

Philosophy of Mind

Philosophy 320

Spring 2009

Time and Location:	MWF 1:00-1:50 pm, Norton 218
Instructor:	Professor David Braun, Department of Philosophy
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Office Hours:	Mondays 2:00-4:00 pm, and by appointment
Course Web Page:	UBLeans

We will discuss some fundamental questions about the nature of minds and mental states, and what is sometimes known as “the mind-body problem”. Are minds and mental states physical or non-physical in nature? Are mental states just complex dispositions to behave in certain ways? Are mental states identical with certain kinds of brain states? In what respect (if any) is a mind like a computer? Could a purely physical object be conscious? How can a mental state represent something, or be *about* something? Could a physical state of a brain or computer do this? Our consideration of these questions will begin with arguments for and against several theories of the nature of minds and mental states, including dualism, materialism, behaviorism, and functionalism.

Pre-requisites

The only formal pre-requisite is one prior philosophy course. But this will be an advanced course, and it will be helpful to have taken several prior philosophy courses.

Required Texts

Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, second edition.

David Chalmers (ed.), *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*.

Recommended Texts (on reserve at Capen)

Paul Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*, revised edition.

David Braddon-Mitchell & Frank Jackson, *The Philosophy of Mind and Cognition*

Required Work

1. Two short papers, about 3 pages each, on assigned topics. **Tentative due dates:** Friday, February 6 and Friday, March 27.
2. One in-class midterm examination. **Tentative date:** Friday, February 27.
4. A second in-class examination covering the last half of the course. **Definite date:** Monday, April 27.

Grading

I will grade each assignment on a 100-point scale. At the end of the semester, I will multiply each assignment's score by the percentages given below, sum the results, design a curve, and determine break-off points for letter grades.

1. First paper	20%
2. Second paper	25%
3. First exam	25%
4. Second exam	30%

Examinations

The examinations will consist of a mixture of true-false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and short-essay questions. Make-up exams (if any) will be long-essay exams, and will be offered only to those who have appropriate excuses and appropriate documentation.

Conflicts

Those of you who have out-of-town commitments due to membership in a college organization (e.g., sports teams) must let me know *no later than the second week of class* if you anticipate having a commitment that conflicts with an exam.

In-Class Announcements, E-mail Announcements, and UBLearns

I will make various announcements in class, including readings, changes in topics, and definite dates for papers and examinations. I will also periodically e-mail announcements through UBLearns. You will be responsible for all of these announcements. Some of them will appear on the class's UBLearns site.

Contacting Me

Please use e-mail to contact me: dbraun2@buffalo.edu. Use your buffalo.edu e-mail account and put "Philosophy of Mind" in the subject line. I am likely to delete messages from non-buffalo.edu accounts.

Special Needs

If you have a disability that you think requires special accommodations (e.g., note-takers or extended time on exams), then inform me immediately and contact Disability Services, 25 Capen Hall, 645-2608, to receive documentation of your disability. You are responsible for notifying me and assuring that I receive documentation from DS *by the end of the second week of class*.

Academic Honesty and Student Conduct

I expect you to conform to all University policies regarding academic honesty, plagiarism, and conduct. For information about UB's policies, see the following URLs.

Academic Integrity: <http://academicintegrity.buffalo.edu/policies/index.php>

Student Conduct: <http://www.ub-judiciary.buffalo.edu/rulereg.php>

Reading List and Tentative Schedule

I will periodically make reading assignments from the list below, at approximately the times indicated. The schedule is tentative, and there may be additions or subtractions to the readings and topics. K = Kim. C = Chalmers. U = UBLearns. W = Web. L = Churchland. B = Braddon-Mitchell and Jackson.

1. Dualism (Jan 12 - Jan 26)

K: Chapters 1 and 2.

C: Rene Descartes, "Meditations 2 & 6", 10-20. Descartes, "Passions of the Soul," 21-23. Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes' Myth", 32-38.

U: Antoine Arnauld, "Objections IV" and Descartes's "Reply".

Recommended: L, 1-22 and 32-33. B, 1-17.

2. Behaviorism (Jan 28 - Feb 2)

K: Chapter 3.

C: Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes' Myth", 32-38. Rudolf Carnap, "Psychology in Physical Language", 39-44. Hilary Putnam, "Brains and Behavior", 45-54. Bertrand Russell, "Analogy", 667-669.

W: Ned Block, "The Mind as the Software of the Brain," section 1.1 only.

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/faculty/block/papers/msb.html>

Recommended: L, 23-25, 54-55, 67-81, 88-91. B, chap. 2.

☞ **First short paper due Friday, Feb 6 (tentative due date)** ☞

3. The Identity Theory (Feb 4 - Feb 11)

K: Chapter 4.

C: J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes", 60-67.

Recommended: L, 26-35, 96-98, 123-45. B, chap. 6. C, Saul Kripke, Selection from "Naming and Necessity", 329-333.

4. Functionalism (Feb 13 - Feb 25)

K: Chapter 5, 115-132, and Chapter 6, all of it.

W: Ned Block, "What is Functionalism?",

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/faculty/block/papers/functionalism.pdf>

C: Ned Block, "Troubles with Functionalism", pp. 94-98.

Recommended: L, 36-42, 92-95. C, Lewis, "Psycho-physical & Theoretical Identifications", 88-93. B, chaps. 3, 5, 7.

☞ **First examination, Friday, February 27 (tentative date)** ☞

5. Minimal Materialism and Qualia (Mar 2 - Mar 6)

K: Chapter 1, 11-14. Chapter 8, 205-224.

C: Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia", 273-280; David Lewis, "What Experience Teaches", 291-294..

Recommended: C, the rest of Lewis, "What Experience Teaches." B, chap. 8.

Spring Break, March 9 - March 13

6. Intentionality and Strong Artificial Intelligence (Mar 16 - Mar 20)

K: pp. 97-102.

C: John Searle, "Can Computers Think?", 669-675.

Recommended: W, Block, "The Mind as the Software of the Brain", section 4 . L, 92-95, 99-122. B, 107-111.

7. Intentionality and Externalism about Content (Mar 23 - Mar 27)

K: Chapter 9

C: Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'", 582-587. Tyler Burge, "Individualism and the Mental", 599-605.

Recommended: B, chap. 12.

☞ Second paper due Friday, March 27 (tentative date) ☞

8. Externalism and Self-Knowledge (Mar 30 - Apr 3)

K: Chapter 9, 268-270.

C: Michael McKinsey, "Anti-Individualism and Privileged Access", 634-638. Anthony Brueckner, "What an Individualist Knows A Priori", 639-643.

9. Psychosemantics (Apr 6 - Apr 10)

K: Chapter 9.

C: Dretske, "A Recipe for Thought", 491-499.

W: Block, "The Mind as the Software of the Brain," URL above, especially sections 3.1-3.2.

Recommended: C, Fodor, "Propositional Attitudes," 542-555. L, 63-66, 31.

10. Representational Theories of Qualia (Apr 13 - Apr 17)

C: Michael Tye, "Visual Qualia and Visual Content Revisited."

U: Tye, "Precis of *Ten Problems of Consciousness*." Block, "Is Experiencing Just Representing?" Tye, "Response to Discussants".

11. Catchup and Review, Apr 20- Apr 24

☞ Second Exam, Monday, April 27 ☞