

Phil 3ST: Philosophy of Mind

Spring 2022

Humanities 120 T/Th 9:35-11:15am

Instructor: Nathaniel Greely Email: ngreely@callutheran.edu Office Hours: T/Th 11:20am-12:20pm

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to topics in philosophy of mind. No previous knowledge of philosophy or logic is assumed or required. The course will be divided into seven units. Unit 1 will cover issues in the metaphysics of mind. Is the mind identical to the brain, or is it possible for octopi, computers, aliens, or post-human creatures to have minds as well? Unit 2 will cover some problems associated with mental causation. How do mental states like pains and beliefs cause bodily movements? How does stimulation of sensory organs result in conscious experience? Unit 3 will consider the nature of mental content. How do mental states like belief come to be *about* states of the world, when other physical states don't seem to have this same property? Unit 4 will cover perhaps the most puzzling aspect of the mind – consciousness. Is it possible to explain consciousness, or is it not a suitable subject for objective inquiry? Unit 5 will cover concepts. Concepts seem to be necessary to account for the flexibility and sheer number of our mental states. But what are they? Are they definitions? Prototypes? Theories? Unit 6 will cover a recent revolutionary turn in philosophy and cognitive science – so-called “4E cognition.” This is the view that minds are extended, embodied, enactive, and embedded in ways that incorporate elements of the extracranial environment into the mind. Finally, Unit 7 will cover perhaps the most recent and exciting turn in cognitive science – predictive processing. According to predictive processing, much of what we experience does not come from the immediate environment but from top-down predictions of what our brains expect the environment to present. Perception, on this view, is controlled hallucination.

Textbook:

The primary text for the first portion of the course will be Jaegwon Kim's *Philosophy of Mind* (3rd Ed.), available in the bookstore. Other readings will be provided in PDF format on Blackboard. We will almost certainly not touch on all the readings listed on the syllabus. The readings for each day are listed in order of priority, but don't worry if you are not able to get through all of them.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to demonstrate their understanding of important topics in philosophy of mind by engaging in discussions, completing written exams, and writing and revising an original essay that argues for or against a specific thesis related to philosophy of mind or cognitive science.

Assessments:

The assessments in this course are largely designed to keep you engaged with the lectures, readings, and other students in the course. Your grades for attendance, quizzes, research proposal, and essay draft comprise 55% of your grade. It should be easy to do well on these components if you stay engaged. The midterm, final essay, and final exam will be graded on quality - to get top marks on these components you will be required to demonstrate understanding of the material (for the midterm and final exam) and some original philosophical insight (for the final essay). Your final grade in the course will be composed of the following:

Attendance – 15%

Lecture attendance is required. In lecture I will not only present and explain the readings, but we will engage in active learning projects. Being in class is essential to these activities. Exceptions will only be made with a documented excuse, such as a doctor's note. You may miss up to three lectures without an excuse and still receive full marks for attendance.

Quizzes – 15%

At the end of each two-week unit, we will devote part of one class period to review. The following class will begin with a short quiz on the previous unit. The goal of the quizzes is to assess whether students are keeping up with reading and lectures. They are designed to be quite easy for students who do so.

Midterm – 15%

The midterm take place in class on Mar. 8. It will consist of two short essays (1-2 pages each). Students will be provided four essay prompts ahead of time and may choose to write on any two of them. The essay prompts will be on topics from units 1-3. The short essays should demonstrate understanding of the claims and arguments from the readings and lectures on the given topic. The essay prompts will be provided Mar. 4 and students will have the weekend to craft a response to the two they choose. The midterm will be taken in class with no access to notes.

Research Proposal – 10%

Students will produce a one-page document that explains the thesis they plan to argue for in their essay and outlines the argumentative strategy they will employ. These may change over the course of composing the draft and revising it into a final paper. This assignment is designed to get you thinking about your essay early-on and receive feedback on how it may be improved. Students are free to choose any topic from the course that interests them. Specific prompts will also be provided as models for the appropriate scope of the essay, and students may choose to write on those prompts if they wish. Prompts will be provided Mar. 8 after the midterm. Research proposals are due Mar. 20.

Essay draft – 15%

One of the most important parts of writing an essay is revision. Students will be required to turn in a rough draft of their essay, due Apr. 3. The essay should present and develop an original thesis on one of the topics of the course. Prompts will be provided, but students are welcome to develop their own essay topics. The essay should be narrowly focused on a very specific claim, likely a single premise in an argument presented in a lecture or reading. Provide an original argument for your view about that claim and consider objections to your argument. The essay should be 5 pages (1250 words), give or take a page. It should be easy to get full points for your draft so long as it reflects an honest effort to make a cogent argument.

