

Winter 2020 Syllabus

I. General Description: Philosophy of Mind is the systematic, abstract study of mental (or psychological) phenomena including our sensations, perceptual experiences, thoughts, beliefs, desires, decisions, choices and emotions. We will begin with the *metaphysics* of mind. What is the mind? Of what are our thoughts and feelings made up? What relation do psychological phenomena bear to one another and to physical phenomena? (For example, what is the relation between our pains and the electrochemical events going on in our brains?) After addressing these issues, we move on to discuss various *epistemological* questions about our thoughts, sensations and experiences. How do we know what is going on in our minds? Are the mental facts we discover through introspection irreducible to the physical facts we uncover through sensory perception, experimentation, and theory construction? Other topics include the nature of our thoughts, beliefs and desires and what conditions need to obtain if a person is to continue to persist through time. We will concentrate throughout on arguments designed to show: (1) that our minds are not physical, and (2) that there are facts about our minds that cannot be explained using the experimental methods typically used by scientists.

II. Required Reading: *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, David Chalmers (ed.), Oxford: UP (2002). The text is available in the bookstore.

III. Schedule of Readings: We will take these as they come. If we move at a good clip, we'll get through all of it. If we want to linger on some of the early issues, we won't address the last topic or two.

**Topic 1: Dualism**

Descartes, "Mediations on First Philosophy II," pp. 10-14.  
(Recommended: Meditation VI, pp. 13-21.)

**Topic 2: The Identity Theory**

J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes," pp. 60-67.  
Paper 1 Assigned: 1/15/20

**Topic 3: Behaviorism**

Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes' Myth," pp. 32-38.  
Hilary Putnam, "Brains and Behavior," pp. 45-54.

**Topic 4: Functionalism**

David Armstrong, "The Causal Theory of Mind," pp. 80-87.  
David Lewis, "Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications," pp. 88-93.  
Ned Block, "Troubles with Functionalism," pp. 94-98.  
Paper 1 Due: 1/29/20

**Topic 5: The Knowledge Argument**

Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," pp. 273-280.

Paper 2 Assigned: 2/12/20

David Lewis, "What Experience Teaches," pp. 281-294.

**Topic 6: Anomalous Monism**

Donald Davidson, "Mental Events," pp. 116-126.

**Topic 7: Thought**

Jerry A. Fodor, "Propositional Attitudes," pp. 542-555.

Daniel Dennett, "True Believers...", pp. 556-567.

Paper 2 Due: 2/26/20

**Topic 8: Aboutness**

Fred Dretske, "A Recipe for Thought," pp. 491-499.

Ruth Garrett Millikan, "Biosemantics," pp. 500-8.

**Topic 9: Personal Identity**

Derek Parfit, 'Reductionism and Personal Identity,' pp. 655-661.

**Topic 10: Externalism**

Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'," pp. 581-596.

IV. Course requirements: Two (3-5 pp) papers (35% each) and a final exam (30%). Points may be added or subtracted for class participation (or the absence of such). Papers will be assigned as the class progresses. The final exam is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 17, 7:30-10:30PM**. (You must arrange an alternative date now, if you cannot make the final.)

V. Warning: If you cheat or plagiarize you will fail the class and you may be expelled from school. (a) Cheating on an exam and (b) taking material from the web and putting it in your paper without the appropriate acknowledgments are both forms of deceit punishable by failure and expulsion. Please don't do it!

Note: All adding and dropping will be conducted through your sections.