Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind
21:730:472:01
Spring 2011

Prerequisite: 730:103 and an additional philosophy course.

Room: Conklin 447
Meeting time: Mondays 2:30-3:50 and Wednesdays 1:00-2:20,
Instructor: Professor Katalin Balog
Office: Philosophy Department, Conklin Hall, Room 410
Office phone: 973-353-1397
Office hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 and by appointment.
email: kbalog@andromeda.rutgers.edu

THE BRAIN is wider than the sky,
For, put them side by side,
The one the other will include
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea,
For, hold them, blue to blue,
The one the other will absorb,
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God,
For, lift them, pound for pound,
And they will differ, if they do,
As syllable from sound.

Emily Dickinson

Blackboard: once you registered for the class you can go to Blackboard and select the
course “Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind, 730:472.” The page will contain course-
related information, viz., syllabus, powerpoint slides, study questions, announcements,
and more. You need to have access to Blackboard to participate in the course. I will be
updating the syllabus, slides (sometimes even editing old slides), and study questions -
you’ll want to download them periodically to have the latest version.

You are responsible for making sure your Rutgers email address Blackboard has on file
for you works and that my messages via Blackboard reach you. Failure to do so will
mean missing vital information affecting your progress in the class.

Course description:
In this course, we are going to think about issues that lie at the intersection of metaphysics and the philosophy of mind. Four questions have dominated the philosophy of mind in the analytic tradition since Descartes. They are: What is consciousness? What are thoughts and thinking? What are persons? What is agency? Most contemporary analytic philosophers attempt to answer these questions within a broadly materialistic metaphysical framework since they think that there is overwhelming reason to believe that human beings are biological organisms entirely composed of ordinary matter. We will explore the prospects of the materialistic approach with special attention to certain recent challenges from the anti-materialist camp.

**Required texts:**


This is available in the campus bookstore as of now. Additional articles are posted on Blackboard.

*Some good books on general philosophy of mind I recommend to look at:*


Tim Crane: *Elements of Mind*, Oxford.

*Some helpful philosophy links to find out more about terms and topics discussed in class:*

- *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (you need to be logged into the Rutgers Library system)
- *Jim Pryor’s philosophical terms and methods*

**What you can expect from the course:** One of the main goals of this class is to give you a sense of the philosophical problems involving the metaphysics of mind: what is it to be a mental state, how do mental states fit into the rest of nature, etc. However, because one of the most important features distinguishing philosophy from other academic disciplines is that it is a *skill* and not just a body of knowledge, we have another, more general goal in this class: to further develop your ability to think critically and deeply about philosophical issues, and to internalize this skill so that you can apply it to any subject matter whatsoever. One of the reasons that philosophy majors do considerably better on the LSAT’s than all other majors except physics is that they are taught to think constructively and critically irrespective of the subject matter. Accordingly, the assessments (quizzes) in the course will all involve essay questions requiring answers of varying length. In addition to these, you will be assigned to write a paper. This will give
you an opportunity to exhibit most fully your skills to think critically and systematically about philosophy.

**Tentative schedule of readings** (Please notice that this schedule is tentative and so subject to change as the semester unfolds. *Coming to class and checking Blackboard on a regular basis will keep you informed of the changes*):

**Week 1** Jan. 19 **Introduction** (Look over syllabus; get acquainted)

**Week 2**: Jan. 24-26 CLASSES CANCELED – I will be away at a conference. Please read ahead during this time so we can hit the ground running the following week.

**Week 3: The mind-body problem**

Jan. 31 Dualism and physicalism

* PM pp 10-21 (Descartes)
* Physicalism: Daniel Stoljar, [Physicalism](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physicalism/) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (you can skip sections 9-14)


**Week 4: Physicalism solutions**

Feb. 7 Identity theory PM pp 60-68 (Smart)

Feb. 9 Empirical functionalism

* [Functionalism](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/functionalism/) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (section 1, 2, 3.1 and 3.2)
* PM pp 73-80 (Putnam),
* PM pp 88-94 (Lewis).

**Week 5: Functionalism**

Feb. 14 Analytic functionalism

* PM pp 80-88 (Armstrong),
* [Functionalism](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/functionalism/) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (section 3.3 and 3.4)

Feb. 16 Challenges to Functionalism

* PM pp 94-99 (Block),
* PM pp 99-106 (Nida-Rümelin).
**Week 6: Recap and quiz**

Feb 21 TBA?