Final Essay – 15%

Students will revise their essays, taking into account the comments they receive. You are almost certainly expected to make significant changes to your essay in order to get top marks. The final draft will be graded on quality, not merely on effort. The final essay will be due May 1.

Final Exam – 15%

The final exam will be similar in format to the midterm exam. It will consist of three short essays (1-2 pages each). Students will be provided six essay prompts ahead of time and may choose to write on any three of them. The essay prompts will be on topics from units 4-7. The short essays should demonstrate

understanding of the claims and arguments from the readings and lectures on the given topic. The essay prompts will be provided May 5. The final exam takes place on May 10 at 10:35am.

Texts:

The first four units of the course will draw in part from Jaegwon Kim's *Philosophy of Mind*, available in the bookstore. Older editions of the text are acceptable. Other readings will be available online for free.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Metaphysics of Mind

In this unit we will examine what sort of thing the mind is. Is it the brain? An immaterial soul? A pattern of behavior? A functional kind? We will examine arguments for and against each of these theories.

Jan. 20 – Course Intro; Reading: Kim Ch. 1

Jan. 25 – Dualism; Reading: Kim Ch. 2; Descartes & Princess Elisabeth Correspondence

Jan. 27 – Behaviorism; Reading: Kim Ch. 3

Feb. 1 – Identity Theory; Reading: Kim Ch. 4; Cho “Buddhist Mind and Matter”

Feb. 3 – Functionalism part 1; Reading Kim Ch. 5; Putnam “The Nature of Mental States”

Feb. 8 – Functionalism part 2; Reading Kim Ch. 6; Lewis “Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications”

Feb. 10 – Unit 1 Review; Quiz

Unit 2: Mental Causation

Events in the physical world cause mental events and mental events cause bodily movements. Depending on what kind of thing we decide the mind is, various problems arise in explaining how mental causation is possible. We will examine arguments for and against several accounts of mental causation.

Feb. 15 – Epiphenomenalism & Anomalous Monism; Readings: Kim Ch. 7; Huxley “On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata”, Davidson “Mental Events”

Feb. 17 – Counterfactual causation & The exclusion argument; Readings: Kim Ch. 7; LePore & Loewer “Mind Matters”, Kim “Mental Causation in a Physical World”

Feb. 22 – Unit 2 Review; Quiz

Unit 3: Mental Content

The mark of the mental is its intentionality. Mental states, unlike other natural phenomena, can be *about* something. What is the nature of mental content and how does it come about? We will examine several accounts of mental content and arguments for and against them.

Feb. 24 - Interpretation Theory & Informational Semantics; Readings: Kim Ch. 8; Lewis “Radical Interpretation”, Dretske “A Recipe for Thought”

Mar. 1 – Content Externalism & Content Internalism: Readings: Kim Ch. 8; Putnam “The Meaning of ‘Meaning’”, Horgan and Tienson “The Intentionality of Phenomenology and the Phenomenology of Intentionality”; Review for quiz

Mar. 3 – Unit 3 Review; Quiz

Mar. 4 – Midterm questions posted

Mar. 8 – In-class Midterm; Sample essay topics posted

Unit 4: Consciousness

Another peculiar property of some mental states is that they are conscious. The experience of tasting a mango or hearing a symphony is different than merely thinking that mangoes are delicious or that symphonies are beautiful. Can consciousness be explained or is in principle beyond scientific investigation? We will examine several accounts of consciousness and arguments for and against them.

Mar. 10 – The Hard Problem – Reading: Kim Ch. 9

Mar. 15 – Higher-Order Theory – Readings: Rosenthal “Two Concepts of Consciousness”; Greely “Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness are Empirically False”

Mar. 17 – Global Workspace Theory – Readings: Dehaene & Naccache “Towards a Cognitive Neuroscience of Consciousness”; Review for quiz

Mar. 20 – Research Proposals Due

Mar. 22 – Unit 4 Review; Quiz

Unit 5: Concepts

In order to explain behavior, we posit mental states like beliefs and desires. And to explain beliefs and desires we posit that these mental states have constituent parts. These parts are concepts. But what are they? Are they images? Definitions? Prototypes? Theories? We will examine arguments for and against several accounts of concepts.

Mar. 24 – Definitions, Prototypes, and Exemplars: Reading: Rosch “Slow Lettuce”

Mar. 29 – Theories, Perceptual Symbols: Readings: Margolis “The Significance of the Theory Analogy in the Psychological Study of Concepts”; Barsalou “Perceptual Symbol Systems”

Mar. 31 – Nonconceptual Content – Readings; Millikan “Pushmi-Pullyu Representations”, Bermudez, excerpt from *Thinking Without Words*; Review for quiz

Apr. 3 – Essay Drafts Due

Apr. 5 – Unit 5 Review; Quiz

Unit 6: Extended, Embodied, Embedded, and Enactive Cognition

We often theorize about the mind as if it were completely distinct from the body and the world it inhabits. But many contemporary theorists hold that our minds are largely constituted by the bodies and

environments in which they develop. We will examine arguments for and against “4E” accounts of cognition as extended, embodied, embedded, and enacted.

