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
Carl F. Craver (Wilson Hall; 935 7146; ccraver@arts.wustl.edu)
Office hours: Tues. and Thurs 1-2 and by appointment.

Teaching assistant
Rawdon Waller (Wilson 116; 935 7913; rmwaller@wustl.edu)
Office hours: Tues & Thurs

Location
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30-1 in Psychology 249.

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.

Grading:

Papers: 25% each on best three of four.
Exam: 20%
Attendance and participation: 5%

Papers: You will write four original papers. The paper topic in each case is:

Identify one central argument in one or more of the readings on this topic. Clearly state the premises and the conclusion of the argument. Discuss possible objections to this argument and explain why you do or do not find those objections compelling. You can feel free to discuss the appropriateness of your chosen argument with the teaching assistant or the instructor up three days before the due date.

Papers are to be 3-4 pages long and are to have standard margins (1" top and bottom, 1.25 L and R). Papers longer than 4 pages will be returned without a grade and treated as late from the due-date of the paper. Condensation is a useful intellectual enterprise.

Papers will be evaluated on 1) a basic grasp of the issue, argument, and relevant reading material, 2) capacity for creative or original insight, and 3) exposition (grammar, prose, composition). Your grade will be based on the best three papers. Please note that plagiarism of any sort will result in failure of the course.
Exam: There will be one final exam. It will be a cumulative essay exam. There will be three questions relating to fundamental themes in the course. Answers will be graded on composition, understanding of the relevant material, and capacity for creative and original insight. Please note that cheating of any kind will result in failure of the course.

Attendance: You are required to show up and participate. Merely showing up is a B performance, unless your presence is problematic, in which case you might score lower than a B. Your discussion should reflect an understanding of the readings for each week.

Reading: You are expected to keep up with the readings. Readings to be discussed are those listed for that day in the syllabus. It often helps to take notes when reading philosophy. Exams and papers will be written under the assumption that students have mastered the reading material. Supplemental readings are meant to provide an additional challenge and additional reading for possible use in writing assignments.

Lateeness: Papers are due by 5 PM on the due date. Late papers will drop in final score by one letter grade per day. Unless otherwise specified, papers are to be delivered in hard-copy to the philosophy office in Wilson Hall.

Class Schedule

1/16  Introduction

1  Marks of the mental
Lect.  Th 1/18
Disc.  Tu 1/23

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 1/25
Disc.  Tu 1/30

Req.  Hempel (reserve) "Logical analysis of Psychology" and 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 2/1
Disc.  Tu 2/6

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.

4 Modal objections to identity
Lect. Th 2/8
Disc. Tu 2/13

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. Th 2/15
Disc. Tu 2/20

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. Th 2/22
Disc. Tu 2/27

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. 3/1
Disc. 3/6

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

(a) What is the motivation for the Ramsey-Lewis method?
(b) How does causal-theoretic functionalism differ from machine functionalism and behaviorism?
What is the most plausible underlying theory for a functionalist?

8
Objections to functionalism
Lect. Tu 20
Disc. Th 22

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 27
Disc. Th 29

Req. Kim Ch. 7 and Kim in Chalmers (Ch. 22)
Supp. F. Jackson, 'Mental causation', Mind 105 (1996), 377-413 [JSTOR]

(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 4/3
Disc. Th 4/5

Req. Fodor in Chalmers (Ch. 18) & Kim in Chalmers (Ch. 19)
Supp. J. Fodor, 'The special sciences: Still autonomous after all these years', Nous 1997, 149-163 [JSTOR]

(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 4/10
Disc. Th 4/12

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 4/15
Disc. Th 4/17

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. Tu 4/24
Disc. Th 4/26

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?