

Fall 2009
Philosophy of Mind
PHI 4320 Section 6738

BASIC SYLLABUS

The complete syllabus for this class includes both this Basic Syllabus and the Class Policies and Details document. The Class Policies and Details document includes all the fine print, so to speak: details on all the requirements, policies regarding attendance, the determination of grades, and so on. ***It is your responsibility to be aware of the information in the Class Policies and Details document as well as this Basic Syllabus.*** Be sure you read over both in their entirety within the first week of class.

Times: Monday, Wednesday, Friday period 7 (1:55 PM—2:45 PM)
Location: Leigh Hall 142
Instructor: D. Gene Witmer
Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall, Room 330B
Office phone: 273-1830
Office hours: Wednesday 3:00-5:00 PM
Friday 3:00-5:00 PM
And by appointment*
Email: gwitmer@phil.ufl.edu
Course website: Navigate to this course after logging on using your Gatorlink here:
<http://elearning.courses.ufl.edu/>

*Regular office hours are not held during holidays, spring break, or after the last day of classes (during reading days and exam week). Appointments might still be made during those times. If a class is cancelled the office hours on that day are cancelled as well; see the schedule below for some details.

Course description

It is tempting to see the mind as occupying a special place in the world. Much of what we think of as especially valuable seems to depend on mentality—thought, feeling, reason, and the like. But is the mind in fact special? Much of what falls under the heading of the philosophy of mind can be understood as pursuing specific questions inspired by this general one: is the mind fundamentally different from the other things we find in the world?

This general question can be approached via what is known as the mind-body problem: the project of finding an account of the mind that locates it in the broader physical world. While this problem does not exhaust the philosophy of mind, one's response to it imposes substantial constraints on what one may say about other questions in this area, and it will be our focus in this course.

The two dominant positions on the mind-body problem are materialism (also known as physicalism) and dualism. Very roughly put, materialism is the thesis that the mental reduces to the physical, whereas dualism denies this. We will consider both views generally as well as the two specific areas of the mental that seem distinctive of it, namely, the fact that we can represent things (intentionality) and fact that there is something it is like to undergo experience (phenomenal consciousness).

This course overlaps with a graduate course (PHI5325) of the same name; students in the graduate course will attend and participate in discussions along with the rest of you, although they face different requirements and will not be present for the exams.

Required text

Timothy O'Connor and David Robb, editors, *Philosophy of Mind: Contemporary Readings*. Routledge 2003. ISBN: 0-415-28354-X.

Readings will be primarily from the anthology above, though I might also put some additional readings on the website in electronic form.

Grade determination

Three in-class exams, one for each third of the course, each worth 10%. (No exam during finals week.)	30%
Two substantial papers (2000-2500 words), where the best is worth 35% and the other worth 20%.	55%
Writing exercises. Several ungraded, mandatory writing assignments; you get to select that which you feel is best to be graded.	15%

Subjects, readings, and schedule

The following is what I anticipate covering in this semester. Note that my ordering of readings isn't always the same as that in the anthology (e.g. reading 4 comes before reading 3).

Part 1: Substance Dualism and Idealism

1. Dean W. Zimmerman, "Two Cartesian Arguments for the Simplicity of the Soul"
2. Richard Swinburne, "The Soul"
4. Jaegwon Kim, "Lonely Souls: Causality and Substance Dualism"
3. E.J. Lowe, "The Problem of Psychophysical Causation"
5. Howard Robinson, "The General Form of the Argument for Berkeleyian Idealism"

Part 2: Materialism

6. J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes" and "Postscript (1995)"
7. Saul A. Kripke, "Naming and Necessity"
11. Hilary Putnam, "The Nature of Mental States"
12. Ned Block, "Troubles with Functionalism"
9. Arnold Zuboff, "The Story of a Brain"
10. David Lewis, "Reduction of Mind"
13. David J. Chalmers, "Absent Qualia, Fading Qualia, Dancing Qualia"

