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Philosophy of Mind

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CUNY City College

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Philosophy of Mind

Spring 2021

Tuesday, Thursday 11-12:15

Professor Ryan McElhaney

Email: Ryan.McElhaney [at] gmail.com

Office Hours: By Appt.

Purpose: The purpose of this course is to engage critically with topics in classic and contemporary philosophy of mind. We will review issues related to the ontology of mind (e.g. Is the mind physical, non-physical, neither?), the mind-body problem (e.g. how does the mind relate to the body? Is there a causal connection between the two?), the nature of mental content, the nature of consciousness, and, time permitting, explanatory strategies in contemporary cognitive science.

Online Synchronous Course: This course occurs entirely online. We meet twice a week for an hour and fifteen minutes. A zoom link will be posted to the course blackboard prior to every class. As this course is a seminar, I aim to make class meetings discussion based punctuated with short lecture sections. That means your involvement and participation is far more important to the smooth running of the class than it would otherwise be in a lecture course, especially given the online nature of the course. **Students are required to have their camera on for the entirety of each lesson. Students whose circumstances make having their camera on during class a burden should contact me early to in semester to avoid losing points.**

Course Requirements:

5 Reading Responses (Approx. 500 words each) (40%)
1 Paper Draft (2000 words) (15%)
1 Final Paper (3000 words) (35%)
Participation and Attendance (10%)

Readings: Students are expected to read all assigned reading **by the week** it is listed on the reading schedule. All required reading will **either** be posted to blackboard or will be easily accessible electronically with via library databases or standard search engines.

Reading Responses: Students are expected to submit 5 satisfactory reading responses (out of 10 possible). Reading responses are due before the beginning of class. Prompts will be posted to Canvas the week prior to their due date. **Because there are multiple opportunities to complete the required number of reading responses, absolutely no late reading response submissions will be accepted for ANY reason.** I recommend that students begin submitting RRs early in the semester.

Draft Paper: Students are expected to submit a draft paper to me approximately halfway through the semester. I will provide feedback as with the intent of helping students expand their draft for the final paper.

Due Dates: The due date of the draft and paper will be listed on blackboard. Work turned in late will be marked down a half a letter grade for every 2-3 days late. After 10 days, late work will no longer

be accepted. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the paper is uploaded to blackboard. A student who does not turn in an assignment should not expect me to contact them about it. If a student needs an extension, they should contact me at least two days before the assignment is due. (If the paper is due at 3:30 on Monday, then the latest I want to be asked for an extension on Saturday) **I do not give out late-notice extensions except in rare circumstances. But, I give out extensions fairly liberally otherwise. If the request is for 7 days or fewer, it will almost certainly be granted.**

Attendance: **Regular attendance is required. Be sure to inform me of any class absences as early as possible.**

Plagiarism: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity. Possible penalties include, but are not limited to, failing the paper or failing the class. **When in doubt, cite it.**

This is a ***tentative*** reading list and may change with regard to both content and timing based on student feedback.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Notes
Week 1	Introduction to the course and Dualism	1a. No reading. Recommended: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Dualism (especially section on mind-body problem) --- 1b. Meditations II and VI (Descartes) 1643-4 Correspondence between Descartes and Elizabeth	Students should look for Descartes' Meditations through the CCNY Library. It edition edited by Cottingham is available online though the library. The correspondence between Descartes and Elizabeth is available for free through https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/
Week 2	Behaviorism	2a. The Concept of Mind Chapter I: Descartes Myth (Ryle) Recommended: SEP entry on Behaviorism --- 2b. The Concept of Mind Chapter IV: Emotions (Ryle) Recommended: SEP entry on Behaviorism	The Concept of the Mind is available online for free through the library via archive.org (you will have to set up an account to "borrow" it).
Week 3	Functionalism	1a. The Nature of the Mind Chapter 1 (Armstrong) Recommended: SEP article on Functionalism --- 1b. The Nature of the Mind Chapter 2 (Armstrong)	I will send this to you.
Week 4	Against Functionalism	4. Minds, Brains and Programs (Searle)	Available through cogprints.org , or a standard google search.
Week 5	Identity theory	5. Sensations and Brain Processes (Smart)	Jstor
Week 6	How do we know what other people think?	6a. The myth of Jones (excerpt from Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind) (Sellars)	http://www.ditext.com/sellars/epm.html
Week 7	How do we know what other people think?	7. The Intentional Stance, Chapter 1: True Believers (Dennett)	archive.org
Week 8	Content Internalism and Externalism	7. Meaning and Reference (Putnam)	Jstor

Week 9	Content Internalism and Externalism	Narrow Content and Representation, or Twin Earth Revisited (Jackson)	Jstor
Week 9	Consciousness	What's it Like to be a Bat (Nagel)	Jstor
Week 10	Consciousness	Consciousness and its Place in Nature (Chalmers)	http://consc.net/papers/nature.pdf
Week 11	The Knowledge Problem	Epiphenomenal Qualia (Jackson)	Jstor Paper Draft Due
Week 12	The Explanatory Gap	On Leaving out What its Like (Levine)	Through Levine's website. Easiest way to find it is to search for the title in quote via google.
Week 13	Scientific theories of consciousness	Treating Consciousness as a Variable: The Fading Taboo in Essential sources in the scientific study of consciousness (Baars)	Available online via Library
Week 14	Scientific theories of consciousness	Consciousness and Neuroscience in Essential sources in the scientific study of consciousness (Crick and Koch)	Available online via Library
Week 15	Overflow Week	No Planned Reading	