

Date prepared: 1/20/14

University of New Orleans
Dept. of Philosophy

PHIL 2450: Philosophy of Mind (3 credits)

SECTIONS 476 & 585

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Robert Stufflebeam
Office: UNO: LA 385
Office Hours: M-T-W-Th, 1:00 – 2:30 (and by appointment)
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Course Webpages: (1) [Moodle](#) login page; (2) iTunes U course page

Required Texts

- [1] Cooney, B. (2000). *The place of mind*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. [T] ~~ISBN 0-534-52825-2.~~
- [2] Supplemental readings. [O]
- [3] [The Mind Project](#). [TMP]

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: A critical survey and analysis of some major problems in the philosophy of mind: personal identity, the existence of other minds, and the relationship of mind and body.

COURSE OVERVIEW: Fundamental questions are questions that cannot be resolved through observation or experience alone. Since the beginning of Western philosophy, philosophers have attempted to resolve several fundamental questions about minds. Recent advances in the cognitive and neural sciences have made settling these questions (or determining what is most reasonable to believe) the subject of much debate. Through texts, podcasts, TV, film, and online discussions, the aim of this course is to critically explore some historical but mostly recent attempts to resolve the following fundamental questions about minds:

- What is the nature of the mind? Are minds souls, thinking substance, matter, brains, or a kind of computer software?
- Can dualists overcome the mind-body problem?
- What sort of "things" have minds? How can we tell whether something has a mind? Is it possible for a machine to have a mind? How should we tell whether a machine is intelligent?
- Wherein lies personal identity? (That is, what makes you you and me me?) Sameness of body? Consciousness? Memories? Behavior?
- What is a computer? What distinguishes digital computers from analog ones? What is the philosophical significance of the brain being a computer?
- What is consciousness?
- Wherein lies the meaning of our concepts? In our head (internalism) or out in the world (externalism)?

Along the way, we shall explore several theories of mind (dualism, behaviorism, identity theory, eliminative materialism, and functionalism), the mind-body problem, the problem of other minds (as applied to both persons and intelligent machines), the Turing Test, Searle's Chinese Room Thought Experiment, and a few theories about personal identity.

Student Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to understand the nature of philosophy of mind and how it differs from psychology
- to understand the philosophical problems associated with the nature of minds and persons
- to understand the philosophical problems associated with personal identity and the views of Descartes, Locke, Hume, etc. on the subject
- to understand the nature of the mind-body problem (and Cartesian dualism)
- to understand the problem of other minds
- to understand the philosophical problems associated with consciousness
- to understand what makes something a computer, the fundamental types of computers, and the philosophical implications of the computer metaphor
- to understand the nature of Turing machines and their relation to computation and digital computers
- to understand the philosophical implications of whether a machine can think and the Turing Test as the measure of whether a machine is intelligent
- to understand Searle's Chinese room thought experiment and the robot reply
- to understand identity theory, eliminative materialism, and functionalism as theories of mind
- to present and to defend your own views regarding the philosophical issues raised in this course
- to read philosophical texts
- to recognize philosophical questions and problems
- to lead philosophical discussions
- to defend your own views with respect to the philosophical issues covered in this course

Final Grades

Grades will be based on a cumulative 100 point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
One min. args	(20%) 20 points	A	100 – 89.5 points
Exam 1	(40%) 40 points	B	89.4 – 79.5 points
Exam 2	(40%) 40 points	C	79.4 – 69.5 points
		D	69.4 – 59.5 points
		F	59.4 — 0 points

Course Requirements

ONE-MINUTE ARGUMENTS: My only means of interacting with you as a class is through our discussion board. Since interacting with each other and me is important, after almost every lecture there is a discussion question to which you need to post a response. Each student is required to post a response within a few DAYS of when the lecture should be completed. (For each week of the semester, the **Game Plan** tells you what you need to READ, which lecture to COMPLETE, and to which one minute argument question you need to POST your response.) If you post your response a week after a lecture should have been completed, your response will be late. Consider your responses to be "one-minute arguments." What that means is you will need to make a claim, give some evidence in support of that claim, and it should take me about 1 minute to read it. What *that* means is you need to write a paragraph as a response, *not* a single sentence. After posting your response, you may then post a response to someone else's response ... continuing the discussion. Your one-minute argument grade will be based on the quality, timeliness, and thoughtfulness of your replies. Overall, it is worth **20%** of your final grade.

EXAMS: There will be **2** exams, each covering about 1/2 of the course material. Each exam will be completed online. ***You MAY use your text and notes but you may NOT collaborate.*** The **Game Plan** tells you when each exam must be completed. **You will have exactly 1 attempt to complete an exam**, so load an exam only if you are prepared to finish it. **Each exam must be completed within 90 minutes.** Regardless of when you begin the exam, **each exam must be submitted by 11:55 p.m. on the day of the exam.** On minute later, that exam will disappear and it will impossible to submit your exam for a grade. Each exam will be composed of various short answer (T/F and MC) and short essay questions taken from the study questions for that exam (see Moodle). The exams are worth **80%** of your final grade.

EXTRA CREDIT: On each exam there is an extra credit question worth **10%** of the exam.

What follows are my class policies. If for any reason you are unable to abide by these policies, you should withdraw from my course.

- ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Academic honesty is fundamental to the process of learning and to evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.
- AUDITS:** Whether an audit is successful will depend only on your one minute argument performance.
- INCOMPLETES:** Incompletes are STRONGLY discouraged. Should you need to take an incomplete, arrangements must be made with me well BEFORE Exam 4.
- CONDUCT/
SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** Feel free to say anything to me or to your peers, but tailor your remarks so as not to be uncivil, abusive, or inappropriate. I will not tolerate ANY abusive behavior in the one minute argument discussions, so do not engage in any personal attacks or name calling. (See my 'warning' below.)
- DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.
- LATE-STARTS:** There are no special dispensations for late-start students.
- LATE WORK:** A one minute argument response will be penalized a letter grade for each week it is late. Hence, if you post a reply to a question 10 or more weeks late, you will receive a 0. Waiting until the end of the semester to post your replies is utterly self-defeating.
- MAKE-UPS:** Each exam will be available to take from the start of the semester. The information on Moodle makes it quite clear that an exam will disappear at **11:55 p.m.** the night of the exam. Consequently, there will be no make-up exams.
- MEDIA:** The game plan tells you what movie/TV episode to watch for which lecture. Since the lecture will tell you how you are to apply what we are studying while you watch the media, COMPLETE the lecture before watching the media, then POST your reply to the one minute argument question for that lecture. If you have already seen the media, you need to watch it again.
- PARTICIPATION:** Since this is an internet course, your participation will be limited to the one minute arguments. Your responses should be posted each week, NOT weeks later. You need to have read the material and completed the lecture prior to posting your response.
- WITHDRAWALS:** You may withdraw from this course for any reason. Withdrawal is strictly up to you and none of my business. Look in the course listings for the last day to withdraw without a penalty — a 'W' appearing on your transcript.

WARNING! *Doing philosophy requires a willingness to think critically. Critical thinking does not consist in merely making claims. Rather, it requires offering reasons/evidence in support of your claims. It also requires your willingness to entertain criticism from others who do not share your assumptions. You will be required to do philosophy in this class. Doing philosophy can be hazardous to your cherished beliefs. Consequently, if you are unwilling to participate, to subject your views to critical analysis, to explore issues that cannot be resolved empirically, or to use computers, then my course is not for you.*

Game Plan

(subject to slight revision)

WEEK	TOPIC	READ	COMPLETE LECTURE	POST 1 MIN. ARG.
(1) 01/13 - 01/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the course 		1	1
	A. What is philosophy of mind? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is philosophy? fundamental questions subfields 		2	2
(2) 01/20 - 01/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 3 media: STNG: The measure of a man & Bicentennial man 		3	3
(3) 01/27 - 01/31	B. THEORY OF MIND: Dualism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> theories of mind Cartesian dualism: Descartes The mind-body problem Ryle: The ghost in the machine category mistakes 	T: 1-10 T: 13-28 T: 31-41	4	4
(4) 02/03 - 02/07	C. The problem of other minds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the analogy argument 	T: 42-49	5	5
(5) 02/10 - 02/14	D. THEORY OF MIND: Identity theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neurons, neural networks, neuroscience Brain events Place Smart 	T: 53-73 TMP: Neurons T: 77-84 T: 85-95	6	6
(6) 02/17 - 02/21	E. THEORY OF MIND: Eliminative materialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Churchland 	T: 130-135	7	7
(7) 02/24 - 02/28	F. THEORY OF MIND: Functionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are functions? Armstrong Fodor 	TMP: Functionalism T: 136-145 T: 146-155	8	8
03/03 - 03/07	MARDI GRAS BREAK & SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS			
(8) 03/10 - 03/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 9 media: Star Wars - Episode II 		9	9
	Exam 1 (by 11:55 p.m. FRIDAY, 03/14)			
(9) 03/17 - 03/21	G. Computers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a computer? analog computers vs. digital computers Turing machines connectionism Putnam 	TMP: What is a computer? TMP: Computer types TMP: Turing machines TMP: Connectionism T: 219-227	10	10 & 11
(10) 03/24 - 03/28	H. Can a machine think? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep Blue Larry learner How can we tell if a machine is intelligent? Turing Test Eliza The Loebner Prize 	TMP Mind Reader TMP: Can a machine think? Kasparov v. Deep Blue O: Turing (1950) TMP: The Turing test Eliza The Loebner Prize Alicebot	11	12
(11) 03/31 - 04/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Searle's Chinese room thought experiment Robot reply Is the brain a digital computer? 	T: 248-267 TMP: The Chinese room TMP: Robot reply O: Searle (1990)	12	13
(12) 04/07 - 04/11	I. What makes you you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 13 media: B5: Passing through Gethsemane 		13	14

<p>(13) 04/14 - 04/18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems of personal identity (selves) <p><i>Continuity of memory (or consciousness)?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locke Gallant Officer objection Phineas Gage 	<p>T: 425-427</p> <p>T: 428-433</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>(14) 04/21 - 04/25</p>	<p><i>Sameness of body (or brains)?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lobotomies, Alzheimer's, strokes Hume: There is no self <hr/> <p><i>Psychological continuity?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parfit 	<p>T: 434-443</p> <p>T: 444-453</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>(15) 04/28 - 05/02</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 16 media: <i>Farscape: Eat Me</i> 		<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>Exam 2 (by 11:55 p.m. on TUESDAY, 05/06)</p>				