

CONSCIOUSNESS AND AGENCY (PHIL4220/PHIL5200)

Carleton University, Winter 2016

Day/Time: Tuesdays, 2:35pm – 5:25pm **Location:** Paterson Hall 3A36

Dr. Myrto Mylopoulos

Office: 3A47 Paterson Hall **Office Telephone:** 613-520-2600 x3943
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12pm – 2pm (and by appointment)
E-mail: Myrto.Mylopoulos@carleton.ca

Course Description

In both folk psychology and more formal theorizing, consciousness and action are often assumed to be importantly related. In this course, we will question and examine different aspects of this purported relationship. We will start by laying down some groundwork and surveying leading philosophical theories of consciousness and action. We will then proceed to address the following questions, among others: What role, if any, does consciousness play in action control? What psychological mechanisms underlie our “sense of agency,” that is, one’s conscious awareness of oneself as the source of one’s actions? How can we make sense of certain pathological conditions in which such awareness seems to break down? Is consciousness required for free will and moral responsibility, as some have recently argued? We will tackle these questions by appeal to both theoretical considerations and a range of empirical results from the cognitive sciences.

Course Materials

- All required readings and additional resources will be made available on cuLearn.

Course Requirements

Course Component	Percentage of Final Grade
Participation	10%
Critical Responses (x8)	40%
Term Paper	50%

Readings

Readings will be assigned for every class session except the first and last. All readings are required, except for those marked as ‘optional’ on the course syllabus. While optional, you are strongly encouraged to do these readings, as they’ll help both to fill in the background for and expand on some of the material we’ll be covering in class. Please ensure you complete all required readings for a class session before that session. Come prepared to discuss them.

Critical Reading Responses

You will write **up to ten** critical reading responses (350 – 500 words each) over the course of the semester (starting in week 3). Only your **best eight** responses will be counted. These will each be worth **5%** of your final grade for a total of **40%**.

The responses are intended to give you an opportunity to critically reflect, in writing, on the main claims, arguments, or theories you encounter in the lecture/readings. As such, **you should not merely summarize** the material you are addressing, though of course some summary will be necessary, but rather **evaluate** and **expand** on it. I will go over a grading rubric in class and some general guidelines for how you might approach these responses.

Responses will be submitted via cuLearn and are due **before** the start of class that **follows** the class for which the relevant reading was covered/assigned. Late responses will not be accepted.

You are encouraged to use ideas you develop in these responses as the basis for your term paper.

Term Paper

You will write one term paper (**2000-2500 words for undergrads and 3500-4000 words for graduate students**) tentatively due on **April 5th** and worth **50%** of your final grade.

You will submit an abstract (**150 – 250 words**) for this paper tentatively due on **March 8th**.

Participation

Active participation is a requirement in this course. This means, among other things, attending each class on time having done the readings carefully, being prepared to discuss them, asking questions during class, responding to questions asked by myself or a classmate, and visiting office hours to discuss any material you're not clear on. This will be worth **10%** of your final grade.

Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Please turn off (or silence) your mobile phones and put them away before the start of class. The use of laptops for the **sole purpose** of note-taking is permitted.

Office Hours and Availability

My regular office hours are as stated up top. I'm happy to meet you at other days/times as well—just make arrangements with me over email or in person.

I will do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours, but I may not always be able to do so. If you think your message will require a lengthy reply from me, please arrange to come and see me in person instead.

Tentative Course Readings/Topics Schedule (may be revised)

Week 1 (Jan. 12): Introduction

- No readings

*Read the SEP entries on Action and Intention as background for Weeks 2 and 3

Week 2 (Jan. 19): Action Theory: The Causal Theory of Action

- Brand, M. (1984) "Philosophical Action Theory" (Ch.1 of *Intending and Acting: Toward a Naturalized Action Theory*)
- Frankfurt, H. (1978) "The Problem of Action"
- Optional: Davidson, D. (1963) "Actions, Reasons, and Causes"

Week 3 (Jan. 26): Action Theory: Intention

- Wu, W. (2015) "Experts and Deviants: The Story of Agentive Control"
- Pacherie, E. (2006) "Towards a Dynamic Theory of Intentions"
- Optional: Bratman, M. (1984) "Two Faces of Intention"

*Read the SEP entry on Consciousness as background for Weeks 4 and 5

Week 4 (Feb. 2): Consciousness: Global Workspace Theory

- Block, N. (1995) "On a Confusion About a Function of Consciousness"
- Dehaene S. and Naccache, L. (2001) "Towards a Cognitive Neuroscience of Consciousness: Basic Evidence and a Workspace Framework"

Week 5 (Feb. 9): Consciousness: Higher-Order Theories

- Rosenthal, D. (2004) "Varieties of Higher-Order Theory" (Ch.2 of *Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness: An Anthology*, edited by R. Gennaro)
- Lycan, W. (2004) "The Superiority of HOP to HOT" (Ch.5 of *Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness: An Anthology*, edited by R. Gennaro)
- Carruthers, P. (2004) "HOP Over FOR, HOT Theory" (Ch.6 of *Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness: An Anthology*, edited by R. Gennaro)

Week 6 (Feb. 16): Winter Break, No Class

Week 7 (Feb. 23): Enactivism

- Noe & O'Regan (2001) "A Sensorimotor Account of Vision and Visual Consciousness"
- Prinz (2006) "Putting the Brakes on Enactive Perception"
- Optional: de Vignemont, F. (2011) "A Mosquito Bite Against the Enactive Approach to Bodily Experiences"

Week 8 (March 1): The Sense of Agency

- Bayne, T. "The Sense of Agency"
- Carruthers, G. "The Case for the Comparator Model as an Explanation of the Sense of Agency and Its Breakdowns"
- Optional: Mylopoulos, M. "Agentive Awareness Is Not Sensory Awareness"

Week 9 (March 8): Consciousness and Control: Conscious Intention

- Pacherie, E. (2014) "Can Conscious Agency Be Saved?"
- Libet, B. (1985) "Unconscious Cerebral Initiative and the Role of Conscious Will in Voluntary Action"
- Optional: Schurger, Mylopoulos, & Rosenthal (2015) "Neural Antecedents of Spontaneous Voluntary Movement: A New Perspective"

Week 10 (March 15): Consciousness and Control: Conscious Intention (cont'd) *ABSTRACTS DUE*****

- Mele, A. (2012) "Intentional Actions and the Alleged Illusion of Conscious Will"
- Wegner, D. (2003) "The Mind's Best Trick: How We Experience Conscious Will"
- Optional: Nahmias (2005) "Agency, authorship, and illusion"

Week 11 (March 22): Consciousness and Action Control: Conscious Vision

- Clark, A. (2007) "What Reaching Teaches: Consciousness, Control, and the Inner Zombie"
- Walhagen, M. (2007) "Consciousness and Action: Does Cognitive Science Support (Mild) Epiphenomenalism?"
- Optional: Milner, A.D. & Goodale, M. (2008) "Two visual systems re-viewed"
- Optional: Shepherd, J. (2015) "Conscious Control Over Action"
- Optional: Brogaard, B. (2011) "Conscious vision for action versus unconscious vision for action?"

Week 12 (March 29): Consciousness, Free Will, and Moral Responsibility

- Levy, N. (2014) "Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes, and Responsibility"
- King, M. & Carruthers, P. (2012) "Moral Responsibility and Consciousness"
- Optional: Mandelbaum, E. (2014) "Attitude, Inference, Association: On the Propositional Structure of Implicit Bias"

Week 13 (April 5): Wrap-up *TERM PAPERS DUE*****

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2015-16)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more 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. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy 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 Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

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 Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

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 scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure

accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 2	Classes start.
Sept. 4	Classes follow a Monday schedule.
Sept. 7	Labour Day - University closed.
Sept. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 12	Thanksgiving Day – University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 7	Last day of classes, Fall term. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 7	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 8	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Dec. 9-21	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 21	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 6	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break, no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Mar. 25	Good Friday – University closed.
Apr. 8	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. 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 Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Apr. 11-23	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735