

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND
SYLLABUS WINTER TERM 2018

1. Name of Course: Philosophy of Mind

2. Lecturer: Tim Crane

3. No. of Credits: 2 credits (4 ECTS)

4. Semester: Winter 2019

5. Any other required elements of the department

Compulsory course for 2 year MA; elective for others

6. Course Level

MA, PhD

7. Brief introduction to the course outlining its primary theme, objective and briefly the place of the course in the overall programme of study.

This course will introduce the main problems of the philosophy of mind: the nature of the mental, the classification of mental phenomena, the mind-body problem, the problems of consciousness and the problems of intentionality (mental representation).

8. The goals of the course

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the main questions of the philosophy of mind: the nature of the mental, the classification of mental phenomena, the mind-body problem, the problems of consciousness and the problems of intentionality (mental representation)

9. The learning outcomes of the course

At the end of this course, students who have attended class and done the readings will understand the main questions of the philosophy of mind; they will be able to articulate the arguments for or against the central positions on the mind-body relationship; they will understand the significance of the questions of intentionality and consciousness.

10. WEEK BY WEEK BREAKDOWN OF TOPICS

The course divides into two halves: the first six weeks are on the phenomena of mind, or phenomenology. The second six weeks are on the metaphysics of mind, or the mind-body problem.

Note about reading: each week has two readings. The first is the compulsory reading: usually, a classic from the history of 20th century philosophy of mind or metaphysics of mind. The second is optional and is a more up to date piece on the same subject.

Week 1: The subjective and the objective

What distinguishes those aspects of the world we call 'mental' or 'psychological'? What is the 'mark' of the mental? We start with the idea of subjectivity. Something has a mind when it has a subjective perspective on things.

Reading 1: Thomas Nagel *The View from Nowhere* (1986) chapter 2

Reading 2: Tim Crane, *Elements of Mind* (2001) chapter 1

Week 2: Intentionality

'Intentionality' is a philosophical term for the mind's representation of reality. To what extent can the notion of intentionality, with its complex historical connotations, help explain the idea of a subjective perspective?

Reading 1: John Searle, *Intentionality* (1983) chapter 1

Reading 2: Mark Sainsbury, *Thinking about Things* (2018), chapter 1

Week 3: Consciousness

Our subjective perspective on the world is in part a conscious perspective. But what is consciousness, and how should it be understood? Is there a distinction between 'phenomenal' and 'access' consciousness?

Reading 1: Ned Block, 'On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness'

Reading 2: Philip Goff, *Consciousness and Fundamental Reality* (2017) Ch.

Week 4: Intentionality and consciousness

What is the relationship between intentionality — conceived of as having a perspective on the world — and consciousness? 'Intentionalists' think that consciousness should be understood in terms of intentionality; the doctrine of 'phenomenal intentionality' has the opposite view.

Reading 1: Alex Byrne, 'Intentionalism Defended' *Philosophical Review* 2001

Reading 2: Angela Mendelovici *The Phenomenal Basis of Intentionality* (2018)

Week 5: Belief and reason

What is belief? How is belief related to action, and to judgement? Is belief conscious?

Reading 1: Braithwaite, R.B., 1932–1933, "The nature of believing", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 33: 129–146

Reading 2: Zimmerman, Aaron, 2007, "The nature of belief", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 14(11): 61–82.

Week 6: The Will

Is there a mental faculty of the will, in addition to reason (belief) and conation (desire)? If so, then decisions are the acts of the will, and intentions are states of the will. If not, then all motivational structures reduce to beliefs and desires.

Reading 1: Richard Holton, 'Intention and Weakness of Will' *Journal of Philosophy* 1999

Reading 2: Kieran Setiya 'Intention' *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2018)

Week 7: The mind and the brain

How are the mind and the brain related? Are they the same thing or distinct things? How does the knowledge we have from neuroscience influence this answer?

Reading 1: Paul Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*, 3rd Edition (2012) Ch.7 'Neuroscience'

Reading 2: Christof Koch, 'What is Consciousness?' *Scientific American* (2018)

Week 8: Dualism

Dualism is the view that the mind and the brain (or the mind and matter) are different things, even if they are connected. What are the reasons for believing this view?

Reading 1: WD Hart 'An Argument for Dualism' (Chapter 1 of *The Engines of the Soul*, 1988) reprinted in in Gertler and Shapiro (eds.) *Arguing about the Mind*

Reading 2: Brie Gertler, 'In Defense of Mind Body Dualism' in J. Feinberg & R. Schafer-Landau, eds., *Reason and Responsibility*, 16th ed. (2011).

Week 9: Physicalism and materialism

Physicalism (materialism) is the view that everything is physical; so if the mind exists, the mind is physical. What does physical mean in this context?

Reading 1: JJC Smart, 'The Content of Physicalism' *Philosophical Quarterly* (1978)

Reading 2: Barbara Montero and David Papineau, 'Naturalism and Physicalism' *Blackwell Companion to Naturalism* (2016)

Week 10: Functionalism

Functionalism characterises mental states in terms of their 'functional roles' — their characteristic patterns of inputs and outputs. How does this view relate to physicalism and what are the reasons for believing it?

Reading 1: Hilary Putnam, 'The Nature of Mental States' (1967) in D. Chalmers, ed., *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 73-79

Reading 2: Frank Jackson and David Braddon-Mitchell, *Philosophy of Mind and Cognition* (second edition 2006), chapter 3

Week 11: Explaining consciousness naturalistically

Even if some version of materialism or functionalism is true, how can it explain consciousness? Is there an 'explanatory gap' between the functional/physical and the conscious?

Reading 1: Thomas Nagel, 'What is it like to be a bat?' *Philosophical Review* (1974)

Reading 2: Katalin Farkas, 'How to Close the Explanatory Gap' (draft)

Week 12: Explaining intentionality naturalistically

There is a related question about intentionality: how does intentionality fit into the natural world, the world described by natural science?

Reading 1: Jerry Fodor, *Psychosemantics* (1987) chapter 4

Reading 2: Tim Crane, 'How to Explain Intentionality' (draft)

11. Assessment

Assessment for 2 year MA students will be by written examination in the Spring term; assessment for other students taking this course for credit will be by a 2000 to 2500 word essay on a topic agreed with the instructor.

12. Other details

Assessment deadlines: TBC

Office hours: TBC

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