Part 3: Mind and Representation

16. John R. Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"
19. Paul M. Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes"
14. Jerry A. Fodor, "Meaning and the World Order"
15. Fred Dretske, "Representational Systems"

Part 4: Consciousness

21. Colin McGinn, "Can We Solve the Mind-Body Problem?"
22. Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"
20. Joseph Levine, "Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap"
23. David Lewis, "What Experience Teaches"
25. Gilbert Harman, "The Intrinsic Quality of Experience"

We will aim to stick to the schedule below, though I reserve the right to adjust this as needed, and it is your responsibility to stay up to date with information regarding current reading assignments, writing exercises, and any other aspect of the course during the semester.

Week	Mon		Wed		Fri	
1	8/24	No reading	8/26	No reading	8/28	Zimmerman (1)
2	8/31	Zimmerman (1) & Swinburne (2)	9/2	Swinburne (2)	9/4	Kim (4)
3	9/7	<i>Labor Day - No Class</i>	9/9	Kim (4) & Lowe (3)	9/11	Lowe (3)
4	9/14	Robinson (5)	9/16	Robinson (5)	9/18	Smart (6)
5	9/21	Smart (6)	9/23	Kripke (7)	9/25	SHORT EXAM 1

E	9/28	Kripke (7)	9/30	Putnam (11)	10/2	Putnam (11) & Block (12)
7	10/5	Block (12)	10/7	Block (12) & Zuboff (9)	10/9	Zuboff (9)
8	10/12	Lewis (10)	10/14	Lewis (10)	10/16	<i>Homecoming- No Class</i>
9	10/19	Chalmers (13)	10/21	Chalmers (13)	10/23	Searle (16) FIRST PAPER DUE 5 PM
10	10/26	Searle (16)	10/28	Churchland (17)	10/30	SHORT EXAM 2
11	11/2	Fodor (14)	11/4	Fodor (14)	11/6	Dretske (15)
12	11/9	Dretske (15)	11/11	<i>Vets Day - No Class</i>	11/13	<i>FPA - No Class</i>
13	11/16	McGinn (21)	11/18	Jackson (22)	11/20	Jackson (22) & Levine (20)
14	11/23	Levine (20)	11/25	<i>Free day</i>	11/27	<i>Thanksgiving - No Class</i>
15	11/30	Lewis (23)	12/2	Lewis (23)	12/4	Harman (25)
16	12/7	Harman (25)	12/9	Last class SHORT EXAM 3		
17	12/14	SECOND PAPER DUE 5 PM				

Note: For the first short exam (September 25th) I will be out of town, but someone else will proctor the exam that day.

CLASS POLICIES AND DETAILS

for
PHI4320 Fall 2009
Professor D. Gene Witmer

1. Course elements and routine

This course will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Besides participating in the discussions and reading and studying the assigned material, the work you do in this class falls into three categories:

- Mandatory ungraded writing exercises
- Three relatively short in-class exams, one for each third of the course
- Two substantial, argumentative philosophical papers

Details on the directions for and mechanics of the exams, papers, and exercises are found below.

The general routine of the class is straightforward. You need to come to each class prepared to discuss the readings recently assigned. I will vary lecture and discussion as seems fit in order to cover the material adequately. There are three dates on which exams will be held in class; see the schedule for the relevant dates. No exams are held during the final exam week. Writing exercises are assigned on an ad hoc basis; attending class is the best way to keep up to date on those assignments. Exercises and the two substantial papers are submitted electronically through the elearning web site. The exercises are due in by the morning prior to the next class session after which they are assigned, so that I may make use of them during that class session as appropriate. At the end of the semester, you select which of the writing exercises you did that you think shows your best work, and that one is assigned a grade.

