Philosophy 136: Philosophy of Mind

Winter Quarter 2024. UCSD.
Time: M-W 5:00-6:20
Room: RWAC 0426
Instructor: Rick Grush (**rgrush@ucsd.edu** -- **http://rickgrush.net**)
Office Hours: Thursday 11am - 1pm. Zoom link here: https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/96491620655

TA: Min Heo. Office Hours Thurs 2-4 https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/92162049336 Sign-in Sheet

Note: This class will be IN PERSON and there will be either an exam or a quiz in class every day. The quizzes will be very short 5 questions multiple choice, designed to be pretty easy if you've done the reading for that day, so they are nothing to stress over so long as you plan to do the readings before we meet. BUT they will be in-class, so you should only sign up for this class if you are able and willing to be in class in person for all, or at least most, of the sessions.

Short Description

What are minds? Humans have minds, but why? Is it because minds are non-physical things like souls or spirits that are attached to human brains? Is it because of computational properties of the brain? Could a machine have a mind? Could it ever be the case that a group of beings -- people, or a hive of bees or ants -- could collectively have a single mind? You'll know the answers to all these questions by the end of the quarter!

This course will provide students with an introduction to some of the main topics in Philosophy of Mind. All readings are available as PDFs from this syllabus. The course will be broken down into thirds, with descriptions below:

Part 1: Historical topics

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 20th century views including behaviorism, identity theory, and the initial formulations of functionalism.

Part 2: Contemporary topics

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?

Schedule and Readings:

Session 01 (Jan 8): Introduction

Session 02 (Jan 10): Dualism 1 (Q1)
Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*, Ch. 2 pp. 7-10 [here]
Rene Descartes, *Meditations* 1 and 2. [here]
Bloom, 'Therefore I am' [here]

Session 03 (Jan 17): Dualism 2 (Q2)
Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*, Ch. 2 pp. 10-22
Jackson, 'Epiphenomenal Qualia' [here]
The Jackson article has 4 sections. We will read I and IV (1 and 4)
But we will not worry about sections II and III (2 and 3)

Session 04 (Jan 22): Behaviorism (Q3)
Churchland *MC* pp 23-25 [link above under Session 02]
Skinner *Science and Human Behavior* (selections) [here]

Session 05 (Jan 24): Identity Theory (Q4)
Churchland *MC* pp. 26-35. [link above under Session 02]
Smart, 'Sensations and Brain Processes' [here]
The Smart article has the main part, then 9 objections and replies.
We will only read the Third objection/reply, and skip the other 8.
So roughly: Pages 141-146, 148-150, and then the end bit 155-156

Session 06 (Jan 29): **Exam 1**

Session 07 (Jan 31): Functionalism 1 (Q5)
Churchland *MC* pp 36-42 [link above under Session 02
Polger, 'Functionalism' (entry in IEP) [here]
Also, watch **this youtube video on ChatGPT**. Don't worry if some (or all) of it mostly goes over your head. It's a little technical. I'll go over the main relevant points in class. But the way it works will contrast interestingly with the way other AI systems work, and will shed light on issues with, for example, behaviorism vs. functionalism.

Session 8 (Feb 5): Understanding (Q6)
Searle, 'Minds, brains and programs' [here]

Session 9 (Feb 7): Belief/Desire Psychology (Q7)
Dennett, 'True Believers' [here]

Session 10 (Feb 12):Qualia (Q8)
Dennett, 'A Method for Phenomenology' [here]

Session 11 (Feb 14): Eliminative Materialism (Q9)
Churchland, 'Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes' [here]
Churchland, *MC*, pp 43-49 [link above under Session 02]

Session 12 (Feb 21): **Exam 2**

Session 13 (Feb 26): Social Insects (Q10)
Seeley "Group decision making in honey bee swarms" [here]

Session 14 (Feb 28): Distributed Cognition (Q11)
Hutchins "The Technology of team Navigation" [here]

Session 15 (March 4): Corporate responsibility (Q12)
Pettit "Responsibility Incorporated" [here]

Session 16 (March 6): TBD (Q13)

Session 17 (March 11) TBD (Q14)

Session 18 (March 13): **Exam 3**

Grades

Grades will be based on the following components:

Quizzes:
At the beginning of each regular class period (excluding exam days) 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 a 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 our class time more productive. There will be five or six quizzes for each of the three parts of the course. Each question is worth 4 points, and so each quiz is worth 20 points.

So … 14 quizzes, each worth 20 points. For 280 points possible.

Note that there are NO make-ups for the quizzes. BUT … I'll replace your 3 worst quiz scores with your 3 best quiz scores. This means that you can miss (or tank) 3 quizzes without it impacting your grade.

Note that **these replaced scores are the mechanism for making up any missed quizzes**. If you miss a quiz because you were sick or late because of traffic or whatever, I will say "No problem, that will be one of the quiz scores that will get replaced." So don't treat them like free passes for missing quizzes. If you've already missed 3 quizzes, then any more after that *will* have a negative impact on your score.

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 was assumed on the quizzes. Each multiple choice question will be worth 5 points, and so the total MC points on each midterm will be 50 points.

The essays will work as follows: around 2-5 days before the midterm exam, I will distribute 5 or 6 essay questions to the class. So you'll have access to the questions that could be asked beforehand. On the exam, I will choose 3 of these at random to put on the exam, and you can choose any 2 of those 3 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. Each essay will be worth 50 points.

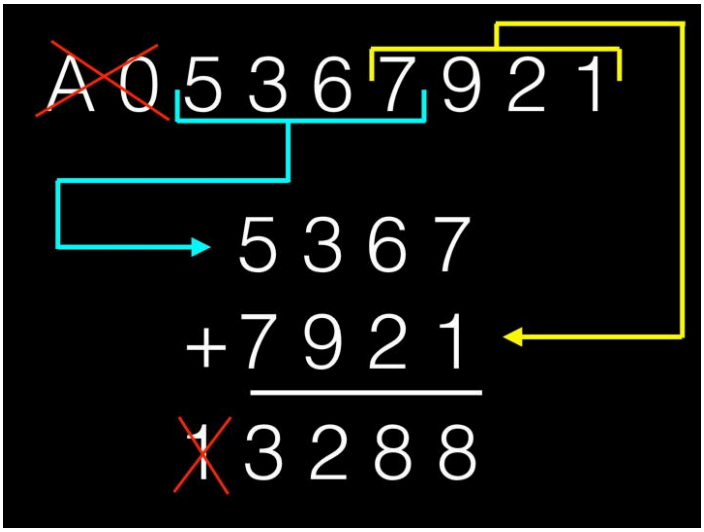
So … each midterm exam will have 10 multiple-choice questions worth 5 points each for a total of 50 points for the MC questions; and two essays worth 50 points each. So each midterm is worth 150 points total. And there are 3 midterms, so that's 450 points for the midterms.

With the 450 from the exams, and the 280 from the quizzes, that is 730 points possible.

At the end of the class, 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 PID 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 PID 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**.



>>>>> **THE SCORESHEET IS HERE** <<<<<

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** 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.