Feb. 23 Recap and quiz

**First in-class quiz**

**Week 7: The nature of intentionality**

Feb. 28

* PM pp 479-84 (Brentano),
* PM pp 491-500 (Dretske)

March. 2

* PM 520-534 (Horgan&Tienson)

**Week 8: Intentionality continued**

March 7 Propositional attitudes

* PM 542-556 (Fodor)

March 9 Internalism and Externalism

* PM 581-597 (Putnam)

**SPRING VACATION**

**Week 9: The matrix**

March 21 Chalmers, *The matrix as metaphysics*

March 23 Recap and quiz

**Second in-class quiz**

**Week 10: Phenomenal qualities and consciousness I**

March 28

* PM 206-219 (Block)

March 30
Week 11: Phenomenal qualities and consciousness continued

April 4

* PM pp 329-334 (Kripke),
* PM pp 295-311 (Loar)

April 6

* PM 226-247 (Dennett)

Week 12: Free Will

April 11 Incompatibilism

* van Inwagen *The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom*;

April 13 Compatibilism

* Hillary Bok, “Freedom and Practical Reason” from Hilary Bok *Freedom and Responsibility* (on Resources page)

Week 13:

April 18 Recap and quiz

**Third in-class quiz**

April 20

* Strawson “The impossibility of moral responsibility” (on Resources page)

April 22th: draft of final paper due

Week 14:

April 25 * Wegner, “The mind's best trick: how we experience conscious will”
Week 15: Conclusion

May 2

Weekly powerpoint lecture notes will be placed on BB shortly after each class designed to help you understand and think about the course material you are reading.

Preparing for class: Expect to do 20-30 pages of reading for each class. You are probably already aware that reading philosophy, even when the reading assignment is short, is difficult. Often the author assigned will be developing a sophisticated and subtle line of reasoning that you will miss unless you give it your full attention. Therefore it is a good idea to read each article or chapter at least twice, and to write down your questions for discussion while reading the assignments, during lecture, or an office hour. You should spend a minimum of 3 hours preparing for the course every week. You should be prepared in each class to raise questions about the readings assigned for the day. I will call on people occasionally to help facilitate a discussion about the readings but also to make sure you have done the readings ahead of time.

Some Ground Rules for the Course:

1) Please come to each lecture and discussion section with the reading assigned for that date already completed. Be prepared to ask questions about the material. I will take attendance in each class. Unexcused absence from more than 3 classes will result in having the grade lowered by a half grade.

2) Do not read newspapers, magazines, books, etc., either in hard copy or in wireless form, in class.

3) No food or drink (unless you do it so unobtrusively that I don’t notice).

4) Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class.

5) Your oral participation is strongly encouraged. You will likely disagree with a variety of views and concerns expressed in the class; please be respectful. Class discussion will be more fun and also more instructional if everybody feels safe to present their points of view.

Required course-work:

1) 2 in-class quizzes.

2) 7-10 page paper
(You will rewrite the paper 3 times during the peer reviewing process – see schedule for peer reviewing under “Current Schedule” - and prepare the final draft by May 7th.)
3) class participation.

**In-Class Quizzes:** *No Make-up Quizzes are given.* The only accepted reasons for missing a quiz are: (1) illness documented by a doctor’s note; (2) a university sponsored activity taking place at the time the assignment is due; (3) family crisis with proper documentation provided.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>40% (20% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Your quizzes and paper will be assigned points out of 100, which will translate into letter grades as follows:

- 94-100 = A
- 90-93 = A-
- 86-89 = B+
- 80-85 = B
- 76-79 = C+
- 70-75 = C
- 56-69 = D
- 55 or below = F

**Here are two highly recommended links that**

a) help you with your class preparation:  
Jim Pryor’s guide to reading philosophy  

b) guide you in the process of writing a philosophy paper:  
Jim Pryor’s guide to writing philosophy

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**

The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic work. Intentionally committing plagiarism is a serious offense with severe consequences. Instructors are required to report students who intentionally violate this policy to the department chairperson and to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The most common forms of plagiarism are:

- Quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source (this includes copying or paraphrasing material from a web site without providing a proper citation for the site)
• Presenting the work of another as one’s own
• Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment
• Submitting purchased materials such as term papers

The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy establishes levels of violations and recommends sanctions. Depending upon the severity of the case and the level of the violation, the sanctions for these violations include: a failing grade for the assignment, failure in the course, mandatory participation in a series of noncredit academic integrity workshops, academic probation, and/or suspension.

(If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism or are concerned that you are misappropriating someone's words or ideas, speak immediately with your instructor. For more information, you can also consult the University Code of Student Conduct or the Student Judicial Affairs website [http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu](http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu).)

**Special situations:**

If you have a special situation concerning learning needs that either requires accommodation, or that you would simply like me to know about, please contact me as soon as possible. I will make every effort to aid you.

Rutgers abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and the accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Robeson Student Center. I look forward to talking with you soon to learn how I may be helpful in supporting your academic success in this course.

For more information on disability services at Rutgers, go to [http://disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu](http://disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu).