

PHL 200L: Philosophy of Mind

Spring 2018
Carthage College

Section 01: T,Th 12:30-2:10 (Lentz Hall 203)

Instructor: Robert K. Whitaker

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Course Description

This course will introduce the student to philosophy of mind, including topics of historical importance such as the existence of a soul and the relationship between the mind and the body, as well as topics of more recent interest such as mind/brain identity, consciousness, intentionality, physicalism vs. non-physicalism, functionalism, artificial intelligence, animal minds, and group minds/extended mind. Authors covered will include historically important philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, and Ryle, but most readings will come from more recent authors including Putnam, Lewis, Searle, Jackson, Nagel, Chalmers, Block, Dennett, the Churchlands, and others. An effort will be made to include works by female philosophers as well. The course will require close reading, careful, logical reasoning, and clear writing.

Required Texts

§ Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind: A Beginner's Guide*, First Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0199252541

All other course materials will be made available as PDF documents via eLearning.

Course Objectives and Assessment

By the end of the course,

- (1) The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the ontology of the human person, including the debate between dualism and materialism.
- (2) The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the relation of the mind to the brain, including reductive and nonreductive positions held by classical and contemporary thinkers.
- (3) The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the “hard problem” of consciousness.
- (4) The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the possibility of artificial intelligence and its implications for our understanding of human intelligence.

- (5) The student will be able to state and provide reasons for basic positions concerning the applicability of mental terms to animals, groups, and inanimate objects.
- (6) By the end of the course, the student will be able to state, explain, compare, and contrast the views of various representative thinkers in philosophy of mind, including Plato, Descartes, Gilbert Ryle, David Lewis, John Searle, Frank Jackson, Thomas Nagel, and others.
- (7) By the end of the course, the student will have received practice and instruction on crafting well-written arguments, as well as recognizing and assessing the arguments of others.

Attainment of all objectives will be assessed primarily through reading responses, the critical paper, and in-class presentation, and the midterm and final exams. All objectives will also be assessed via class participation.

Course Requirements

Course Composition:

Reading Responses	15%
Discussion Questions	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Critical Paper	20%
Presentation	10%
Participation	5%

The grading scale is as follows:

A	94 – 100	C	73 – 76.9
A-	90 – 93.9	C-	70 – 72.9
B+	87 – 89.9	D+	67 – 69.9
B	83 – 86.9	D	63 – 66.9
B-	80 – 82.9	D-	60 – 62.9
C+	77 – 79.9	F	... – 59.9

Reading Responses: There will be 9 short reading responses assigned throughout the course of the semester (see readings in the schedule marked with an “R”), of which you are responsible for **5**. You may write up to **6** of these. If you write 6, I will drop your lowest grade. If you wish, you may write only 5, but you will be stuck with the grades you get. I highly recommend writing all 6. These are to be **no more than a half page double spaced** (this should be roughly 2-3 paragraphs—do not exceed this!), and are to be purely exegetical. You will **summarize the main arguments of the author; do not provide your own opinion**. Please cite the page number of the relevant reading for any quotations and major points; no outside sources will be necessary. Hand in a hard copy at the beginning of class on the day the reading is assigned. Reading responses will not be accepted after the class for which they are assigned, and you must be present for the whole class on the day you turn in a response (unless you have a valid excuse). Each

response is worth **3 percentage points** of your final grade.

Discussion Questions: Ten times during the semester, I will assign discussion questions, either for a particular reading (see readings in the schedule marked with a “D”), or for a video (see places in the schedule marked with a “V”). You will type a question or two about these readings/videos for the purposes of fostering discussion in class, and bring your typed question with you to class on the day the reading/video is assigned. **Handwritten questions will not be accepted.** We will devote a significant portion of class time on these days to discussion of your questions, so please put some thought into them. Turn them in at the end of class, and you will receive one final percentage point. Together, discussion questions constitute **10%** of the final grade.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will take place on **Tuesday, March 27**. The exam will include multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

Final Exam: There will be a non-comprehensive final exam on **Wednesday, May 23, from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**. The exam will include multiple choice, short answer, short essay, and a longer essay.

