PHIL 315/PNP 315: Philosophy of Mind
Spring 2011
Monday & Wednesday, 2:30-4pm
Location: Busch 100

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)? What is consciousness, and can it receive a scientific explanation? Is our common sense conception of mental states and processes compatible with the methods and assumptions of cognitive science?

Instructor
Peter Langland-Hassan (Wilson 101; 935-9531; langland-hassan@wustl.edu)
Office hours: Fri. 10-11am

Teaching assistants
Jan Plate (Wilson 116; jplate@wustl.edu)
Office hours: Tues. 3-5pm
Jan is your TA if your last name ends in letters A-K.

Isaac Wiegmans (Wilson 116; itwiegma@wustl.edu)
Office hours: Mon. 1:30-2:30pm, Wed. 1:30-2:30pm
Isaac is your TA if your last name ends in letters L-Z.

Texts
(1) J. Kim, Philosophy of Mind (Westview 3rd edition, 2011)
(3) Additional assigned articles will be available for download from Telesis.

Assessment
Two 5-7 page papers, each worth 30% of your grade.

Final exam (2 hours – 30%): Monday May 9, 6-8pm, Busch 100

10 Response sheets (10% of grade): these are graded only for completion. See the page on Response Sheets at the end of this syllabus for details.

Policies
No laptops in the classroom, please. Papers turned in late will be marked down as follows: one third of a grade (e.g. from A to A-) if turned in after class until midnight on the day due; a full grade (A to B) if turned in on either of the two days after it was originally due. I may not accept papers more than two days late.
TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 0: Introduction: kinds of minds

Wednesday, January 19: course introduction

Week 1: Marks of the Mental

Monday, January 24: (1) Kim Ch. 1, pp. 14-30 and
                  (2) Schwitzgebel (2008) "The Unreliability of Naïve Introspection" (on Telesis).

Wednesday, January 26: Same readings as Monday

Week 2: Mind and Behavior

Monday, January 31: (1) Kim Ch. 3, pp. 61-71 and
                    (2) Putnam in Chalmers (Ch. 7)

Wednesday, February 2: Same readings as Monday

Week 3: Mind-brain Identity Theories

Monday, February 7: (1) Kim Ch. 4 pp. 91-114, and
                    (2) Smart in Chalmers (Ch. 9)

Wednesday, February 9: Same readings as Monday

Week 4: Modal objections to identity theories

Monday, February 14: Kripke in Chalmers (Ch. 32)

Wednesday, February 16: Hill in Chalmers (Ch. 33)

**First paper assigned, Feb. 16**

Week 5: Functionalism

Monday, February 21: Kim Ch. 5 - pp. 139-165

Wednesday, February 23: Kim Ch. 6 - pp. 169-179

Week 6: Functionalism and Intentionality

Monday, February 28: Block in Chalmers ("Troubles with Functionalism") & skim Searle in Chalmers (Ch 63) if you're not already familiar with the "Chinese Room" argument

Wednesday, March 2: Dretske in Chalmers (Ch. 46).
**Week 7: Other perspectives on functionalism and folk-psychology**

Monday, March 7: Dennett in Chalmers (Ch. 52)

**First Paper Due March 7**

Wednesday, March 9: Churchland in Chalmers (Ch. 53)

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8: Consciousness and the Knowledge Argument**

Monday, March 21: Jackson in Chalmers (Ch. 28) & Kim Ch. 9 (pp.263-280) & Kim Ch. 10 (pp. 323-326)

**Second Paper Assigned March 28**

Wednesday, March 33: VanGulick “Understanding the phenomenal mind” (on Telesis)

**Week 9: Inverted Earth**

Monday, March 28: Block (1990) “Inverted Earth” (on Telesis)

Wednesday, March 30: Tye in Chalmers (Ch. 42) and Kim Ch. 9 (pp. 289-295)

**Week 10: Chalmers vs. Churchland**

Monday, April 4: Chalmers in Chalmers (Ch. 27)

Wednesday, April 6: Churchland in Chalmers (Ch. 36)

**Week 11: Qualia**

Monday, April 11: Dennett in Chalmers (Ch. 26)

