Overview
This course is an introduction to contemporary debates in the philosophy of mind. The focus will be on questions such as the following: What is a mind? How does what goes on in the mind relate to what goes on in the brain and in the rest of the body? Can a mind exist in a very different kind of body (e.g., a computer or a robot)? How can mental events have physical consequences? What is the relation between the sciences of the mind, such as psychology, and the fundamental sciences, such as physics?

Objectives
• To introduce students to the key debates and issues in contemporary philosophy of mind.
• To deepen students' skills in reading and assessing philosophical texts.
• To develop students' skills in philosophical writing and argumentation.
• To prepare students for more advanced courses in the philosophy of mind and related areas.

By the end of the course students will have a good working knowledge of the main positions and arguments in contemporary philosophy of mind.

Instructor
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Teaching assistant
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Office hours: Tues & Friday 2.30 – 3.30

Location
Lectures on Thursdays will be in McDonnell 362. Discussion sections will be in McDonnell 362 and Ridgley 122.

Set texts
We will be using J. Kim, Philosophy of Mind (Westview 2nd edition, 2006) and D. Chalmers (ed.), Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings (Oxford 2002). There are copies of both in the bookstore.

Organization
The course will cover 13 topics. For most topics there will be a lecture and a discussion class. There will be 2 discussion sections. Students will be allocated alphabetically and instructors will swap sections after topic 6.

Readings
There are required readings for each topic (usually the equivalent of two book chapters). These are all taken from the set texts. In addition there is one supplementary reading for each topic. This may be more challenging than the required readings. The lectures, discussions and assessment for the course will assume a good knowledge of the required readings. Each topic has a number of questions that will help you organize your reading. You should come to discussion classes with notes on each question.
Assessment
Class tests (1.5 hours – 33%) to be held on Tuesday 25 September and Thursday 1 November. Only the higher of the two scores will count for the final grade.

Term paper (1500 words = 5-7 pages double-spaced– 33%) due in class on Tuesday 20 November

Final exam (1.5 hours – 33%) on last day of class (Thursday 6 December)

1 Marks of the mental
Lect. Th 8/30
Disc. Tu 9/4

Req. Kim Intro & Brentano in Chalmers (Ch. 44)
(a) What is minimal physicalism? How plausible do you find it?
(b) What are Kim’s candidate marks of the mental?
(c) Do you find any of the candidate marks plausible?
(d) Does Brentano answer Kim’s first worry about intentionality as a mark of the mental?

2 Mind and behavior
Lect. Th 9/6
Disc. Tu 9/11

Req. Hempel, ‘The logical analysis of psychology’ (available on E-Res) & Ryle in Chalmers (Ch. 5)
Supp. Putnam in Chalmers (Ch. 7)

(a) What is the distinction that Hempel opposes between natural science and the sciences of the mind and culture? Why have people made that distinction?
(b) Why does Hempel have reservations about scientific behaviorism?
(c) What does it mean to say that “the meaning of a sentence is established by the conditions of its verification” (p. 88)
(d) Why does Hempel say that “psychology is an integral part of physics” (p. 90)?

3 Mind-brain identity theories
Lect. Th 9/13
Disc. Tu 9/18

Req. Kim Ch. 4

(a) What is the difference between an a priori identity and an empirical identity? Why is the distinction important?
(b) What is the difference between token identity and type identity? Why is the distinction important?
(c) How does the type/token distinction connect to different ways of thinking about events? See also section 1 of Kim and Brandt 1972.
There will be a CLASS TEST on Thursday 20 September in McDonnell 362.

4  Modal objections to identity
Lect.  Tu 9/25
Disc.  Th 9/27

Req.  Kripke & Hill in Chalmers (Chs. 32 & 33)
Supp.  Maxwell in Chalmers (Ch. 34)

(a) Why does Kripke think that there is a difference between “Benjamin Franklin = the inventor of bifocals” and “pain = C-fibre stimulation”?
(b) What sort of identity theory is Kripke criticizing?
(c) What is the crucial distinction between mind-brain identities and ordinary scientific identities?
(d) How does Hill propose to escape Kripke’s argument?

5  Minds as Turing machines
Lect.  Tu 10/2
Disc.  Th 10/4

Req.  Kim Ch. 5, pp. 115-142
Supp.  Putnam in Chalmers (Ch. 7)

(a) What are Turing machines?
(b) What is Turing machine functionalism?
(c) What are the motivations for Turing machine functionalism?
(d) How does a Turing machine functionalist understand what it is for two things to be in the same psychological state?