Critical Paper: The critical paper consists of an articulation and assessment of at least one of the philosophical views considered during the course of the semester. This does not have to be a direct response to one of the readings, though it should be conversant with at least one of the authors we’ve covered. As with the reading responses, you will need to identify and explain the argument or position you are responding to, but the bulk of the paper should be your own argumentation. This may take the form of critiquing the argument of an author, extending the view of an author beyond what he/she argues, critiquing a philosophical position taken by one or more authors, critiquing an entire style of approach to a type of philosophical problem, and/or making a positive case for your own view over and against the view of one or more of our authors. I will provide a list of potential topics for this paper, and I encourage you to choose something that interests you. You may also suggest something that is not on the list (pending my approval). You will submit the paper (PDF or Word files only please) using the **Turnitin** feature on eLearning by **Thursday, April 26, by 11:59 pm**. There is no need to turn in a hard copy.

Specifications: 3-5 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins, correct grammar, and proper citation.* See “Critical Paper Rubric” on eLearning for further detail.

* I do not care what citation style you use, so long as whatever style you choose is consistent throughout, and so long as all sources, quotations, and borrowed ideas are properly cited (see below regarding academic honesty). No cover page or bibliography page is necessary, nor will they count towards the page total if included. Footnotes are preferred over endnotes.

Presentation: Once during the semester, you will be responsible for presenting on a reading of your choice from the schedule, and leading the class discussion on it for that day. Depending on how discussion goes, this shouldn’t take more than 45 minutes to an hour. Your presentation needn’t be that long; whatever is

required to deal with the reading is sufficient. You may use PowerPoint or print handouts if you like, but this is not required; the style of your presentation is up to you. You will be graded on your mastery of the material, not on your public speaking ability. The presentation is worth **10%** of the final grade.

Participation: Your involvement is essential to the success of this class and to your success in this class. This means that a) active listening, b) open questioning, and c) creative discussion are expected of you. Note that all of these things require attendance; thus, if you miss too many classes, your grade will suffer. See below under “Attendance” for details. Participation constitutes **5%** of your final grade.

Attendance: Attendance is required. Your success in the course will largely depend on your grasp of the material discussed in class, and it is not possible to get the full benefit of that discussion if you are not present. In general, I will not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences (for example, in the case of illness), but if you need to be absent for some extraordinary circumstance, please notify me well in advance. **I will allow a grace period of four absences before I start deducting points.** 5 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 2 participation points; 6 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 4 participation points; 7 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 5 participation points plus 1 additional final percentage point. More than 7 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 5 participation points, plus an additional 4 final percentage points per absence over 7. Additionally, punctuality is expected; if you come to class late, it is your responsibility to make sure I know you are there, preferably by seeing me at the end of class so I can mark you on the attendance sheet.

Late Work Policy: Four percentage points will be deducted from the student’s assignment grade for each late day (including weekends). For example, a student who has earned 85% on a paper but who has turned it in a day late may receive a maximum of 81%.

Extra Credit: I have included several **recommended readings** in the schedule. These are clearly marked as “Recommended” and appear in a slightly smaller font size. You are not required to read these for class, but if you choose, you may read one and write a short (2-3 paragraph) response summarizing the main argument of the article. These should be similar in style to a normal reading response, though each will be worth a maximum of **2 points**, rather than 3. You may write a maximum of **two** extra credit reading responses during the semester. These may be turned in any time up to and including **May 17**.

Grading: Grading rubrics for the critical paper and the reading responses will be posted on eLearning.

Reading: The reading for this course is difficult. Despite this, it is crucial that you keep up with the reading schedule (especially since the lectures and all assignments are based on the readings). This means setting aside adequate time to engage the material *before class*. I have tried to keep the assigned readings to a length that allows you to wrestle with the ideas without getting overwhelmed. If something from the reading is unclear, you may always bring it up in class, or in a meeting with me.