The best way to learn in philosophy is by taking an active role in thinking, discussing, and writing about the readings and arguments presented. It is, I believe, essential to appreciating that material in a serious way that you make the effort to work your own way through it, doing your best to decide what you think about it, confronting those thoughts with objections you come up with and those you encounter in class discussion, and so on. Re-reading the assigned texts, making your own notes on them, doing the exercises—these all help, but participating in discussion is also crucial. Please note that I will feel free to call on people even if they don't volunteer; this is done to help ensure that you get past any reluctance to articulate your thoughts in a challenging environment—which requires courage of exactly the sort one needs in philosophy.

2. Grading scales and course grade determination

Papers are graded using a traditional alphabetic scale, with each grade corresponding to a numerical equivalent: A (4), A- (3.67), B+ (3.33), B (3), B- (2.67), C+ (2.33), C (2), C- (1.67), D+ (1.33), D (1), D- (.67), E (0). They are the most important aspects of your grade and are given the most careful look. Exams and the selected graded exercise are graded using a nontraditional scale I call the "check scale." There are five categories in the check scale with the indicated numerical equivalents: ☆ (4), ✓+ (3.5), ✓ (2.5), ✓- (1.5), and ∅ (0).

The final course grade is determined by factoring in each of those elements according to the percentages specified in the basic syllabus and then applying any penalties. Each factor is initially marked on a 4-point scale, and the result of the calculation is again a numerical score on the 4-point scale. For the final course grade, divisions between letter grades are marked at the midway points. This means that, for example, to get a B for the course the final numeric grade needs to be at least as high as the midpoint between a B and a B-. The result is that final course grades are determined by the following scale:

3.83 – 4.00	A	2.50 – 2.82	B-	1.17 – 1.49	D+
3.50 – 3.82	A-	2.17 – 2.49	C+	0.83 – 1.16	D
3.17 – 3.49	B+	1.83 – 2.16	C	0.50 – 0.82	D-
2.83 – 3.16	B	1.50 – 1.82	C-	0.00 – 0.49	E

Finally, a general comment on grading is in order. As I see the purpose of an assigned grade, the point is to provide a record that carries information about the extent to which the student has gained the knowledge, understanding and skills that the course aims to foster. A grade is not intended to be a reward for effort or a punishment for lack of effort. Of course, students are motivated by the desire for good grades, and I design the structure of the course so as to make use of that motivation. But I want to stress that grades are intended to provide a measure of your actual mastery of the relevant knowledge and skills as demonstrated in your work throughout the semester; other factors—how hard you work, or how much you improve over your former self—are irrelevant.

3. Attendance policy

Attendance is mandatory. I record attendance in the first five minutes of each class; if you come in late, you risk being counted as absent, though if you come in, say, 10 minutes late I'll try to remember to record your presence.

While I will not penalize you directly for absences, absences will hurt in various ways. If you miss an exam without a good excuse, of course, that gets counted as a zero grade. Further, I should note that exams and writing exercises will not infrequently require you to know things that you could only get from the lectures; reviewing the readings on your own will not be sufficient. Finally, in evaluating your papers, I expect you to be familiar with points covered in class lectures and discussion, even if they're not covered in the assigned readings; if you fail to take into account points from such discussion where they are plainly relevant to what you are arguing, that will hurt.

If you miss a class, excused or not, you need to take responsibility for finding out what you have missed. You are advised to get the name and phone or email of a fellow classmate from whom you can get notes and the like. If you need to, you can contact me about what was missed, but I cannot reproduce lectures or the details of class discussion for you; I can only indicate what sort of material was covered and convey information about scheduling, assignments, or the like.

If you do have a good excuse for an absence or a late assignment, you need to get in contact with me in a reasonable amount of time and make any relevant arrangements. Your credibility may depend on your previous attendance record.

