

Philosophy of Mind

PHI 5325 Section 7153

Fall 2009

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/fall-7153-L@lists.ufl.edu>
Email discussion list:

*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 an undergraduate course (PHI4320) of the same name. I expect you to attend all classes and participate in discussion, although you will not be taking the short exams that the undergrads will be taking and need not attend on those days. I would also like to meet with all of you as a group on a number of occasions outside of those class meetings.

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

Participation (contributions to the email list)	20%
Short paper	30%
Term paper	50%

Contributions to the email list. An email discussion list has been set up for this class; the address is fall-7153-L@lists.ufl.edu. Every other week you should post a comment to the list. This will serve as a forum for discussion just for the graduate students (the undergraduates do not have access to this list). I will divide the class into two groups and stagger the requirement so that each week every member of one of the groups will be posting a comment.

The postings are due in prior to 6:00 AM Monday morning each week, though obviously handing them in earlier than that would be advisable. More precisely, when it is your group's turn, you should post at least one comment or question to the list, where the comment or question concerns readings that we expect to be under discussion the following week. If a reading already discussed one week is one that I say we will still be discussing the following week, that reading is fair game. The comments or questions need not touch on all the readings we expect to be discussing; they can be drawn from those in any combination.

These may be relatively informal. Questions could concern difficulties of interpretation, apparent puzzles about how the person is arguing, questions about implications of the position defended in the paper, and the like; comments should be evaluative, pointing out argumentative flaws or problems, or suggesting ways to improve arguments, perhaps. The quality of those questions and comments, combined with your participation (primarily in the email discussion list) will determine that 20% portion of your grade.

Short paper: You are to complete a short paper (2000-2500 words) that focuses on some narrow topic in the readings assigned for the undergraduate class. It will be due the same day as the undergraduates' first paper (10/23, by 5 PM). Needless to say, you have much higher expectations to meet. You may make use of the same list of suggested topics as those I give the undergraduates, but you should be sure to make your focus appropriately concentrated.

Throughout the first half of the semester, I would like you to be thinking about what areas in philosophy of mind you are especially interested in. By the time you hand in the first, short paper, you need to have selected (with my help, as needed) several additional readings on this more specific topic of interest. During the rest of the semester, while keeping up with the regular class and weekly comments and questions, you should be working on those additional readings and a *full-scale research paper* (4000-5000 words) due at the end of the semester (12/18, by 5 PM).

Below is the schedule of readings from the O'Connor & Robb anthology as I hope to cover them.

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 (UG) no class (G)
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) SHORT PAPER DUE 5 PM MUST SELECT SUBTOPIC & READINGS
10	10/26	Searle (16)	10/28	Churchland (19)	10/30	Short exam (UG) no class (G)
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 (UG) no class (G)	12/11	
17	12/14		12/16		12/18	TERM PAPER DUE 5 PM

Here is the schedule for the groups' biweekly contributions to the email discussion list:

Week#	Monday	Group
2	8/31	Group 1
3	9/7	Group 2
4	9/14	Group 1
5	9/21	Group 2
E	9/28	Group 1
7	10/5	Group 2
8	10/12	Group 1
9	10/19	Group 2
10	10/26	Group 1
11	11/2	Group 2
12	11/9	Group 1
13	11/16	Group 2
14	11/23	<i>Free week</i>
15	11/30	Group 1
16	12/7	Group 2

Group 1: Ron, Kyle, Alan

Group 2: Andy, Seth