PHIL 315/PNP 315: Philosophy of Mind
Spring 2010

Course Syllabus

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? What is consciousness, and can it receive a scientific explanation?

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
Peter Langland-Hassan (Wilson 101; 935 -9531; langland-hassan@wustl.edu)
Office hours: Mon. and Fri. 11:15–12:15

Teaching assistant
Isaac Wiegman (Wilson 116; itwiegma@wustl.edu)
Office hours: Wed. 11:15-12:15, and Thurs. 10-11.

Location
Lectures will be in Psychology 249. Discussion sections for Group 1 will also be in Psychology 249; discussions for Group 2 will be in Psychology 251 on Fridays, and Wilson 104 on Mondays.

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 14 topics. For most topics there will be two lectures and a discussion class. There will be 2 discussion sections. Students will be allocated alphabetically by last names (Group 1= A-K, Group 2 = L-Z) and instructors will swap sections every other session. Sometimes discussions will fall on a Friday, and sometimes on a Monday.

Readings
There are required readings for each topic (usually the equivalent of two book chapters). These are all taken from the set texts, or will be available for download on Telesis. In addition there will often be a 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 hour – 30%) to be held on Monday February 15 and Monday March 22. Only the higher of the two scores will count towards your final grade.

Term paper (1500 words = 5-7 pages double-spaced– 30%) due in class Friday April 16

Final exam (2 hours – 30%): Monday May 10, 10:30AM-12:30PM, 249 Psychology

Discussion Day Questions: (Pass/Fail 10%) If you fail three or more discussion day questions you will fail this component of the overall grade (not completing a question due to an unexcused absence counts as a fail). Otherwise you will receive an A for this component of the grade.

TOPICS AND READINGS:

Week 1: Marks of the Mental

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?

Wednesday, January 20: Lecture
Friday, January 22: Lecture

Week 2: Mind and Behavior

Req. Kim (Ch. 3), Putnam in Chalmers (Ch. 7)
Supp. Ryle in Chalmers (Ch. 5)

(a) What is the “verifiability criterion of meaning”?
(b) What is the strongest motivation for the verifiability criterion of meaning?
(c) What does Putnam mean by, “causes are not logical constructions out of their effects”?
(d) What lessons does the scientific study of diseases hold for the study of the mind?

Monday, January 25: Lecture
Wednesday, January 27: Lecture
Friday, January 29: Discussion

Week 3: Mind-brain Identity Theories

Req. Kim Ch. 4; Smart in Chalmers (Ch. 9)

(a) What is the distinction between an a priori and an empirical identity? Why is it important?
(b) What is the difference between a token identity and type identity theory? Why is it important?
(c) Why does Smart recommend describing the experience of a yellow-orange after-image as “There is something going on which is like what is going on when I have my eyes open, am awake, and there is an orange illuminated in good light in front of me...”?
(d) “If it is objected that the after-image is yellowy-orange but that a surgeon looking into your brain would see nothing yellowy-orange, my reply is that it is the experience of seeing yellowy-orange that is being described, and this experience is not a yellowy-orange something.” What is Smart’s point here?

Monday, February 1: Lecture
Wednesday, February 3: Lecture
Friday, February 5: Discussion

**Week 4: Modal objections to identity theories**

Req. Kripke & Hill in Chalmers (Chs. 32 & 33)

(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?

Monday, February 8: Lecture
Wednesday, February 10: Lecture
Friday, February 12: Discussion (REVIEW SESSION)

**CLASS TEST MONDAY FEB. 15**

**Week 5: Functionalism**

Req. Kim Ch. 5 and Putnam in Chalmers (Ch. 11)

Monday, February 15: Test
Wednesday, February 17: Lecture
Friday, February 19: Lecture

**Week 6: Functionalism and Intentionality**

Req. Searle in Chalmers (Ch. 63) and Dennett in Chalmers (Ch. 52)

Monday, February 22: Discussion
Wednesday, February 24: Lecture
Friday, February 26: Lecture

**Week 7: Causal-theoretic Functionalism**

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

Monday, March 1: Discussion
Wednesday, March 3: Lecture
Friday, March 5: Lecture

SPRING BREAK

Week 8: Objections to Functionalism

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?

Monday, March 15: Lecture
Wednesday, March 17: Lecture
Friday, March 19: Discussion

**CLASS TEST MONDAY MARCH 22**

Week 9: The Problem of Mental Causation

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 extrinsicalness of mental states"? Why is this a problem?
(e) What is the supervenience argument against mental causation?

Monday, March 22: Test
Wednesday, March 24: Lecture
Friday, March 26: Lecture

Week 10: Reduction and the Special Sciences

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?
(e) What is the supervenience argument against mental causation?

Monday, March 29: Discussion
Wednesday, March 31: Lecture
Friday, April 2: Lecture

Week 11: The Knowledge Argument

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?

Monday, April 5: Discussion
Wednesday, April 7: Lecture
Friday, April 9: Lecture

Week 12: Consciousness – the Mysterians

Req. Nagel in Chalmers (Ch. 25) and McGinn in Chalmers (Ch. 38)
Supp. Dennett in Chalmers (Ch.

(a) 
(b) 
(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?

Monday, April 12: Discussion
Wednesday, April 14: Lecture
Friday, April 16: Lecture

TERM PAPER DUE FRIDAY APRIL 16

Week 13: Consciousness – What Mystery?

Req. Dennett in Chalmers (Ch. 26) and Churchland in Chalmers (Ch. 36)

Monday, April 26
Wednesday, April 28
Friday, April 30
**Week 14: Representationalism and the ‘Transparency’ of Experience**

Req. Tye "Visual Qualia and Visual Content Revisited" in Chalmers (Ch. 42) and Schwitzgebel (on Telesis)
Supp. Byrne "Intentionalism Defended"

Monday, April 19: Discussion
Wednesday, April 21: Lecture
Friday, April 23: Lecture

**FINAL EXAM:** May 10, 10:30-12:30, Psych 249