Writing: Good writing is a basic skill in any professional field, and I expect you to put in the necessary effort to make sure that your critical paper is lucid and well organized. **A “Tips for Writing Philosophy**

Papers” document will be posted on eLearning. Please use it. If you need additional help with this, the Brainard Writing Center, located on the upper level of the Hedberg Library, offers tutoring services free of charge for the entire Carthage community. For more information, see:

<https://www.carthage.edu/writing-center/>.

Academic Dishonesty: The Carthage College Community Code guidelines on academic dishonesty will be enforced. *Ignorance is not an excuse.* Please refer to these policies for more details or contact me with particular questions in order to avoid any problems. The College’s policies can be found online here:

<https://www.carthage.edu/community-code/academic-concerns/academic-honesty-guidelines/>

More information on plagiarism can be found here: <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism/>

*A useful, but not foolproof, rule of thumb: When in doubt, err on the side of over-citing.

In this course you will be required to submit written assignments in electronic form to a plagiarism detection website called Turnitin (this is done automatically via eLearning). Your assignments become a permanent part of the Turnitin database, but will not be used for any other purpose than checking for plagiarism.

Disabilities: Students with documented physical or learning disabilities wishing to have special accommodations should contact me as soon as possible. In addition, Carthage’s Learning Accessibility Services is available to assist you. They can be reached by phone at (262) 551-5802 or online here:

<https://www.carthage.edu/library/learning-accessibility-services/>.

Phones and Computers: Laptops or laptop-like tablets are allowed for note-taking and in-class work. If I catch you using it for something other than in-class work, your participation grade will be lowered. Cell phones are to be off and put away for the duration of the class. Texting, or any other form of electronic communication, is strictly prohibited.

Food and Drink: Please try to avoid bringing food into the classroom. However, in the exceptional case, choose being engaged in class while eating a snack over not eating and being unable to focus. Beverages in closed containers are welcome.

Conduct: Disagreement is a basic feature of philosophy and all other academic discourse. In this class, we will be discussing important and controversial issues. We may be engaging in discussions which challenge some of our most deeply held beliefs, and disagreement is sure to arise. For this reason, it is vital for each student, and myself, to always conduct ourselves with the utmost generosity and sensitivity toward one another and our authors. I reserve the right to steer discussions in whatever way I deem most appropriate to the day’s lesson, and I will not tolerate rude, disrespectful, or offensive comments. If you are unsure whether something you plan to say or do could possibly be offensive, always talk to me before sharing it with the class.

Tentative Schedule

“R” indicates a Reading Response assignment

“D” & “V” indicate a Discussion Question assignment

Intro to Course		Page #
Week 1 (2/8)	Syllabus Review, Introductions, Overview of Course What Is an Argument? (No Reading)	
Intro / Dualism		
Week 2 (2/13 - 2/15)	Ravenscroft: Introduction	1-5
	Heil: Introduction	1-6
Week 2 (2/13 - 2/15)	Ravenscroft: Dualism	9-24
	Alvin Plantinga: “Against Materialism” (ignore crossed-out portions) <i>Recommended:</i> René Descartes: from <i>Passions of the Soul</i>	3-22 109-114
Dualism (Continued)		
Week 3 (2/20 - 2/22)	Plantinga (continued)	
	Peter van Inwagen: “Dualism and Physicalism” (ignore crossed-out portions) V	233-240
	Jaegwon Kim: “Lonely Souls: Causality and Substance Dualism” R	1-13
	Alvin Plantinga: Response to Kim (from “Materialism and Christian Belief”) <i>Recommended:</i> Gottfried Leibniz: “The Nature and Communication of Substances” <i>Recommended:</i> Nicolas Malebranche: from “The Union of Soul and Body” <i>Recommended:</i> William Hasker: “Emergent Dualism”	130-133 119-121 115-118 525-539
Behaviorism		
Week 4 (2/27 - 3/1)	Ravenscroft: Behaviorism	25-36
	Gilbert Ryle: “The Myth of the Ghost in the Machine” D <i>Recommended:</i> Margaret Boden: “Intentionality and Physical Systems”	176-181 200-213
Week 4 (2/27 - 3/1)	Heil: Behaviorism	52-58
	Hilary Putnam: “Brains and Behaviour” R	96-104
Spring Break		
Week 5 (3/6 - 3/8)	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
Identity Theory		
Week 6 (3/13 - 3/15)	Heil: The Identity Theory D	69-85
	NO CLASS: INSTRUCTOR AWAY	
Identity Theory (Continued)		
Week 7	Heil: Identity Theory (Continued)	

