

Philosophy of Mind Syllabus

Philosophy 136: Philosophy of Mind

Spring Quarter 2011. UCSD. Time: MW 5:00-6:20pm Room: CSB 002

Instructor: Rick Grush (rick@mind.ucsd.edu -- <http://mind.ucsd.edu>)

Office Hours: Thursday 3:00 - 4:30, Muir Coffee Shop

TAs:

Marta Halina: Office hours: W 2:30-4:30 pm, HSS 7043 (mhalina@ucsd.edu)

Ben Sheredos: Office hours: Thurs, 12:00-1:00, HSS 7039 (sheredos@ucsd.edu)

Short Description

This course will provide students with an introduction to some of the main topics in Philosophy of Mind. The course will be broken down into thirds, with descriptions below:

Part 1: Historical views

In this part we will look mostly at a few historical approaches to philosophy of mind. Starting with Descartes and a discussion of substance dualism, we will move on to Locke and Hume, and then behaviorism, identity theory, and the initial formulations of functionalism.

Part 2: Contemporary views

In this third we will examine some contemporary approaches to the nature of mind, including current views on functionalism, Dennett's intentional stance, Fodor's LOT/RTM, and eliminative materialism.

Part 3: Group minds

With some of the standard approaches covered in the first two parts, we will turn in the third part to a more specialized and speculative issue: the group mind. Is it possible for a single mind to be implemented in, and distributed across, multiple biological individuals (and perhaps even other sorts of stuff)?

Grades

Grades will be based on the following components:

Quizzes: At the beginning of each class period there will be a 5 question multiple choice quiz on the readings for that session. These quizzes will be designed such that if you have just read the readings carefully you should be able to easily get 4 or 5 of the questions right. The questions won't presuppose deep understanding of every little point. The purpose is to give everyone a reason to stay on schedule with the readings, and to have the readings done BEFORE class, which will make class time more productive. There will be five quizzes for each of the three parts of the course.

Midterm exams:

At the end of each of the three parts of the course there will be an in-class midterm exam, consisting of 10 multiple choice questions, and 2 essays. The multiple choice questions will assume a little more sophisticated understanding than is assumed on the quizzes.

The essays will work as follows: from 2-5 days before the midterm exam, I will distribute 5 or 6 essay questions to the class. On the exam, I will choose 3 of these at random to put on the exam, and you can choose any 2 of those three to write on. How long they will be varies as a function of the writer's concision and mastery of the material, but around 3-4 written blue book pages per essay is a rough average.

The points available for everything are as follows:

In-class quizzes: 5 multiple-choice questions worth 4 point each. Each quiz is worth 20 points.

Midterm exam: 10 multiple-choice questions worth 5 points each for a total of 50 points. And two essays worth 100 points each for a total of 200 points.

So for each third of the course, there will be 350 points possible (5 quizzes at 20 points each = 100; 10 MC questions on exam = 50; and two essays = 200).

There are NO make-ups for the in-class quizzes. If you miss class, you miss the quiz, and get a 0. However, I will replace your worst quiz score in each part of the course with your best quiz score. This policy means that if you tank or miss one quiz, then you won't be affected, so long as you do well on the others.

At the end of the class, the TAs and I will take all points scored, turn that into a percentage, make the letter-grade cut-offs, and assign grades. The worst-case scenario will be a straight 10% break-down. Though depending on the average score and score distribution, the cut-offs might be lower.

Score Sheets

The scores will be posted online after exams are graded. **Scores are listed by a coded version of your student ID number in order to protect privacy, as per University regulations.** In order to determine what your coded ID number is, do the following. Take your student ID number. This will be something like a letter followed by 8 digits, like "A01234567". Remove the letter and the first digit, and you're left with a string of 7 digits, like "1234567". Take the first four digits, and treat this as a 4 digit number (something between 0000 and 9999); and take the last four digits and treat this like another 4-digit number. In the example above, they would be "1234" and "4567". Add these two numbers together, for example: $1234 + 4567 = 5801$. If the number you get is 5 digits, remove the first digit to make it 4 digits long; if it is 4, then keep it at 4 digits. This is your coded ID number. To see another example: If your student ID is "A05367921", you drop the first letter and number: "5367921"; then take the first 4 digits: "5367"; and the last 4 digits "7921"; add them together: $5367+7921=13288$. If the result is 5 digits, remove the first digit: "3288". If you cannot find your row on the score sheet, email me with your name, section, and ID number, **AND WHAT YOU DETERMINED YOUR CODED ID NUMBER IS.**

