings. Students are encouraged to ask questions and participate in the conversation – this is usually the best way to get a grip on some very abstract issues and ultimately to understand philosophy. There is no formal attendance policy for this class. But:

*Class participation:* This does make up 10% of your final grade, and attendance does informally factor into the equation. I realize that not everyone is equally outgoing or talkative in class. However, participation in class discussion almost always helps in learning philosophy. So while I highly encourage it, I do not penalize students simply for not speaking up. That said, a consistent record of participation and attendance will always help a student's final grade if it is on a borderline at the end of the semester. On the other hand, students who have not been present and engaged throughout the semester will not get the benefit of the doubt in similar borderline cases, and in particularly egregious cases will have their grades dragged down.

### **Emergency:**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances.

## 5. Texts

The only required text is *Mind and Cognition: An Anthology*, edited by Jesse Prinz and William Lycan. It is (or should be) available at the bookstore, and can be easily bought online at a number of places, including amazon.com, though some sites are probably

cheaper than others. Any additional required readings will be posted on the course website.

An optional text is *The Mind's Eye*, edited by Douglas Hofstadter and Daniel Dennett. It is also easily available at amazon.com and many used book stores, but the full text (with many typos, alas) can also be found here:

<http://themindi.blogspot.com/>

The book is a collection of philosophically oriented pieces, including papers, dialogues, and short stories. After each one, the editors draw out and comment upon the philosophically relevant themes in the piece. It is a sort of fun read.

A word on using sources not listed on the syllabus in your papers: that is fine, as long as they are both to the point, and are properly cited. And at all time, when in doubt, ***cite your sources!*** It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

Wikipedia can be valuable for getting a very broad grasp of positions and debates, but when it gets into details, especially on philosophic topics, it is very often horrible – sketchy, convoluted, misinformed, and often simply wrong. If you wish to consult online resources, I suggest you use some of the other, much better sites. Most prominent is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, but others are useful as well:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Episteme Links <http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/MainEncy.aspx>

## 6. Course Website

Information and comments will often be posted on the website, which can be reached via my homepage:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/>

## 7. Topics and Readings

Here is a tentative list of topics and readings. We'll reserve the right to pick and choose as we go, depending on how fast we are going, and what catches our collective imagination. Specific readings and dates will be announced in class or on the webpage. Since reminders and other information will be distributed of the email list, *make sure you check the website and your Purdue account on a fairly regular basis.*

Week 1: Jan 13<sup>th</sup>

Introduction and Overview

- W. Lycan 'The Mind-Body Problem'
- Daniel Dennett: Introduction to *The Mind's I*

Dualism

- René Descartes: Excerpts from *The Meditations* II and VI and *Passions of the Soul*
- Thomas Huxley 'On the Hypothesis that Animals Are Automata, and Its History'
- Raymond Smullyan 'An Unfortunate Dualist'

Week 2: Jan 20<sup>th</sup>

Behaviorism

- Gilbert Ryle 'Descartes' Myth'
- Hilary Putnam 'Brains and Behavior'

Week 3: Jan 27<sup>th</sup>

Type Identity Theory

- U.T. Place 'Is Consciousness a Brain Process'
- H. Feigl 'The "Mental" and the "Physical"'

Week 4: Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>

Functionalism

- Hilary Putnam, 'The Nature of Mental States'
- D.M. Armstrong, 'The Causal Theory of Mind'
  - Also see: Janet Levin, 'Functionalism':  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/functionism/>

Week 5: Feb 10<sup>th</sup>

Objections to Functionalism

- N. Block, 'Troubles with Functionalism'
- J. Searle, 'Minds, Brains and Programs'
  - Also see: Excerpts from Andy Clark's *Mindware*

Week 6: Feb 17<sup>th</sup>

Varieties of Functionalism

- W. Lycan 'The Continuity of Levels of Nature'
  - **Midterm Exam: Feb 19th**

Week 7: Feb 24<sup>th</sup>

Folk Psychology and Propositional Attitudes: Realism and Eliminativism

- J. Fodor 'Three Cheers for the Propositional Attitudes'
- P. Churchland 'Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes'

Week 8: March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Folk Psychology and Propositional Attitudes: Instrumentalism

- D. Dennett 'True Believers: The Intentional Stance and Why It Works'
- S.P. Stich 'Dennett on Intentional Systems'
- D. Dennett 'Real Patterns'
  - Also see: Excerpts from Andy Clark's *Mindware*

Week 9: March 10<sup>th</sup>

Intentionality and the Externalist Turn

- Franz Brentano, 'The Distinction between Mental and Physical Phenomena'
- Hilary Putnam, 'The Meaning of Meaning'
- S.P. Stich 'Autonomous Psychology and the Belief-Desire Thesis'
  - Also see: Loewer, 'A Guide to Naturalizing Semantics'

**Spring Break:** No Class March 16-20

Week 10: March 24<sup>th</sup>

Active Externalism and Catch Up

- Andy Clark and David Chalmers 'The Extended Mind'
  - **First Paper Due March 26<sup>th</sup>**

Week 11: March 31<sup>st</sup>

Conceptions of the Self

- David Hume *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book 1, Part iv, Section 6
- John Perry, 'The Self'
- D. Dennett, 'The Self as Centre of Narrative Gravity'
  - Also see: G. Strawson 'Against Narrativity'; D. Velleman 'Self as Narrator'

Week 12, 13, 14: April 7<sup>th</sup> - April 23<sup>rd</sup>

Consciousness

- The Phenomenon
  - Ned Block, 'Concepts of Consciousness'
- The Arguments Against Materialism
  - Thomas Nagel, 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat?'
  - Frank Jackson: 'What Mary Didn't Know'
  - Joseph Levine, 'Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap'
  - Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, (excerpt)
- Taking Stock
  - D. Chalmers, 'Consciousness and Its Place in Nature'
- Some Positive Accounts
  - You Can't Get There From Here: Cognitive Closure Arguments
    - Colin McGinn, 'Can We Solve The Mind Body Problem?'
  - Naturalistic Dualism
    - D. Chalmers, 'Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness'
  - Panpsychism: The New Monism
    - Galen Strawson, 'Realistic Monism: Why Physicalism Entails Panpsychism'
    - Also see: William Seager, 'Panpsychism': <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panpsychism/>
  - Dennett's Empirically Based Functionalism
    - D. Dennett 'Quining Qualia'
    - D. Dennett 'Are We Explaining Consciousness Yet?'

Week 15: April 28<sup>th</sup>

Catch Up

If we have time – Issues in the Philosophy of Psychology: Innateness, Massive Modularity & Evolutionary Psychology

- Mason, Sripada, Stich, 'The Philosophy of Psychology'
- Cosmides and Tooby, 'Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer'
  - **Second Paper Due April 30<sup>th</sup>**