(3/20 - 3/22)	U.T. Place: "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?" V <i>Recommended:</i> J.J.C. Smart: "Sensations and Brain Processes" <i>Recommended:</i> Saul Kripke: from <i>Naming and Necessity</i>	55-60 60-67 329-333
Midterm Exam / Functionalism		
Week 8 (3/27 - 3/29)	*Midterm Exam*	
	Ravenscroft: Functionalism Hilary Putnam: "Psychological Predicates" R <i>Recommended:</i> David Lewis: "An Argument for the Identity Theory" <i>Recommended:</i> Patricia Churchland: "Reductionism and Antireductionism in Functionalist Theories of Mind" <i>Recommended:</i> Ned Block: "Troubles with Functionalism"	50-62 158-167 150-157 59-66 94-97
Representation		
Week 9 (4/3 - 4/5)	Heil: The Representational Theory of Mind <i>Recommended:</i> Franz Brentano: "The Distinction Between Mental and Physical Phenomena"	107-127 479-483
	Jerry Fodor: "Propositional Attitudes" V <i>Recommended:</i> Wilfrid Sellars: "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" <i>Recommended:</i> Ruth Garrett Millikan: "Biosemantics" <i>Recommended:</i> Daniel Dennett: "True Believers: The Intentional Strategy and Why It Works"	542-554 534-541 500-508 556-567
Artificial Intelligence		
Week 10 (4/10 - 4/12)	John Searle: "Minds, Brains, and Programs" R <i>Recommended:</i> John Searle vs. Jerry Fodor <i>Recommended:</i> Alan Turing: "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"	235-252 520-526 212-233
	Margaret Boden: "Escaping from the Chinese Room" D Ned Block: "The Mind as Software in the Brain"	253-265 267-270
Mental Causation / Eliminativism		
Week 11 (4/17 - 4/19)	Ravenscroft: Mental Causation <i>Recommended:</i> Jaegwon Kim: "The Many Problems of Mental Causation"	144-153 170-178
	Ravenscroft: Eliminativism Paul Churchland: "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes" R	64-72 382-400
Eliminativism (Continued) / Consciousness		
Week 12 (4/24 - 4/26)	Lynne Rudder Baker: "Cognitive Suicide" R Heil: Eliminativism	401-413 155-158
	Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" R Frank Jackson: "Epiphenomenal Qualia" D Ravenscroft: 12.2 – "Responding to the Knowledge Argument" *Critical Paper Due*	421-427 427-433 174-180
Consciousness (Continued)		

Week 13 (5/1 - 5/3)	Janet Levin: "Could Love Be Like a Heatwave?" R	539-552
	David Chalmers: "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness" <i>Recommended:</i> Katalin Balog: "Conceivability, Possibility, and the Mind-Body Problem"	617-639 497-526
	Chalmers (Continued) Patricia Churchland: "The Hornswoggle Problem" R	402-408
Consciousness (Continued)		
Week 14 (5/8 - 5/10)	John Searle: "The Irreducibility of Consciousness" Valerie Gray Hardcastle: "The Why of Consciousness: A Non-Issue for Materialists" D	700-708 798-806
	<i>Recommended:</i> Joseph Levine: "Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap"	772-780
	Alva Noë: "Experience without the Head" V	1-25
Special Topics		
Week 15 (5/15 - 5/17)	Andy Clark and David Chalmers: "The Extended Mind" V	7-18
	<i>Recommended:</i> Brie Gertler: "Overextending the Mind?" <i>Recommended:</i> Barbara Montero: "Post-Physicalism"	1-13 61-79
	Pete Mandik: "Idealism, Solipsism, and Panpsychism" <i>Recommended:</i> Peter Carruthers: "Brute Experience" [On Animal Minds]	45-59 510-520
Final Exam		
Week 16 (5/23)	Wednesday, 5/23, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	