Apr. 7 – Extended & Enactive Cognition – Reading: Clark & Chalmers “The Extended Mind”, Noe “*Precis of Action in Perception*”

Apr. 12 – Spring Break

Apr. 14 – Spring Break

Apr. 19 – Embodied Cognition & Critique of 4E Cognition– Reading: Lakoff and Johnson “Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Life”, Adams and Aizawa “Why the Mind is Still in the Head”

Apr. 21 – Unit 6 Review; Quiz

Unit 7: Predictive Processing

Perhaps the most influential recent development in philosophy of mind and cognitive science are accounts of the mind as an instrument of prediction. On these accounts much of what we experience is not gleaned from the environment from the senses but is constructed “top-down” by processes that predict sensory inputs. We will examine arguments for several variations of this account of the mind.

Apr. 26 – Predictive Processing - Reading: Clark *Surfing Uncertainty* Ch. 1

Apr. 28 – Emulation Theory; Reading: Grush “The Emulation Theory of Representation”

May 1 – Final Essay Due

May. 3 – Unit 7 Review; Quiz; Final Questions Posted

May. 5 – Review for Final

May 10 – Final Exam

GRADING

Numeric	Grade	Numeric	Grade
Over 93%	A	73% to 76%	C
90% to 92%	A-	70% to 72%	C-
87% to 89%	B+	67% to 69%	D+
83% to 86%	B	63% to 66%	D
80% to 82%	B-	60% to 62%	D-
77% to 79%	C+	<60%	F

CARNEGIE/STUDENT WORKLOAD -

Activity	Instructor-Led		Independent		Remarks
	Weekly	Course	Weekly	Course	
Class Meetings	4	60			
Course Readings			4	60	
Midterm Prep				5	
Research Proposal				10	
Essay Draft				10	
Final Essay				20	
Quiz Prep				10	
Final Exam Prep				5	
Total Hours		60		120	

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS FOR BLACKBOARD

Even though this is an on-ground, on-campus, face-to-face, in-person class, some components of your class could be placed on Blackboard (e.g., syllabus).

Hardware & Software

	Windows	Mac OS X
Operating System	Windows 10	OS X 10.12 or later version
Java	Most recent version	Most recent version

Browser

Your browser must always be up to date. We recommend Firefox and Chrome for all Blackboard functions. If you are experiencing problems on another browser, please switch to Firefox or Chrome. To check your browser and system compatibility with Blackboard, please use the Blackboard Browser Checker below to view your functionality. *Please note that checkmarks on all functions does not guarantee a seamless experience.*

Click here: [Blackboard Browser Checker](#)

Internet

Bandwidth: recommended requirement is 5 Mbps per device or higher; anything less will cause potential issues.

Note: Bandwidth is affected by distance from the wireless router or access point, use of Netflix video streaming and number of users on the wireless network.

Streaming services: Sites or applications that use the internet like YouTube, Netflix, P2P, Spotify, or Pandora must be closed before starting a Zoom session.

Connection: You must be connected to the internet via an ethernet cable or Wi-Fi. Hotspots do not have the bandwidth to handle Zoom sessions.

Wi-Fi: Be as close to the router access point as possible to get the best connection. Be aware that locations with free Wi-Fi, i.e. Starbucks or Barnes & Noble, cannot provide enough bandwidth for Zoom sessions and should not be used.

Use the following link to check your speed. Click here: <http://speedof.me>

Diversity and Inclusion:

Individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders (and identities & expressions thereof), national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability - and other visible and non-visible differences are welcome in this course. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. If you find that a particular reading or assignment interacts with these factors in a way that interferes with your ability to complete it, send me an email and we'll see if there is a solution that we can all be happy with.

Academic Accommodation:

If you require any form of accommodation on the grounds of disability, please visit this link: <https://www.callutheran.edu/students/disability-services/register.html> well in advance so that you can submit the necessary documents.

Contact information is dss@callutheran.edu, Phone: (805) 493-3464, Disability Support Services, 60 W. Olsen Rd. #5300, Thousand Oaks, CA, 91360

Religious Accommodation:

If you require any accommodation on religious grounds, please alert me in writing as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity:

All instances of academic offences including plagiarism, cheating on exams, and multiple submission of work, will be handled in accordance with official policy, which can be found here:

<https://catalog.callutheran.edu/undergraduate/academicpolicies/>. Please read the policy and ensure that you understand it.