

PHIL 2501 A – Introduction to Philosophy of Mind

Fall 2022

Instructor: Christopher McGrath

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:30pm or by appointment

Office: 3A54 Paterson Hall

Lecture Times: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30-1:00pm

Classroom: UC 231

Course Description:

An introduction to major philosophical issues concerning human cognition. Topics may include: the relation of mind to body, knowledge of other minds, the relation of mental states to personhood and personal identity, mental illness, consciousness, intentionality, action, mental realism.

Our approach to this course will focus on the mind-body problem, which is usually treated as the foundational or central problem in the philosophy of mind. This problem refers to a host of issues surrounding three questions: What is the mind? What is the body? What is the relationship between the mind and the body? Different answers to these questions have often been influential on our understanding of physics and psychology, as well as on broader philosophical topics like personal identity and free will and responsibility. Most broadly, the mind-body problem can be approached as a characteristically modern formulation of a perennial philosophical question: What kind of a thing is humanity, and what place to do we have in the world?

The aim of this course will be to try clarify the foundational problems, positions, and arguments which have most contributed to our understanding of what the mind-body problem is and how it might be answered.

To do this, we will begin with the major contributions made during the early modern period. Although we can find philosophical work relevant to the mind-body problem in the ancient and medieval periods, it is typical to characterize at least much of the usual sense we have of the mind-body problem in terms of a certain Cartesian heritage that begins in early modernity. So our study will begin by trying to clarify this heritage, and by surveying what possible solutions to the mind-body problem most naturally present themselves, given this Cartesian picture. The second half of the course will focus on more contemporary work, beginning with the major developments in twentieth century philosophy that provide the categories and framework for how philosophers today often understand the mind-body problem. In this context, we will examine reductivist and non-reductivist approaches to the mind, the problem of consciousness, and then eliminativism.

Lecture Schedule:

Lecture topics may be adjusted pending our ability to adequately get through the material in class.

Date:	Topic:	Reading Selections Taken From:
	Introduction	
Sep 08	Introduction to the Course	n/a
	Unit One: Classical Foundations of the Mind-Body Problem, Part One Foundations of the Mind-Body Problem and the Dualist Position	
Sep 13	Principles – Primary and Secondary Properties	Descartes' <i>Treatise on Light</i> and Locke's <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i>
Sep 15	Principles – The Veil of Perception	Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> and Hume's <i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i>
Sep 20	Dualism – The Distinction between Mind and Body	Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> and Leibniz's <i>Monadology</i>
Sep 22	Dualism – The Union between Mind and Body	Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> and <i>Passions of the Soul</i>
Sep 27	Dualism – Critiques	Correspondence between Descartes and Princess Elizabeth
	Unit Two: Classical Foundations of the Mind-Body Problem, Part Two Alternatives to the Dualist Position	
Sep 29	Neutral Monism	Spinoza's <i>Ethics</i>
Oct 04	Quiz #1	n/a
Oct 06	Principles – Primary and Secondary Properties Again	Berkeley's <i>Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i>
Oct 11	Idealism	Berkeley's <i>Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i>
Oct 13	Materialism	D'Holbach's <i>The System of Nature</i>
Oct 18	Principles – The Veil of Perception Again	Kant's <i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i>
Oct 20	Skepticism	Kant's <i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i>
Oct 25	No Class – Fall Break	
Oct 27	No Class – Fall Break	
Nov 01	Quiz #2	n/a
	Unit Three: Contemporary Foundations of the Mind-Body Problem, Part One Reductive and Non-Reductive Physicalism	
Nov 03	Reductive Physicalism – Behaviorism	Ryle's <i>The Concept of Mind</i>
Nov 08	Reductive Physicalism – Identity Theory	Smart's <i>Sensations and Brain Processes</i>
Nov 10	Non-Reductive Physicalism – Functionalism	Putnam's <i>Psychological Predicates</i>
Nov 15	Non-Reductive Physicalism – Special Sciences	Fodor's <i>Special Sciences</i>

