

# **Studies in Philosophy of Mind:** **Agents, Persons and Selves**

Philosophy 535 – Spring Term 2012 – Purdue University

Instructor: Daniel Kelly

## **1. Course Description**

A recent book on the self begins with a statement that hits close to home: “There are some problems in philosophy that give you vertigo, and for the type of philosopher that is attracted to these kinds of problems, the question ‘What am I?’ is irresistible.” In this course we’ll try to get a grip on this question. We will look at a number of contemporary philosophical perspectives on the nature of agents, persons and selves, and think about how those three types of things might be related to each other.

## **2. Class Meetings**

Class meets Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30-2:45pm, in Room 1248 of Beering Hall.

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

Office: 7126 Beering Hall

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

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

Spring Term Office Hours: 11:00 – 2:00 Wednesdays & by appointment.

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

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

100-93:	A
92-90:	A-
89-87:	B+
86-83:	B
82-80:	B-
79-77:	C+

76-73:	C
72-70:	C-
69-60:	D
59-0:	F

Assessment for course:

**10% : Class participation**

- For the **graduate students**, this will involve a class presentation where you will be expected to unpack and guide discussion of one of the papers on the syllabus, or a chapter from one of the books
- You are encouraged to set up a meeting with me beforehand to discuss your presentation
- I reserve the right deny requests for certain papers listed below if they are marginal or slim, etc. But I'm open to being persuaded, so if you want to do something non-conventional, give me a pitch
- First come, first serve on the material

**20%: 10 Outlines**

- 1 Page (no more, no less), pulling out the structure of the paper
- At the bottom, separate from your outline:
  - Formulate the main question the paper is addressing
  - Identify one sentence (quoted from the paper itself) that best states the answer it gives to that question
  - Pose a question of your own that the paper provoked
- May turn in one per class meeting
- All 10 are due **before spring break** (March 8<sup>th</sup>)

**10%: Prospectus for your term paper**

- A 2-3 page discussion of the paper you would like to write
  - Topic
  - Question you want to address
  - Conclusion you want to argue for
  - How you might go about arguing for it
- Along with a 1 page outline of the structure of the paper as you're envisioning it at this point
- Due **Tuesday March 20<sup>th</sup>**

**60%: Term paper**

- 12-15 pages

## 5. Course Policies

**Class sessions:** I will try to begin on time, and will usually go right up until the end of the class session. Please come on time. Do not pack up your materials until class has been dismissed. Talking out of turn during lectures will not be tolerated. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave.

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. The formal attendance policy does not include anything about class participation, but:

*Class participation:* 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 all the time. That said, a consistent record of participation always helps 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.

**Laptop computers:** I would prefer that you exercise enough self-restraint to keep from texting for the 75 minutes that class is in session, but since a formal prohibition would be too difficult to enforce, this remains a preference. If I see you consistently texting or listening to your iPod during class, it will be reflected poorly in you're the attendance/participation portion of your final grade. Use of laptop computers and iPads during lectures will not be allowed, however.

**Emergencies:** 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. Information about emergencies changes in the course can be gotten by contacting either instructor via email or phone, or by consulting the course website. Purdue's Emergency Procedures Handbook and other important emergency planning information is available online at

[http://www.purdue.edu/emergency\\_preparedness/](http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/)

**Plagiarism:** With the advent of the internet, plagiarism has become an increasingly serious problem at universities around the country, particularly in classes like this one, where papers determine a substantial part of the grade.

In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both direct quotations *and paraphrases or summaries* of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.

Plagiarism and cheating on exams undermines the integrity of the academic community. When undetected, it gives the perpetrator an unfair advantage over students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will do our best to detect plagiarism and cheating. Students who are aware of violations by others should bring this to my attention. This is the right thing to do. It is also in your own self-interest.

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 websites:

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

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>

With each paper assignment, a handful of students may be selected at random to submit their papers to TurnItIn, an online service that maintains an enormous database of papers that it uses to check for instances of plagiarism.

**External Sources:** Using sources not listed on the syllabus in researching and writing your papers is fine, as long as they are both to the point, and are properly cited. And at all times, when in doubt, *cite your sources!* It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

This is probably the best place to make this point, too: 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. Texts

Almost all of the readings will be papers that will be posted on the course website. The exception is this book, which should be available at the standard campus bookstores, and can certainly be ordered online.

Ismael, J. (2007) *The situated self*. Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press.

## 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/>

To go directly to this course's website, the address is:

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/KellyPhilMindAPSSpring2012.html>

You should check it fairly regularly. Also, if there is ever a problem with the website, information will be distributed via the course listserv, which you are automatically included on if you are officially signed up for the course.

