

PHI 204: Philosophy of Mind

Professor: Kranti Saran

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Lecture: MW 2:50PM–4:20PM, TR 104

Class webpage: piazza.com/ashoka.edu.in/spring2017/phi204/home

Office Hours: MW 5:00PM–6:00PM, 310 New Academic Block

and by appointment

Course Description

Is your mind identical to your brain? Or are they radically different? What is consciousness? How do our experience and thoughts come to be *about* anything? This course will survey some of the major philosophical views of the mind/body problem, consciousness, and intentionality.

Learning Objectives

What will this course do for you? I anticipate that by the end of the course, you will:

- critically appreciate some key positions regarding the mind-body problem, consciousness, and intentionality.
- learn how to develop and deepen your arguments by incorporating feedback.
- learn how to help develop and deepen the arguments of others by offering feedback.

Instructional Materials

Please purchase this book:

Chalmers, D. J., editor (2002). *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

These books are excellent guides to the philosophy of mind:

Crane, T. (2003). *The Mechanical Mind: A Philosophical Introduction to Minds, Machines and Mental Representation*. Routledge, London and New York, 2nd edition.

Kim, J. (1998). *Philosophy of Mind*. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado.

Churchland, P. M. (1988). *Matter And Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., revised and expanded edition.

All instructional materials are available on the course website.

Schedule of Meetings, Topics, and Readings

Day	Date	Topics and Readings
Mon.	23/1	Introduction to the course
Wed.	25/1	<i>Our Natural History</i> pp. 5–9, Chap. 2, and pp. 65–76 in Godfrey-Smith (2016)
Mon.	30/1	<i>Dualism</i> Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Chalmers #1 Descartes, <i>Passions of the Soul</i> , Chalmers #2 <i>Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Correspondence with Descartes</i> , pp. 1–8.
Wed.	1/2	<i>Behaviourism</i> Ryle, “Descartes’ Myth,” Chalmers #5 Putnam, “Brains and Behavior,” Chalmers #7
Mon.	6/2	<i>Identity Theory</i> Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes,” Chalmers #9
Wed.	8/2	No Class (I’m giving a talk elsewhere)
Mon.	13/2	<i>Machine Functionalism</i> Putnam, “The Nature of Mental States,” Chalmers #11 <i>Optional: Levin (2010), “Functionalism,”</i>
Wed.	15/2	<i>Analytic Functionalism</i> Lewis, “Psychological and Theoretical Identifications,” Chalmers #13 <i>Optional: Lycan (2009), “Giving Dualism its Due,”</i>
Mon.	20/2	<i>Objections to Functionalism</i>

- Searle, "Can Computers Think?," Chalmers #63
- Wed. 22/2 **Draft of First Paper Due for Peer Commentary**
Block, "Troubles with Functionalism," Chalmers #14
- Mon. 27/2 [Gallagher and Zahavi \(2008\)](#), "The Embodied Mind,"
Optional: Block (2005), "Review of *Action in Perception* by Alva Noë,"
- Wed. 1/3 **Peer Commentary on First Paper Due**
Consciousness
[Thompson \(2015\)](#), "Seeing: What is Consciousness?,"
Block, "Concepts of Consciousness," Chalmers #24
- Mon. 6/3 Nagel, "What is it like to be a Bat," Chalmers #25
Chap. 4 in [Godfrey-Smith \(2016\)](#)
- Wed. 8/3 **First Paper Due**
The Knowledge Argument
Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," Chalmers #28
Lewis, "What Experience Teaches," Chalmers #29
- Mon. 13/3 No Class (Midterm Break)
- Wed. 15/3 No Class (Midterm Break)
- Mon. 20/3 *The Modal Argument*
Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Chalmers #32
- Wed. 22/3 Hill, "Imaginability, Conceivability, Possibility and the Mind-Body Problem,"
Chalmers #33
- Mon. 27/3 *The Explanatory Gap*
Levine, "Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap," Chalmers #35
- Wed. 29/3 *Consciousness Wrap-up*
[Churchland \(1996\)](#), "The Hornswoggle Problem,"
- Mon. 3/4 [Block \(2009\)](#), "Comparing the Major Theories of Consciousness,"
- Wed. 5/4 No Class (Ram Navmi)
- Mon. 10/4 *Intentionality*
Brentano, "The Distinction Between Mental and Physical Phenomena,"
Chalmers #44

- Wed. 12/4 **Draft of Final Paper Due for Peer Commentary**
Chisholm, "Intentional Inexistence," Chalmers #45
- Mon. 17/4 Dretske, "A Recipe for Thought," Chalmers #46
- Wed. 19/4 **Peer Commentary on Final Paper Due**
Millikan, "Biosemantics," Chalmers #47
- Mon. 24/4 *Internalism and Externalism*
Putnam, "The Meaning of Meaning," Chalmers #54
- Wed. 26/6 **Final Paper Due**
Burge, "Individualism and the Mental," Chalmers #55
- Mon. 1/5 Clark and Chalmers "The Extended Mind," Chalmers #59
- Wed. 3/5 Wrap-up and catch-up

How to Read the Material

The assigned material is dense. Plan to read it 3-4 times before class. Read actively:

- First, read the opening and closing paragraphs and all section headings to get a sense of the piece.
- Second, read it through word by word, marking it up with any questions and comments you have, and noting passages that require a closer reading.
- Third, go back and reread the passages you marked up for special attention.