Readings

Readings are available online as PDFs:

Schedule:

Session 01 (03.28): Introduction to course

Session 02 (03.30): Cartesian Dualism

Readings:

Rene Descartes, *Meditations* 1 and 2. [\[here\]](#)

Paul Bloom "Therefore I am". [\[here\]](#)

Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*, Ch. 2 pp. 7-22 [\[here\]](#)

Session 03 (04.04): Empiricist Personal Identity

Readings:

John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 2, Chapter 27, "Identity and diversity", pp 112-121. [\[here\]](#)

David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book 1, Part 4, Chapter 6, "Personal Identity", pp. 132-141. [\[here\]](#)

Session 04 (04.06): Behaviorism

Readings

Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, pp 11-61. [\[here\]](#)

Alex Byrne "Behaviorism". [\[here\]](#)

Churchland *MC* pp 23-25 [link above under Session 01]

Session 05 (04.11): Identity Theory

Readings

JJC Smart "Sensations and Brain Processes" [\[here\]](#)

Churchland *MC* pp. 26-35. [link above under Session 01]

Session 06 (04.13): Functionalism

Readings:

Putnam "The nature of Mental States" [\[here\]](#)

Churchland *MC* pp 36-42 [link above under Session 01]

Session 07 (04.18): Midterm 1

Session 08 (04.20): Functionalism I

Readings:

Searle "Minds, brains and programs" [\[here\]](#)

Session 09 (04.25): Functionalism II

Readings:

Block "Troubles with Functionalism" [\[here\]](#)

Session 10 (05.27): The Intentional Stance

Readings:

Dennett "True Believers" [\[here\]](#)

Session 11 (05.02): Representational theory or mind/Language of thought

Readings:

Fodor, *Psychosemantics*, Preface [\[here\]](#)

Fodor, *Psychosemantics*, Chapter 1 [\[here\]](#)

Session 12 (05.04): Eliminative Materialism

Readings:

Churchland "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes" [\[here\]](#)

Churchland *MC*, pp 43-49 [link above under Session 01]

Session 13 (05.09): **Midterm Two**

Session 14 (05.11): Groups and Bees

Readings:

Strawson, selection from *Individuals* Chapter 3, "Persons" [[here](#)]

Seeley "Group decision making in honey bee swarms" [[here](#)]

Session 15 (05.16): Group minds

Readings:

Wilson, pp 265-307 [[here](#)]

Session 16 (05.18): Corporate responsibility

Readings:

Pettit "Responsibility Incorporated" [[here](#)]

Session 17 (05.23):

Readings:

Austen Clark "Beliefs and desires incorporated" [[here](#)]

Session 18 (05.25): TBA

Readings:

Session 19: (06.01) **Midterm Three**

Google Group:

There is a Google group for this class, and **it is a course requirement** that you either subscribe to the list and set your membership to receive email announcements, or that you **regularly, at least once or twice a week**, check the page online to read the announcements. You can get to the announcement page here:

http://groups.google.com/group/phil_mind_ucsd_s11

I recommend that you click on that link now, and sign up for the group. Don't worry, only I can post, so you won't be getting a lot of spam.

If for whatever reason you don't wish to sign up, that is OK. You can still visit the page to read any announcements without signing up. But the announcements won't be emailed to you, you will have to remember to visit the page often to read the announcements. Remember, you are responsible for any information or announcements posted to this group.

When the quarter is over, and it is clear that no more announcements will be needed (like where to pick up finals, or whatever), I will delete this group. So if you are subscribed, there will be no need to unsubscribe.

How to do well in this course:

1. **Be sure to read the assigned material before class.** This will help to ensure that our class time is quality time, and not wasted with me and some of the students reiterating the material to those who haven't read it. Reading the material before class will also help you get some points on the quizzes, and that is a good thing.

2. **Bring *specific* questions with you to lecture.** Even if there are aspects of the readings or study questions you didn't fully grasp, the fact that you tried should help you to narrow down what it is that you don't get.
3. **See me in office hours, or email me,** if there are still questions you are unclear about. That's what office hours are for. Don't be shy.
4. **After class, re-read the material for the session,** paying special attention to the questions that you had before. Hopefully the material will make much more sense to you now.
5. **Manage your time well.** Many students are lazy, and wait until a few days before exams to start studying. That is *bad* time management. The **same number of hours** devoted to the material BEFORE lectures can lead to a much more efficient use of your time, better understanding, and higher grades.

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