

Philosophy of Mind

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Course Description: The purpose of the course is to introduce students to some of the topics in contemporary analytic philosophy of mind. The philosophy of mind concerns itself with questions about the nature of the mind, what is a mind? What is it like? Is it a physical or non-physical thing? What is the relationship between having a mind and having a body? The philosophy of mind also concerns itself with the relationship between the mind and the world, how is it that some mental states can be about things in the world? How does the mind achieve this? Other questions in the philosophy of mind concern the connection between having a mind and being conscious. What does it mean to be a conscious being? What does it take to be conscious? Can purely physical things be conscious?

Learning Objectives:

- To become familiar with the basic foundational positions within contemporary philosophy of mind, such as dualism, materialism, behaviourism and functionalism.
- To examine and consider the significance of these positions for the scientific study of the mind and the brain.

Learning Outcomes: Students will:

- master and critically examine arguments for the various positions in the philosophy of mind.
- attain or enhance analytic and argumentative skills.
- attain or enhance close reading skills.
- attain or enhance the ability to present complex arguments in written form.

Level: Undergraduate elective.

Pre-Requisites: There are no pre-requisites for the course.

Course Structure: The course consists of lectures (2 hours per Lecture, 20 hours total) and self-study (10 hours per Lecture, 100 hours total).

The breakdown of topics and hours is

No	Topic	Lecture hours	Independent Study
	Dualism	2	10
	Behaviourism	3	15
	Materialism	3	15
	Functionalism	7	35
	Consciousness	5	25
Total		20	100

Course Requirements: Students are required to submit three short writing assignments and either a longer final paper or take a final exam. The writing assignments are to be 1000-1500 words in length, answering one question. The questions for the writing assignments will be handed out. Students may opt to either write a final paper (2000-2500 words), or take an exam. The exam can be either oral or written (2 hours). The exam will require answering three questions covering any part of the course. The final grade will be calculated as follows:

60% Writing Assignments (First assignment 15%, Second and Third 25% each)
40% Final (Exam or Paper)

Text: Chalmers, D., *Philosophy of Mind, Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Course Outline:

Lecture 1: Introduction. Dualism

Reading:

Descartes — Meditations (1 and) 2 and 6

Huxley — On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata, and its History

Smullyan — An Unfortunate Dualist

Lecture 2: Behaviourism

Reading:

Ryle — Descartes Myth

Carnap — Psychology in Physical Language

Putnam — Brains and Behaviour

Lecture 3: Behaviourism (cont) & Materialism

Reading:

Place — Is Consciousness a Brain Process?

Smart — Sensations and Brain Processes

Feigl — The “Mental” and the “Physical”

Lecture 4: Materialism (cont)

Assignment 1 Due

Lecture 5: Functionalism

Reading:

Putnam — The Nature of Mental States

Armstrong — The Causal Theory of Mind

Lewis — Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications

Lecture 6: Functionalism (cont.) and its Problems

Reading:

Block — Troubles with Functionalism

Nida-Rumelin — Pseudonormal Vision: An Actual Case of Qualia Inversion

Horgan — Functionalism, Qualia and the Inverted Spectrum (to be distributed separately).

Lecture 7: Problems with Functionalism (cont.)

Assignment 2 Due

Lecture 8: Psychophysical Laws

Reading:

Davidson — Mental Events

Fodor — Special Sciences

Kim — Multiple Realisation and the Metaphysics of Reduction

Lecture 9: Consciousness

Assignment 2 Due

Reading:

Block — Concepts of Consciousness

Nagel — What is it like to be a bat?

Jackson — Epiphenomenal Qualia

Lecture 10: Consciousness (cont.)

Assignment 3 Due

Reading:

Kripke — Naming and Necessity

Rosenthal — Explaining Consciousness