6  The Chinese Room
Lect.  Tu 10/9
Disc.  Th 10/11

Req.  N. Block, ‘The mind as the software of the brain’ sections 1, 2, and 4 (available online – Google the title) and Searle in Chalmers (Ch. 63)
Supp.

(a) What is the Turing test? What can we learn by asking whether a machine passes the Turing test?
(b) What is the distinction between competence and performance? Why is it relevant?
(c) What does Block mean by talking about a syntactic engine driving a semantic engine?
(d) What is the Chinese room argument?

7  Causal-theoretic functionalism
Lect.  Tu 10/16
Disc.  Th 10/18

Req.  Kim Ch. 6 pp. 152 – 161 & 168-171; Armstrong in Chalmers (Ch. 12)
Supp. Lewis in Chalmers (Ch. 13)

(a) What is the motivation for the Ramsey-Lewis method?
(b) How does causal-theoretic functionalism differ from machine functionalism and behaviorism?
(c) What is the most plausible underlying theory for a functionalist?
(d) What motivation does Armstrong present for his causal analysis of mental concepts?

8 Objections to functionalism
Lect. Tu 10/23
Disc. Th 10/25

Req. Kim Ch. 6 pp. 161-168; Block in Chalmers (Ch. 14); Nida-Rumelin in Chalmers (Ch. 15)

(a) What are qualia? Why are they thought to be a problem for functionalism?
(b) Why might there be a difficulty about the causal powers of functional states?
(c) What is Block trying to show with his homunculi-headed robots? Does he succeed?
(d) Is the possibility of pseudo-normal vision an objection to functionalism?

9 The problem of mental causation
Lect. Tu 10/30
No discussion section on Thursday 11/1. There will be a CLASS TEST in McDonnell 362.

Req. Kim Ch. 7 and Kim in Chalmers (Ch. 22)

(a) Why is there a problem of mental causation?
(b) Does the possibility of mental causation require psychophysical laws?
(c) Is Kim right to reject counterfactual accounts of mental causation?
(d) What does Kim mean by “the extrinsicness of mental states”? Why is this a problem?
(e) What is the supervenience argument against mental causation?

10 Reduction and the special sciences
Lect. Tu 11/6
Disc. Th 11/8

Req. Fodor in Chalmers (Ch. 18) & Kim in Chalmers (Ch. 19)

(a) Why does Fodor deny that every natural kind corresponds to a physical natural kind?
(b) What is Fodor’s alternative construal of the unity of science?
(c) What conclusions does Kim draw from his jade example?
(d) Why does Kim distinguish (p. 148) between psychology being a science and psychology being scientific? Which option does he favor, and why?

11 Supervenience and emergence
Lect. Tu 11/13
Disc. Th 11/15

Req. Broad in Chalmers (Ch. 16) & Horgan in Chalmers (Ch. 20)
Supp. J. Wilson, ‘How superduper does a physicalist supervenience have to be?’, Philosophical Quarterly, 1999, 33–52. [JSTOR]

(a) What is the difference between mechanism and emergentism?
(b) What are the different types of supervenience?
(c) Is the supervenience of the mental on the physical compatible with emergentism? Why might this be important?
(d) What is superdupervenience? Does it solve the problem it is intended to solve?

12 The knowledge argument
Lect. Tu 11/20

DUE DATE FOR TERM PAPER

NO CLASS ON THURSDAY 11/22 (THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY)

Disc. Tu 11/27

Req. Jackson in Chalmers (Ch. 28) & Lewis in Chalmers (Ch. 29)
Supp. Loar in Chalmers (Ch. 30)

(a) What is the knowledge argument supposed to show?
(b) Why does Jackson think that the knowledge argument is more fundamental than the other two arguments he considers?
(c) What is the hypothesis of phenomenal information? Why is it relevant to materialism?
(d) How is the ability hypothesis supposed to deflect the knowledge argument?

13 Can we solve the mind–body problem?
Lect. Th 11/29
Disc. Tu 12/4. No discussion class. Review class

Req. Jackson in Chalmers (Ch. 21) and McGinn in Chalmers (Ch. 38)
Supp. Block and Stalnaker in Chalmers (Ch. 37)

(a) Why does Jackson think that the location problem can only be solved by conceptual analysis in the case of solidity?
(b) How is this solution extended to the psychological?
(c) What does McGinn mean by cognitive closure?
(d) Why does McGinn think that we are cognitively closed with respect to the property that accounts for consciousness?
(e) How does this lead him to the conclusion that there is no philosophical mind–body problem?

12/4 REVIEW CLASS

12/6 FINAL EXAM (McDONNELL 362)