

Philosophy of Mind

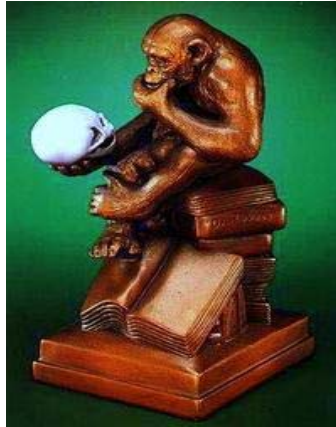
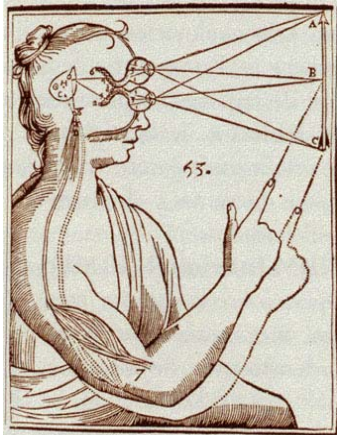
PHI 4330 / 6330

CRN 15921 / 15922

Sparks Hall 326

Spring 2007

Mon. & Wed. 12:00 - 1:15pm



Instructor:

Eddy Nahmias

34 Peachtree St. (corner of Peachtree and Marietta, 11th floor, room 1116)

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Office Hours: Mon. 9:30-11:00, Fri. 10:30-12:00, & by appointment

Course Description and Objectives:

What does it mean to have a mind? To be conscious, self-aware, think, hope, feel, know, dream? How do we know if another creature—a person, an animal, a robot—has a mind? These are some central questions in philosophy of mind. And they raise other questions—for instance, what is the relationship between the mind and the body? Between mental states and behaviors? Is the mind an immaterial substance or a material substance (perhaps the brain or the functions a brain performs)? How could matter give rise to conscious experiences or thoughts? What makes you the same person throughout your life—your mind, your brain, or what?

In this course we'll try to answer some of these questions. But just as importantly, we'll learn how to *ask* them and what good answers look like. We will read some of the most central philosophical works in philosophy of mind, primarily from the last few decades. And we'll examine how empirical sciences may help answer these questions.

By the end of the course you should:

- More fully comprehend these important philosophical questions and debates.
- Develop your ability to analyze and criticize philosophical arguments.
- Improve your philosophical writing.
- Have (I hope) a greater interest in understanding your own and other people's minds.

Responsibilities and Assessment:

- **Attendance and Participation:** You are expected to come to every class having read and thought about the assigned material (in general, you should plan on spending about two hours reading and preparing for each class period). Whenever possible, you should re-read the major readings after we have discussed them—you will dramatically increase your understanding of the ideas. Please participate in discussions by answering questions I ask and by asking questions about what I don't make clear. Attendance and productive participation (i.e., asking relevant questions and answering questions I ask) will improve your grade. Missing more than 3 classes without approved excuses will lower your grade.
- **Critical Responses:** At the end of each class, I will ask you (1) to reflect on a “question of the day” *before* reading the assigned material for the next class, and (2) after reading, to critically respond to the author's arguments. This Critical Response (CR) is *not* meant to be a summary of the arguments; rather, you should find a *specific* claim or implication of the author's views and explain *why* you think it is mistaken. I recommend that you keep a journal of written CRs for all the readings (this will be helpful for exams). You will turn in **6 CRs on or before** the dates listed on the schedule below (Masters students will turn in **9**—see below). Do not wait to turn in CRs until the due date; turn them in when you read an article that you want to write on. CRs will allow you to hone your philosophical thinking and to have an ongoing dialogue with me. You will receive up to the maximum 15 points (10 for graduate students) for every CR that briefly develops one problem about a specific claim or implication in the main reading (the first reading listed on the schedule) assigned for the day you turn in your CR. The CRs should demonstrate that you have read and engaged with the material. They should be between 1-2 pages typed double-spaced (about 300-500 words). You must hand in CRs by the beginning of class in person. The CRs, along with attendance and participation, will count for 100 points of your final grade.
- **Exams:** There will be two exams, a mid-term worth 100 points in class on Monday, February 26, and a “partially cumulative” final exam worth 100 points on Monday, May 7, 12:30-2:30 PM (*sorry*, I have no control over the exam schedule). Exams will include some objective questions and some essay questions.
- **Paper:** You will write one paper for this course, worth 100 points, 8-10 pages (graduate students' paper will be 10-15 pages), and due April 9. Paper topics will be announced.
- **Graduate Students Extra Sessions:** Graduate students enrolled in PHIL 6330 will meet for an additional six class sessions (to be scheduled), for which they will read additional articles. They are expected to turn in extra CRs on the assigned reading for 3 of these sessions. Missing more than one of these sessions without an approved excuse will result in the loss of a letter grade.

