

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Johns Hopkins University
Center for Talented Youth

SYLLABUS

Course Description:

The course introduces students to some of the most important questions in the philosophy of mind. First we investigate the relationship between the mind and the body (or the brain, to be more precise) by examining both dualist theories, which characterize the mind as a non-physical substance, and materialist explanations, which account for the mental purely in terms of the physical. After exploring the mind-body problem we discuss a number of issues about the nature of mental states, thinking, sensing, consciousness and other minds. During the last week of the course we examine the connection between questions in the philosophy of mind and problems in other related areas of research. We consider several issues concerning cognitive science, artificial intelligence, animal cognition, personal identity, ethics and the philosophy of art.

Course-work:

Assignments for the evening sessions (readings, writing assignments, group projects) are given at the end of the afternoon class period each day. There will be a number of individual and group projects, students will write essays, and they will participate in debates during the course.

Texts: *The Nature of Mind*, David M. Rosenthal (ed.). (R)
What is a Mind?, Suzanne Cunningham
Can Animals and Machines Be Persons?, Justin Leiber.
Some papers will also be photocopied for students. (C)

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

| | | WHAT (skill goals/knowledge goals/concepts/readings) | HOW (activities) |
|--------------|-----------|---|--|
| DAY 1 | morning | Introduction: The philosophy of mind The mental and the physical Pre-Post Assessment: pretest | Short introductory lecture, group work, class discussion Writing assignment |
| | afternoon | Philosophical arguments and critical reasoning Buechner, "The Critical Reasoning Tool Kit" (C) | Reading assignment, group work and student presentations, class discussion |
| | evening | Cunningham, pp. 1-13. Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , 1 (C), 2 (R), 3 (C), 6 (R) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 2 | morning | Descartes: Skeptical arguments and substance dualism | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | Descartes (cont.) | Group work and student presentations, class discussion |
| | evening | Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , 2, 4, 5 (C) | Reading assignment |

| | | WHAT (skill goals/knowledge goals/concepts/readings) | HOW (activities) |
|--------------|-----------|--|--|
| DAY 3 | morning | Hume: The origin of ideas and the necessary connection between cause and effect | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | Hume (cont.) | Group work, class discussion, short debate, short writing assignment |
| | evening | Cunningham, pp. 14-21., 54-69. Ryle, "Descartes' Myth" (R) Kalat, "Behaviorism" (<i>Introduction to Psychology</i> , Module 6.1) (C) (Optional reading) Thyer, "Preface to <i>The Philosophical Legacy of Behaviorism</i> " (C) (Optional reading) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 4 | morning | Behaviorism and Ryle's criticism of Descartes | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | First essay | Writing assignment |
| | evening | First essay (cont.) Cunningham, pp. 21-38., 69-95. Searle, "The Mind-Body Problem" (C) McGinn, "Can We Solve the Mind-Body Problem?" (C) | Writing assignment Reading assignment |
| DAY 5 | morning | Searle's solution to the mind-body problem McGinn's views on the mind-body problem | Lecture, group work and student presentations, class discussion |
| | afternoon | Preparation for the first debate First debate | Group work (preparation) Formal debate |

WEEK 2

| | | WHAT (skill goals/knowledge goals/concepts/readings) | HOW (activities) |
|---------------|-----------|--|---|
| Sunday | evening | Malcolm, "Knowledge of Other Minds" (R) Searle, "Free Will" (C) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 6 | morning | Other minds | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | Free will and the philosophy of mind | Lecture and class discussion |
| | evening | Cunningham, pp. 38-53. Putnam, "The Nature of Mental States" (R) Block, "Troubles with Functionalism" (excerpt) (R) (Optional reading) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 7 | morning | Functionalism | Lecture, group work and student presentations, class discussion |
| | afternoon | Criticism of functionalism | Lecture and class discussion |
| | evening | Dennett, "True Believers: The Intentional Strategy and Why It Works" (R) Cunningham, pp. 222-258. | Reading assignment |
| DAY 8 | morning | Dennett's "intentional stance" | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | The "intentional stance", "folk psychology" and functionalism: comparison and evaluation | Group work, student presentations, class discussion |
| | evening | Churchland, P., "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes" (R) Fodor, "Propositional Attitudes" (R) (Optional reading) | Reading assignment, short writing assignment |
| DAY 9 | morning | Eliminative materialism and functionalism | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | Second essay | Writing assignment |

| | | WHAT (skill goals/knowledge goals/concepts/readings) | HOW (activities) |
|---------------|-----------|---|---|
| | evening | Second essay (cont.) Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know" (R) Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" (R) | Writing assignment Reading assignment |
| DAY 10 | morning | Qualia and physicalism | Lecture, group work and student presentations, class discussion |
| | afternoon | Preparation for the second debate Second debate | Group work (preparation) Formal debate |

WEEK 3

| | | WHAT (skill goals/knowledge goals/concepts/readings) | HOW (activities) |
|---------------|-----------|--|---|
| Sunday | evening | Cunningham, pp. 189-221. Searle, "Can computers Think?" (C) Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (R) (Optional reading) Fodor, "Searle on What Only Brains Can Do" (R) (Optional reading) Searle, from "Author's Response" (R) (Optional reading) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 11 | morning | Minds, mental states and artificial intelligence | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | Minds, mental states and artificial intelligence (cont.) | Group work, student presentations and class discussion |
| | evening | Leiber, <i>Can Animals and Machines Be Persons?</i> Cunningham, pp. 131-158. (Optional reading) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 12 | morning | Artificial intelligence, subhuman minds and personhood | Lecture and class discussion |
| | afternoon | Artificial intelligence, subhuman minds and personhood (cont.) | Group work, student presentations and class discussion |
| | evening | Perry, <i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality</i> (C) Searle, "Cognitive Science" (C) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 13 | morning | Personal identity | Lecture, group work, class discussion |
| | afternoon | The science of the mind | Lecture, group work, student presentations and class discussion |
| | evening | Currie, "The Paradox of Caring: Fiction and the Philosophy of Mind" (C) Walton, "Spelunking, Simulation, and Slime: On Being Moved by Fiction" (C) (Optional reading) Cunningham, pp. 96-130, 222-258. (Optional reading) | Reading assignment |
| DAY 14 | morning | Fiction, philosophy of mind, and cognitive science Pre-Post Assessment: post-test | Lecture and class discussion Writing assignment |
| | afternoon | Third essay | Writing assignment |
| | evening | Third essay (cont.) Preparation for the third debate | Writing assignment Group work (preparation) |
| DAY 15 | morning | Third debate | Formal debate |
| | afternoon | Closing ceremonies | |