## 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.

Week 1: January 9<sup>th</sup>

- **Introduction and background**
  - Fodor, The Mind-Body Problem
  - Lycan, The Mind-Body Problem
  - Levin, Functionalism

Week 2: January 16<sup>th</sup>

- **Subjectivity and the 1<sup>st</sup> person perspective**
  - Nagel, T. What is it like to be a bat?
  - Anscombe, G. The first person
  - Borges and I (The original short story, Perry's lecture, and the DCD/DH commentary)
  - Perry, J. The self
  - Perry, J. The essential indexical

Week 3: January 23<sup>rd</sup>

- **Persons, Identities, Personal Identity**
  - Locke on personal identity
  - Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity*, Chapt 1 & 3
  - Hacking, I. Making up people
  - Shweder, R. & Bourne, E. Does the concept of a person vary cross culturally?

Week 4: January 30<sup>th</sup>

- **Dennett**
  - Conditions of personhood
  - On the origins of selves
  - The self as the center of narrative gravity
  - Where am I?
  - Producing Future by Telling Stories
  - Speaking for ourselves

Week 5: February 6<sup>th</sup>

- **Expanding on Dennett**
  - Hardcastle, V. Multiplex vs. Multiple Selves: distinguishing dissociative disorders
  - Hacking, I. Two Souls in One Body
  - Ismael, J. Saving the Baby: Dennett on Autobiography, Agency and the Self
  - Ismael, J. Self-Organization and Self-Governance

Week 6: February 13<sup>th</sup>

- **Narratives: Selves and Persons**
  - Velleman, D. Narrative Explanation
  - Velleman, D. The Self as Narrator
    - Perry, J. On Velleman
  - Strawson G. Against Narrativity
  - Baynes, K. Self, Narrative and Self-constitution: Revisiting Taylor's "Self-interpreting Animals"
    - Taylor, C. Precipitous Sources of the Self
    - Taylor, C. Replies to Commentators

Week 7: February 20<sup>th</sup>

Week 8: February 27<sup>th</sup>

- **Other Perspectives on Narratives**
  - Hammack, P. Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity
  - Hutto, D. Folk psychology and narrative practice
  - Kirshner, *The religious and romantic origins of psychoanalysis: individuation and integration in post-Freudian theory*
  - McAdams, D. Personal Narratives and the Life Story
  - McAdams, D. American Identity: The Redemptive Self
  - McCollum, C. Relatedness and Self-definition: Two Dominant Themes in Middle-Class American' Life Stories
  - McGeer, V. The Regulative Dimension of Folk Psychology
  - McLean, K. The Emergence of Narrative Identity
  - McLean, K. et al. Selves Creating Stories Creating Selves
  - Ross, D. *H. sapiens* as ecologically special: What does language contribute?
  - Sternberg R. et al. Empirical Tests of Aspects of a Theory of Love as a Story
  - Wilson, *Redirect: The Surprising New Science of Psychological Change*

Week 9: March 5<sup>th</sup>

- **Other Perspectives on Selves**
  - The Phenomenal Self
    - Blanke, O. & Metzinger, T. (2009). Full-body illusions and minimal phenomenal selfhood
    - Metzinger, Out-of-Body Experiences as the Origin of the Concept of a "Soul"
    - Metzinger, Self Models
  - Clark, A. Soft Selves and Ecological Control
  - Cai, W. Between the sense of self and the reality of self
  - Christoff, K. et al. Specifying the self for cognitive neuroscience

Week 10: March 12<sup>th</sup>

- Spring Break

Week 11: March 19<sup>th</sup>

- Ismael, J. (2007) *The situated self*. Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press.

Week 12: March 26<sup>th</sup>

- Ismael, J. (2007) *The situated self*. Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press

Week 13: April 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Class cancelled (Out of Town)

Week 14: April 9<sup>th</sup>

- Doris *Talking to our selves*

Week 15: April 16<sup>th</sup>

- Doris *Talking to our selves*

Week 16: April 23<sup>rd</sup>

- Catch up and Miscellaneous
  - Bratman, Reflection, Planning, and Temporally Extended Agency
  - Emerson, R. Self-reliance
  - Frankfurt, H. Free Will and the Concept of a Person
  - Pollock J. What am I? Virtual Machines and the Mind/Body Problem
  - Rupert, R. Empirical Arguments for Group Minds: A Critical Appraisal
  - Self-fulfilling prophecies
    - Jussim, L. Self-Fulfilling Prophecies
    - Humphreys, N. Great Expectations
  - Self-deception
    - Jopling, D. 'Taken away the life-lie...': Positive illusions and creative self-deception
    - White, S. Self-Deception and Responsibility for the Self
    - Von Hippel, W. & Trivers, R. The evolution and psychology of self-deception