Note on the H1N1 flu ("swine flu"). University health officials expect there to be a substantial number of infections this fall semester, and as the flu is highly contagious, if you have symptoms you are advised to stay home and avoid contact with others. UF should soon have a website devoted to updates and university policy on this matter. Of course, many faculty and instructors may become ill as well, so there is the real possibility of a tumultuous semester. I will aim to remain flexible in dealing with these. For instance, if there are severe numbers of excused absences during exams, instead of just a few makeup exams I may have to institute some kind of makeup exam of a different sort during finals week. I reserve the right to institute such alternative forms of evaluation in case the flu results in so many absences.

4. Writing exercises¹

What I call "writing exercises" or just "exercises" are mandatory writing assignments that are not (for the most part) individually graded. They are meant to ensure that you get some practice in writing about the material outside of the substantial papers you need to write, as well as outside the circumstances of time pressure that are necessary for in-class exams.

Writing exercises are assigned on an ad hoc basis throughout the semester. This means that I have not settled ahead of time just how many there will be or when they will be assigned; instead, they will be designed to best suit the particular circumstances as we go along. Exercise assignments will often have two parts to them,

¹ Please note: If you have taken classes with me before, the sort of thing I'm calling "exercises" here are rather different from what I've called "exercises" before, both in that (i) one of these does get graded and (ii) the expected level of formality is higher.

where the first asks you to explain in your own words a key point made by an author and the second asks you to evaluate that point. (They need not always take this form, however.)

Writing exercises should be submitted electronically as Microsoft Word files, unless you have some difficulty making use of that platform (in which case please notify me). When you submit them, you need only include your name and exercise number in the document. There is no specific word count requirement for these exercises, though I expect most of them would call for an answer in the range of 400-800 words.

Your exercises should be written in a careful, somewhat formal style. They should not be sloppy, stream-of-conscious notes or the like. You should take some care to make them clear, organized, and explicit. You should try to ensure they are both formally in order (no grammatical disasters, please) and explicit in their content. Think of them as practice in writing in the style that will be needed in the two substantial papers. And, of course, one of these exercises will be graded (see more on that below).

Exercises are to be handed in electronically via the course website. Exercises are due in by no later than 6 AM the morning of the class for which they were assigned. For example, if the course meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and I assign an exercise in class on Wednesday, the exercise is due in by 6 AM on Friday morning. Of course, it would be sensible to hand them in earlier than that—I would think by late Thursday evening you should hand it in. But I will only count it as officially late if not in by 6 AM.

I understand that technological problems may occasionally intervene and you may have trouble gaining access to the website; in such cases I will in fact accept hard copies handed in during the class period for which they are due, though I reserve the right to be suspicious and refuse accepting them. If you have such trouble, you need to complete the assignment on a hard copy and hand that in during class; do not suppose that you can just complete the exercise later. You could also submit them to my email as an attachment if the elearning site is not working for you for some reason.

The reason I require exercises to be handed in by 6 AM of the relevant day is that this ensures that I have a chance to look at them prior to the class session. Although these are (mostly) not graded and are not returned with comments, I do read over them all and will frequently use them in class by selecting some of them to exhibit in class for discussion and criticism. In doing so, I will always keep the exercises anonymous.

You will probably be assigned somewhere between 8 and 12 writing exercises; at the end of the semester, you select that which you think is best to be graded (using the "check scale"). *That one is then worth 15% of the final grade.* Chances are, given the practice you've had and our discussion of these in class, your selection will earn a good grade.

However, if you don't do all the required exercises, that grade will be systematically diminished. You can miss one without penalty. However, after that, *for each missing exercise, the grade for the selected exercise is dropped by 1 point on the 4-point scale.* For example, if the exercise you select for grading is evaluated as a 3.5, yet you missed two exercises, instead of having 3.5 calculated in as a 15% portion of your final grade, only 2.5 will be thus calculated. Mathematically put: Say your selected exercise earns a grade of g , and you missed n exercises. If n is 1 or 0, there is no penalty; otherwise, I will subtract $(n-1)$ from g , and the result is calculated into your final grade. Note that if you miss enough exercises, that result can even be negative.