Grading Summary:

Critical Responses (plus participation, attendance)	100
Mid-term exam	100
Paper	100
Final Exam	100
Total	<hr/> 400 points*

* Final letter grades are based on your total points using a scale I will set at the end of the term (you *cannot* get a letter grade *lower* than the corresponding percentage of points you earn).

Course Policies:

- **Attendance and classroom courtesy:** Attendance is essential for success in this course, and it will be taken at each class. Given your careful reading and Critical Responses, you should have answers to questions I ask, as well as insightful questions and comments about the reading for each class. You will also have disagreements with what I say and with what your classmates say, and you should express these critiques when appropriate. But in disagreeing, do not be disrespectful. Practice critiquing ideas without criticizing people. Please show respect as well by: (1) Arriving to class on time and remaining seated until I complete the day's discussion; (2) Staying alert and focused on our discussion; (3) Refraining from conversations while others are speaking; (4) Turning off cell phones before class.
- **Late work and excused absences:** All assigned work will be due at the *beginning* of class. Unless the student provides acceptable written documentation (e.g., medical provider's note), absences will not be excused, CRs cannot be turned in, late papers will be penalized (5 points per day), and exams cannot be made up. If you know you will miss a class, let me know ahead of time and we can work something out (observation of religious holidays will be excused).
- **Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to *strictly* uphold the Academic Honesty Policy of Georgia State University (see below). The instructor reserves the right to assess penalties for violations, which may involve a failing grade for the assignment or for the entire course. Plagiarism includes submitting written work which you have not composed yourself or using another person's ideas without proper citation. For instance, if I run your paper through a search site on the internet and find any uncited sentences that match an outside source, I will consider it a plagiarized paper. Without *explicit* consent, no sources other than the assigned texts may be used in any way for any assignments.
- **Students requiring accommodation:** I am happy to accommodate students with disabilities or other needs who require academic accommodation. Please speak to me in the first two weeks of classes.
- **Teacher Support:** I am happy to discuss questions or problems during scheduled office hours or by appointment. Quick questions can be answered right after class.
- **Student Support:** You should work with each other to discuss and better understand the issues, get notes for missed classes, and study for exams. I highly recommend you exchange contact information with at least two classmates for these purposes:

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Required Texts

- *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. by David Chalmers [PM]
- *Matter and Consciousness, revised edition*, by Paul Churchland [MC]
- Handouts or On-line reading [H]

Schedule of Readings and Assignments (subject to revisions):

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><u>Jan. 8</u> Introductions What is philosophy of mind? Course information and syllabus</p>	<p><u>Jan. 10</u> Intuitions about Mind and Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Chalmers (PM 1-9) • MC 1-10
<p><u>Jan. 15</u> NO CLASS MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY</p>	<p><u>Jan. 17</u> Dualism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes (PM 10-24) • MC 10-21 • Smullyan (PM 31)
<p><u>Jan. 22</u> Animal Minds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huxley (PM 24-30) • Descartes on animals (H) <p>**CR 1 Due**</p>	<p><u>Jan. 24</u> Animal Minds and Other Minds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allen (H) • Russell (PM 667-669) • MC 67-70
<p><u>Jan. 29</u> Computer Minds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turing “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” (H) • MC 99-105+ 	<p><u>Jan. 31</u> Computer Minds and Intentionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searle (PM 669-675) • MC 63-66
<p><u>Feb. 5</u> Emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon (H) <p>**CR 2 Due**</p>	<p><u>Feb. 7</u> Emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA (H)
<p><u>Feb. 12</u> Behaviorism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putnam (PM 45-54) • MC 23-25, 54-55, 88-91 • Skinner (H) 	<p><u>Feb. 14</u> Identity Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart (PM 60-68) • MC 26-35, 96-98 <p>**CR 3 Due**</p>
<p><u>Feb. 19</u> Identity Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiegl (PM 68-72) • MC 123-146+ 	<p><u>Feb. 21</u> Reductionism and Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hofstader “Ant Fugue” (H)
<p><u>Feb. 26</u> **MIDTERM EXAM**</p>	<p><u>Feb. 28</u> Functionalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putnam (PM 73-79) • MC 36-42