Unit Four: Contemporary Foundations of the Mind-Body Problem, Part Two Dualism and Eliminativism		
Nov 17	Consciousness – The Problem of Subjectivity	Nagel’s <i>What is it like to be a bat?</i>
Nov 22	Quiz #3	n/a
Nov 24	Consciousness – The Problem of Knowledge	Jackson’s <i>Epiphenomenal Qualia</i> and <i>What Mary Didn’t Know</i>
Nov 29	Eliminativism – Rethinking Reduction	Rorty’s <i>Mind-Body Identity, Privacy, and Categories</i>
Dec 01	Eliminativism – The Eliminativist Position	Lycan and Pappas’ <i>What is Eliminative Materialism?</i>
Conclusion to the Course		
Dec 06	Concluding Remarks	Sellars’ <i>Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man</i>
Dec 08	Quiz #4	n/a

Assessment:

Students who are unable to attend and submit a quiz on the scheduled day should contact the instructor at the earliest reasonable opportunity if they still wish to submit the assessment. In cases that reasonably excuse the absence, an alternative quiz and testing date may be arranged at the instructor’s judgment and pending a discussion of the issue with the student. Note that the final essay is due on the last day of the semester. If students are unable to submit the essay by this date but still wish to submit the assessment, they should likewise contact the instructor at the earliest reasonable opportunity so that possible accommodations may be discussed.

Documentation for reporting such concerns is available in the form of a [“Self-Declaration for Academic Accommodations”](#) available through the website of the Registrar’s Office.

All assessments are expected to be conducted according to due standards of academic integrity. The submission for final essay must be the student’s own work, and any quotations or paraphrases of work other than the student’s own must be duly cited.

Students should expect to receive their first evaluated assessment (Quiz #1) back in class on October 18th.

Due Date:	Assignment:	Proportion of Final Mark:
OCT 04	Quiz #1	20%
NOV 01	Quiz #2	20%
NOV 22	Quiz #3	20%
DEC 08	Quiz #4	15%
DEC 22	Final Essay	25%

- Quizzes: 75% total, 20% or 15% each **(In class Oct 04, Nov 01, Nov 22, and Dec 08)**

Four quizzes will be conducted in class throughout the term, each being non-cumulative and covering the material only from the preceding unit. Quizzes will be in fill-in-the-blank and short answer format, and based on the material covered in our in-class discussions of the readings. Review materials noting the specific terms and arguments students need to know for the quizzes will be provided for each class.

- Final Essay: 25% **(Due by 11:59pm Dec 22)**

A final assignment, due at the end of the term, will take the form of a short term paper, of around four pages (1000 words double-spaced) length. To prepare for the paper students will be expected to read their choice of one option from a given selection of readings related to the material covered in the four units of the course. The submitted paper will then take the form of a summary and explanation, in the student's own words, of the major argument presented in the chosen reading, and of its significance to the mind-body problem. Students who wish to submit a comparable paper on a topic of their choosing may be accommodated pending a discussion with and authorization by the instructor.

Readings:

Readings will be provided online via the course webpage.

Communications Regarding the Course:

Students are encouraged to drop into office hours with any questions they have, whether about the course material, troubleshooting issues with the course, or just informal questions about philosophy. If their course schedule or other commitments overlaps with scheduled office hours, students are encouraged to speak to the instructor about meeting under other conditions, and either in-person or virtual office hours can be arranged at other times.

Students may also contact the instructor via email. Emails will be checked throughout the day at least up to 4:30pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and emails received by this time will be responded to by the next of these dates. Details about contacting the teaching assistant will be posted to the course webpage when they become available.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2022-23)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for [Student Activities](#):* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

Sept. 7	Classes start.
Sept. 20	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 10	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 24-28	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 9	Last day of fall term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 9	Classes begin.
Jan. 20	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 20	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 20-24	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 29	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 7	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 12	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Classes follow a Friday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 13-14	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 15-27	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 27	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735