**Second Paper Due April 11**

Wednesday, April 13: Same reading as Monday

**Week 12: Introspection and Self-Knowledge**

Monday, April 18: Armstrong, “Introspection” (on Telesis)

Wednesday, April 20: Shoemaker, Lecture 1 (on Telesis)
Week 13: Introspection continued

Monday, April 25: Byrne "Introspection" (on Telesis)

Wednesday, April 27: Langland-Hassan "Are Experiences Imaginable" (on Telesis)

Cumulative Final Exam, Monday May 9, 6pm-8pm.
Response Sheet

The point of these is to help focus and solidify your reading and to let me know when there are widespread questions or misunderstandings. Completing each one should not add more than 15 or 20 minutes onto your reading time. You'll save time by thinking about what your questions are and what you find most interesting about the article as you read.

Response sheets must be emailed to your TA (and CC'd to me: langland-hassan@wustl.edu) by 12 noon on the day the reading is to be discussed in class. This will allow me to look at them prior to class and adjust my lecture accordingly. They are graded only for completion. Your TA or I will occasionally respond with comments.

NOTE: PLEASE INCLUDE THE WORDS ‘RESPONSE SHEET’ IN THE SUBJECT OF YOUR EMAIL. Also, aside from week 5, the readings in Kim should not be the topics of Response Sheets (as they are already summaries of other texts).

The response sheet should have three numbered sections:

1) **Take Home Message:** a relatively succinct (not more than a short paragraph) statement of the main point(s) of the article. In explaining its core message, you'll need to say a bit about what motivates it—what problem or argument is it responding to?
2) **Interesting Point or Argument:** what was a highlight of the article for you?
3) **One or Two Questions:** these questions can either be for clarification or can represent a challenge to the author’s claims.

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Sample Response Sheet (for Schwitzgebel 2008):

1. Schwitzgebel argues that introspection is surprisingly unreliable in what it tells us about the nature of our conscious experiences, and that our knowledge of many matters outside the mind is “more secure”. This is in contrast to a long tradition in philosophy that has held that our introspective knowledge of our own minds is more certain than our knowledge of things outside the mind. He focuses on our knowledge of our own emotions, visual experiences, ongoing thoughts, and sensations.

2. A highlight was his discussion of the “sharpness” or “detailed-ness” of the visual field. At least initially, introspection seems to suggest that our conscious visual experience presents a wide and sharply detailed field of view. Yet, when forced to keep our eyes still and reflect on how much detail there is in our visual field outside of the point of fixation, it seems we have only a very coarse-grained awareness of detail in most of our visual field. His suggestions for how one could test this for oneself were helpful—e.g., instructing one to fixate on a particular object, or part of object, and then to carefully focus one’s attention anywhere but on the fixated point.
3: A first question is that I was not entirely clear on his distinction between “epistemic” and “phenomenal” senses of ‘appears’. Apparently, something phenomenally appears a certain way if it looks a certain way (e.g., one line might look longer than another). He thinks we can be wrong about this—wrong about the way something looks to us. The difference with “epistemic” appearances is that they don’t “attribute myself any particular phenomenology”—they just (what?) “express my opinions”? Well, not just opinions, since any of my opinions can easily be wrong, and claims of epistemic appearances are supposed to be almost infallible. He must mean “express my beliefs about my opinions” (e.g. “I believe the Cardinals will win”—as opposed to “the Cardinals will win”). Now, when I say “it looks to me like the top line is longer” this might be ambiguous. I might be making a claim “about visual phenomenology” or a claim of the form “I believe that it looks to be like the top line is longer”. The latter is a claim about epistemic appearances (if I understand him) and the former is a claim about phenomenal appearances.

A second question (turning the first into a potential criticism) is that it is not clear to me why we would be more prone to errors regarding phenomenal appearances than epistemic ones. If we express how things epistemically appear by expressing beliefs about our beliefs, and express how things phenomenally appear by expressing beliefs about how things look to us, why is one species of belief prone to be more secure than the other? They both involve beliefs about mental states—why are beliefs about beliefs more secure than beliefs about phenomenal appearances?