5. Short In-Class Exams

Three times during the semester you will be tested in class. The in-class exams in question are short in that they won't take an entire class period, but they are more substantial than a simple pop quiz. Each exam requires you to write in response to two questions, where you are given some choices as to which questions to answer. The exam will take 30 minutes of class time, which gives you 15 minutes per question. That should be plenty of time to plan out and compare a careful answer. You may not leave early when finished; instead, everyone stays for the 30 minutes. After all the exams are collected, I will discuss the questions and what sorts of things were needed in a good answer, so you have immediate feedback on how appropriate your answers were.

Exam questions will always concern material that has been discussed in class, and the questions will only require you to show that you understand that material; you are not asked to be creative or original or evaluative in the exams. During the exams, please concentrate on making the content of your answer clear and explicit, and on answering the exact question asked. In most cases, a single exam question is something you should be able to answer without any trouble on one side of a handwritten page.

Exams are graded on the "check scale" mentioned above. If your response answers the question clearly and completely in an informed way without major mistakes, it will earn at least a ✓+. If, in addition, it demonstrates a *superior* understanding of the issue, it will receive a ☆. If it suffers from problems but still shows a substantial understanding of some crucial elements, it will receive a ✓. If it is merely better than nothing, it earns a ✓-. And, of course, one that is *not* better than nothing earns a ∅.

Exams start strictly at 5 minutes past the official start of class time; if you come in after that, up to 10 minutes past the start of class, you may still take your seat (*quietly*) and take the test. If, however, you come in later yet—that is, if you come in later than 10 minutes past the official start of class time, you will be barred from taking the test (and will not be able to attend the session). You should not be allowed to distract others from taking their tests.

Finally, a piece of advice about these exams: 15 minutes is actually a fairly sizable amount of time per question, and *it is a very good idea to pace yourself*. Students can cause themselves more grief by rushing into their answer than is necessary. Instead, take your time to think through what you want to say and write it out with care. I want the answers to tell me how well you understand the issues; I don't want them to be primarily indicators of your state of anxiety!

6. Substantial philosophical papers

In any advanced philosophy class, the upshot should include your being able to understand the issues and material sufficiently well so that you can take part in the ongoing debates on your own. A substantial philosophical paper is the standard vehicle for doing so in a sustained, serious way. Ideally, the papers you write ought to constitute your most satisfying achievement in a philosophy class. I will provide a document providing advice and directions on writing these papers, and you should be sure to read over it prior to starting work on your papers.

As a quick way of understanding what it is I want to see in these essays, keep in mind that I always look at three key aspects of philosophical papers in grading them, namely:

- The *clarity* and *organization* of the writing.
- Evidence of *comprehension* of the issue and readings.
- The power or merit of the *argument* you defend, including your success at anticipating likely objections and responding to them.

For paper assignments I will provide a list of various topics. In each case, you need to understand the topics as suggested *lines of inquiry* you might pursue. They are intended to stimulate thought; they are not intended to provide exact blueprints for what you should write. (The questions on exams, by contrast, *do* provide such blueprints.) You should be sure to structure your paper *around your thesis* and the argument you offer for it. If you wish to pursue a topic of your own which does not fit comfortably in the range of the suggested topics, check with me first for approval.

Paper assignments include a *target word count range*. These word count ranges are targets, but they are not hard and fast *requirements*. It is possible to go over or under those ranges without penalty. They are meant to give you a sense of how extensive the paper's contents should be. Think of them this way: if you haven't written at least that much, you *very likely* haven't done enough work; if you've written much, much more than the target range, then you *very likely* need to work on being more concise. Under no circumstances should you simply "pad" the paper with filler material to make it reach the target word count range. Excessive "filler" will actually result in a lower paper grade. A shorter paper full of good content is preferable to a longer one burdened with pointless filler.