Mar. 5 and Mar. 7: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><u>Mar. 12</u> Functionalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armstrong (PM 80-87) • MC 92-95 	<p><u>Mar. 14</u> The Problem of Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nagel (PM 219-226) • Chalmers (PM 197-204) <p>**CR 4 Due**</p>
<p><u>Mar. 19</u> The Problem of Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson (PM 273-280) • Lewis (PM 281+, 291-294) 	<p><u>Mar. 21</u> Eliminating Consciousness?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dennett (PM 226-246)
<p><u>Mar. 26</u> Eliminativism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churchland (PM 362-371) • MC 43-49, 178-180 	<p><u>Mar. 28</u> Mysterianism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McGinn (PM 394-405) <p>**CR 5 Due**</p>
<p><u>Apr. 2</u> Personal Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parfit (PM 655-666) 	<p><u>Apr. 4</u> Personal Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nagel “Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness” (H)
<p><u>Apr. 9</u> Personal Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacks (H) • 3 lbs <p>**PAPER DUE**</p>	<p><u>Apr. 11</u> Personal Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dennett “Where Am I?” (H)
<p><u>Apr. 16</u> Brains in a Vat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putnam “Brains in Vats” (H) 	<p><u>Apr. 18</u> Minds in a Matrix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chalmers “Metaphysics of the Matrix” (H)
<p><u>Apr. 23</u> Extended Minds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clark and Chalmers (PM 643-651) <p>**CR 6 Due**</p>	<p><u>Apr. 25</u> Conclusions and Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA (H)

**** FINAL EXAM Monday May 7, 12:30-2:30 PM ****

PHIL 6330, Philosophy of Mind, Graduate Student Sessions

Tuesdays 10:00-11:30am in Dept. of Philosophy Conference Room (11th floor of 34 Peachtree St.)
Dates and *possible* topics (readings to be assigned)—note that topics will sometimes not be closely integrated with what we are doing in the MW class sessions:

- 1) Jan. 23: The Modal Argument. Read Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (PM 329-333) and Hill, “Imaginability, Conceivability, Possibility, and the Mind-Body Problem” (PM 334-340)
- 2) Feb. 6: Pain. Read Aydede (handouts), attend his talk on Feb. 22
- 3) Feb. 20: Supervenience. Read Horgan “From Supervenience to Superdupervenience” (PM 150-161)
- 4) Mar. 20: Mental Causation. Read Kim “The Many Problems of Mental Causation” (170-178)
- 5) Apr. 3: Horgan and Kim continued.
- 6) Apr. 17: Consciousness. Read Chalmers “Consciousness and Its Place in Nature” (PM 247-272)

- Remember that attendance at these sessions is mandatory and after one missed class (allowed with explanation), each unexcused absence will lower your final grade one full letter grade (e.g., an A- would become a B-).
- You will write CRs for 3 of these extra sessions. Hence, you will write 9 total (they will each count 10 points, plus 10 points for participation and attendance to make 100 points for that component of your grade). Note that the first two extra sessions occur during weeks CRs are due, so you may want to plan around that.
- Your Final Paper will be 10-15 pages allowing you to explain an argument more fully and develop a more sustained objection to it (and hopefully produce a final product from which you could submit a paper to a conference or as a writing sample for graduate school). You will also be expected to research, read, and draw on at least one paper other than those we read for class.