Student Responsibilities

- **Class attendance:** There is no attendance requirement. Because the Reading Quiz will begin right on time at the start of class and late arrivals disturb other test takers, the classroom doors will be locked at the start of class. If you arrive after the doors have been locked you cannot take the quiz or attend class. If you attend class, you may not leave early (unless you inform me beforehand).
- **Behaviour in the Classroom:** Treat the instructor and your fellow classmates with respect. Be considerate when speaking and make sure others get a chance to voice their views too. While your participation is actively encouraged, remember that listening is as much a form of participation as speaking. Do not confuse the volume of your participation with its value. You are welcome to vigorously disagree, but remember not to be disagreeable! If you are rude or

disruptive, you will be asked to leave the classroom. Reading non-class material during class is not permitted.

- **Electronic Etiquette:** Your phone must be off or on silent mode, and out of sight. No laptops are permitted in class. (For those interested in some of the research motivating this policy, see <http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>.)

Ever wondered how to email your professor? Nobody is born knowing how to do this, but luckily there's a useful guide: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>

- **Academic Integrity:** You are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Your work must be your own. Submitting work which you have not composed yourself, or using another person's ideas without due credit, or failing to mark another person's words with appropriate quotation marks all constitute plagiarism. The instructor reserves the right to assess penalties for violations of academic integrity, which may include giving a failing grade for an assignment, for the entire course, or referral to a University disciplinary committee.
- **Work submission:** All work must be submitted on time. Work that is submitted past the deadline will be docked a third of a grade for every successive 24-hour period after the deadline (e.g., a B+ becomes a B).
- **Students with Disabilities:** Reasonable academic accommodation will be made for students with documented disabilities. You must contact me before our next meeting if you need such accommodation.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Your grade will be a function of the following distribution:

Reading Quizzes	25%
Peer Commentary on a draft of another student's First Paper	5%
First Paper (3-5 pages)	15%
Peer Commentary on a draft of another student's Final Paper	10%
Final Paper (7-10 pages)	25%
Class Participation	20%

Reading Quizzes

Every class will start with a short quiz focussed on the reading assigned for that day . The quiz must be taken in class. The quiz aims to test your understanding of some of the main claims and arguments covered in the reading and your retention of material we have already covered. It presupposes that you have carefully read and reflected on

the material. No notes, texts, or study aids of any kind are allowed during the quiz. Importantly, the quiz is cumulative: *any* material that we have covered till date is fair game. If you miss a Reading Quiz, you will not be able to make it up; the lowest four Reading Quiz scores will not count towards your final Reading Quiz grade.

Your Reading Quiz final score will be computed as follows: your lowest four scores will be dropped and the total number of points earned will be turned into a percentage and then into a grade point as follows: if your final score is between 90-100% you will get a 4.0, 80-89% is a 3.5, 70-79% is a 3.0, 60-69% is a 2.5, 50-59% is a 2.0, 40-49% is a 1.0 and 0-39% is a 0.0, which is a failing grade.

Peer Commentary

Your peer commentary will consist of comments written in the margin of the draft and a further page of typed comments that follow the guidelines for the response papers. At the start of class on the due date, submit two hard copies of your comments (one for me and one for the person who's paper you're commenting on). On no account can you be late in submitting drafts of papers to your peer commentator.

First and Final Papers

The first paper will be 3-5 pages and the final paper will be 7-10 pages long. You will write a draft of each paper which you must submit at the start of class by the stipulated date; submitting a draft is a requirement for passing the course. Make sure your draft is an anonymised hard copy; I will assign it to a peer commentator.

Class Participation

This will be a discussion driven class. I will keep lecturing to a minimum. Please bring your questions, your concerns, your counter-arguments, and your observations to class. Everyone will be expected to participate in the discussion.

Bibliography

Block, N. (2005). Review of *Action in Perception* by Alva Noë. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 102(5):pp. 259–272.

Block, N. (2009). Comparing the major theories of consciousness. In Gazzaniga, M., editor, *The Cognitive Neurosciences IV*, chapter 77. The MIT Press, Cambridge.

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- Godfrey-Smith, P. (2016). *Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.
- Kim, J. (1998). *Philosophy of Mind*. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado.
- Levin, J. (2010). Functionalism. In Zalta, E. N., editor, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Summer 2010 edition.
- Lycan, W. G. (2009). Giving dualism its due. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 87(4):551–563.
- Thompson, E. (2015). *Waking, Dreaming, Being: New Light on the Self and Consciousness from Neuroscience, Meditation, and Philosophy*. Columbia University Press, New York.