Papers are to be handed in electronically as Microsoft Word files if possible. If that is not possible, please contact me about other arrangements. You may want to give your paper a title, though I won't require it.

When grading them, I will provide both marginal and overall general comments on the electronic version and return those to you along with the grade. Note that late papers are not accepted for credit; exceptions and extensions are granted only at my discretion, and only for severe problems.

7. Academic honesty

Please note that all UF students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. You can read the full honor code here: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>.

I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. *CLEAR EVIDENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY MEANS AN AUTOMATIC FAILING GRADE FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE.* This includes not just plagiarism but any conduct constituting academic dishonesty as defined in the honor code, including prohibited collaboration, prohibited use of resources, and so on.

Any act of academic dishonesty is *REPORTED TO THE DEAN'S OFFICE*, where it may haunt your future endeavors. Note further that if you are caught, you will not be allowed to withdraw from the course. If you are caught, and I confront you, and you quit attending and try to avoid talking to me, I will inform the Dean's Office and they will prevent you from dropping the course.

To my astonishment, some students seem genuinely unclear on what counts as plagiarism. Below is a useful definition provided in the 1989 Berkeley Campus Code of Student Conduct:

Plagiarism is defined as use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source, for example:

- Wholesale copying of passages from works of others into your homework, essay, term paper, or dissertation without acknowledgment.
- Use of the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment.
- Paraphrasing of another person's characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device without acknowledgment.

(From: <http://students.berkeley.edu/osl/sja.asp?id=983&rcol=1202>)

UF's student code includes this comment on plagiarism:

Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(From: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>)

A particular point I want to make is a very simple one: if any portion of your writing is composed by means of your looking at someone else's writing and duplicating it, even if you mix it up or rearrange it or whatnot, that requires appropriate citation. It's not enough, further, just to cite the source at the end; if your own writing is produced in that fashion from particular sentences from that source, you must cite that source right then and there.

If you have any questions as to whether or not a certain use of outside sources counts as plagiarism be sure to see me about it. If you have any question about what constitutes dishonesty, feel free to ask me, or, failing that, err on the side of caution. It is always preferable to seek extra help from the professor, hand in a late paper, or even just get a zero for that assignment—that is, do something honest—than it is to cheat.

If you are caught cheating, you receive a failing grade—period. There are no exceptions.

8. Additional resources

I will make available online some documents that may prove helpful. In particular, I have a document entitled simply "Key Philosophical Tools" which includes both a basic primer on argumentation and an explanation of a variety of philosophical terms that are likely to come up in my classes. Be sure to read over the "Key Philosophical Tools" handout early on in the semester. A separate document providing advice on writing philosophy papers is also available.

You may want to visit the *UF Philosophy Department Home Page*: web.phil.ufl.edu. You can find there announcements of upcoming events of philosophical interest (including visiting speakers), as well as a link to the *Undergraduate Philosophy Society*. This group meets weekly, sometimes with invited speakers, and sometimes with specific topics; I recommend participating in it.

There are many resources online for philosophers, but I want to caution you against leaning on them, for at least two reasons. First, the variety of material out there is of very inconsistent quality; philosophy is, unfortunately, one of those areas where many people who are quite naive think they can master it quickly and give other people instruction on it. Second, depending on your background, you may find yourself more bewildered than enlightened by seeking out additional material that you've not had any help comprehending. I can tell you, for instance, that anything you find in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is going to be good—but it also tends to be very advanced and can be quite daunting. Third—and most important—when you seek outside material, especially online material, it becomes very tempting to exploit it by simply regurgitating that outside material however best you can. I'm not talking about plagiarism here; I'm talking about citing it and leaning on it as opposed to working your own way through the issues, which, as I mentioned above, I think is crucial to appreciating the issues.

9. Miscellaneous

Special accommodations. To request any special classroom accommodations you must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will then provide you with relevant documentation to provide to me when you request the accommodation.