

# Philosophy of Mind 200-300

Instructor: Liz Jackson

## Course Description:

Human persons have minds. Rocks do not. But what is it to have a mind? Is the mind physical? In this class, we will think about the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body. We will examine *the problem of consciousness*—how consciousness is possible—and *the problem of intentionality*—how we can have mental states that are \*about\* things. We will also talk about the nature of mental states. Finally, we will examine questions about what can have minds: Can robots? Animals? Groups?

This class will have four parts. Here are some examples of the questions we will cover in each part.

- 1) **The Mind-Body Problem:** What is the mind? How does it relate to the body?
- 2) **Consciousness and Intentionality:** What is the problem of consciousness? What is the problem of intentionality? Is there any interesting relationship between the two problems? What do various answers to each say about the mind-body problem?
- 3) **The Nature of the Mind:** What are mental states? What kind of mental states do we have?
- 4) **The Extent of the Mind:** Can robots have minds? What about animals? Can your mind be extended to include things like your notebook, cellphone, or computer? Can groups have minds?

## Learning Goals:

At the end of the course, students should be able to...

- 1) Clearly state an argument in premise-conclusion form.
- 2) Properly object to an argument in premise-conclusion form.
- 3) State and describe the main *views* on the topics discussed, i.e., the mind/body relationship, the nature of consciousness, the nature of intentionality, the nature of mental states, whether robots/animals/groups can have minds.
- 4) State, examine, and analyze *arguments* for and against the above views.

## Policies:

**Technology policy:** No screens during class, including phones, laptops, tablets, etc. The reason for this policy is that there is quite a bit of research on this topic, and almost all findings support the idea that screens in class inhibit, rather than enhance, student learning. Further, the main purpose of this class is to *discuss* the philosophical issues at hand. I do not, primarily, want students to memorize facts, but for them to think, converse, and form opinions about the various topics. If you need to use a device during class to aid your learning, feel free to come talk to me.

**Late work:** Late work will be deducted one-third letter grade for each day late (A to A-, etc.).

**Texts:** Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind* (Third edition). We will also work from a variety of other sources and articles that will be posted on the course website.

**Grading scale:** I will use the following grading scale.

A	94+	B+	87-89	B-	80-82	C	73-76	D	60-69
A-	90-93	B	83-86	C+	77-79	C-	70-72	F	59-

**Honor Code:** Students are responsible for compliance with the University's honor code at all times. I take academic integrity very seriously. Cheating of any kind will be reported, will result in a failing grade on the assignment, and might lead to even stronger penalties. Any particular questions about the honor code should be directed to me.

**Accessibility:** I am committed to making this course accessible to all students. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability, or who have questions about disability, are invited to talk to me.

### **Assignments:**

#### **Attendance:**

It is impossible for a student to participate if he or she does not attend class. It is also difficult to learn the material without attending and participating. *Students who have more than two unexcused absences will have points deducted from their overall grade.*

#### **Participation: 20%**

This class is discussion-based, so participation from the students is especially important. I know not everyone loves talking in front of the class, so participation grades will also include reading responses. For each reading response, students should submit a question about the assigned material the Google Doc 24 hours before the class meeting. The question should demonstrate that you read (or watched/consumed/etc.) the material (partially because I am doing these instead of pop quizzes).

#### **Paper 1, Precis: 15% (~1-2 pages)**

In this paper, students defend an argument presented by an academic article we read in class. Students can pick which argument they would like to defend. An argument related to course material that we did not discuss is also fine, but students must get it pre-approved. No rough draft required.

#### **Paper 2, Objection and Response Paper: 25% (~3-4 pages)**

In this paper, students present an argument (a different argument than Paper 1), offer an original objection to the argument, and then an original response to the objection. A rough draft is required (and graded as pass/fail).

#### **Paper 3, Paper & Creative Project: 40% (~6 pages)**

Part 1- Paper (20%): In this paper, students take their own view on an issue we discuss. They should offer an argument for their view, then give two objections to their argument, then respond to each objection. A rough draft is required (and graded as pass/fail). I will give ideas for paper topics, but students can write on any topic that is related to course material.

Part 2- Presentation (20%): Students are required to do a creative project that explains or illustrates their argument from paper 3. During the final weeks of the semester, students will present their projects to the class.

**Do not include your first or last name on your papers. Instead, merely include your student ID number.**

Note on paper length: While I have provided a suggested length for each paper, there are no minimum word requirements. Quality is much more important than quantity for the papers; I strongly prefer a short, tightly-argued paper to a long, rambling paper without much substance. (Part of the reason we do rough drafts is to teach students how to produce quality philosophical writing). Closer to the due dates, I will provide more detailed instructions for each paper.

### Schedule:

#### UNIT ONE: THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

##### Week 1: Substance Dualism

- Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (II & VI)
- Kim chapter 2, “Mind as Immaterial Substance: Descartes’s Dualism”

##### Week 2: Physicalism/ Identity Theory

- “Physicalism” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Introduction and sections 1-2)
- Kim chapter 4, “The Mind as the Brain”

#### UNIT TWO: CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTENTIONALITY

##### Week 3: The Problem of Consciousness

- Excerpts from Chalmers, “Facing up to the problem of consciousness”
- Optional: Kim chapter 9, “What is consciousness?”

##### Week 4: The Problem of Consciousness cont

- Jackson, “What Mary didn’t know”
- Kind, “Chalmers’ Zombie Argument” in *Just the Arguments: 100 of the Most Important Arguments in Western Philosophy*

##### Week 5: The Problem of Intentionality / Mental Content

- Graham, Horgan, and Tienson, “Phenomenology, Intentionality, and the Unity of the Mind” in the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mind*
- Optional: Kim chapter 8, “Mental Content”

#### UNIT THREE: THE NATURE OF THE MIND

##### Week 6: Behaviorism

- Kim chapter 4, “Mind and Behavior: Behaviorism”

- Optional: Hilary Putnam, “Brains and Behavior”

#### **Week 7: Functionalism**

- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Functionalism”
- Optional: Ned Block, “Troubles with Functionalism”

#### **Week 8: Attitudes**

- Graham Oppy, “Propositional Attitudes,” in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Jesse Prinz “Emotions: Motivating Feelings,” in the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mind*

#### **Week 9: Cognitive Penetration**

- Dustin Stokes, “Cognitive Penetrability of Perception” in *Philosophy Compass*
- Optional: Susanna Siegel, “Cognitive Penetrability and Perceptual Justification”

### UNIT 4: THE EXTENT OF THE MIND

#### **Week 10: Artificial Intelligence**

- Dennett, “Can Machines Think?”
- Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs”

#### **Week 11: The Extended Mind**

- Clark and Chalmers, “The Extended Mind”
- Brooks, “The Outsourced Mind”

#### **Week 12: Animal Minds**

- Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”
- Malcolm: “Thoughtless Brutes”
- Davidson: “Rational Animals”

#### **Week 13: Group Minds**

- Clark, “Beliefs and Desires Incorporated”
- Bjornsson and Hess, “Corporate Crocodile Tears? On the Reactive Attitudes of Corporate Agents”

#### **Week 14: Student Presentations**

#### **Week 15: Student Presentations**