

PHIL/MIND

What can philosophy tell us about the mind? Surely in the 21st century we should leave study of the mind to neurobiologists, cognitive psychologists...in short *scientists*. Shouldn't we?



This course is about those questions. We will explore, in very general terms, scientific approaches to explaining the mind, and investigate challenges to the adequacy of these approaches. Is having a mind a matter of having:

- a complex neurobiological structure (a brain)?
- a certain kind of functional or computational organization?

or is it a matter of having

- a non-physical soul?

Can any of these views account for *conscious* experience? Do they explain how we have thoughts that are *about* things?

LOGISTICS

Course meets Mondays and Wednesdays 1:15 – 2:30 in Pearsons 202.

I am Peter Kung. My office is Pearsons 201B, email peter.kung@pomona.edu. Office hours are Monday 2:30-3:30, Tuesday/Thursday 1–2, and of course by appointment.

READINGS



Primary source readings are on Sakai, and you will submit written work via Sakai as well, so must have access. All registered 5C students should already be able to log in. If you don't already use Sakai, verify *right away* that have access.

<http://sakai.claremont.edu>

In addition to the primary source readings on Sakai, I've ordered a pretty clear textbook on phil/mind, available at Huntley Bookstore.

- David Braddon-Mitchell & Frank Jackson. (2007). *Philosophy of Mind and Cognition*, 2nd Edition. Blackwell.

REQUIREMENTS

You must complete all requirements to get credit for the course.

This semester I'm going to experiment with something new. Assigning papers early in the course is of questionable value because you don't know much about the subject yet. But at the same time it's nice to get feedback on how you're doing early on. We'll have two short exams earlier on in the course.

1. Early exams (15%)

These early exams will be in-class (they won't take a whole class period) and, very likely, true/false or multiple choice.

2. In-class midterm (20%)
3. Term paper (30%)
4. Final exam or paper, your choice (30%)
(Graduating seniors must take the paper option)

Class participation influences borderline grades. You'd be surprised how often grades wind up in the border region...

WRITING

Everyone needs outside feedback on their writing. *Everyone*. I'll show you a page from one of my recent "finished" papers that a colleague *savaged* with incisive, constructive suggestions and lots and lots of deletions. I have to be nice to my colleagues to get them to give me feedback.



Fortunately for you, you can simply go to *The Writing Center* (Pomona's is on the 2nd floor of Smith Campus Center, above the Coop Fountain; ever college has one). Writing centers offer free, one-on-one consultations at any stage of the writing process — from generating a thesis and structuring an argument to fine-tuning a draft. Consultations are available by appointment, which you can make



online:

<http://writing.pomona.edu/>

For some of you this will be your first experience with philosophical writing. In philosophy there's a heavy emphasis on *arguments*, both on presenting an author's argument accurately and developing your own. We will discuss what I expect in your writing throughout the semester. For a preview, see:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>.

They are also helpful (perhaps just to review) even if you have written many philosophy papers for other courses.

You will choose your own topic for the term paper. In my view perhaps the toughest part of writing is coming up with a good topic question, a question that is a) provocative or interesting, b) answerable, c) requires some depth to explore, d) is sufficiently clear (i.e., isn't too vague), and e) isn't too broad to address in the page limit. That's a lot. But it's very difficult to write an excellent paper if you are asking, e.g., a "so what?" question, or posing a great question that's simply too difficult to answer. I urge you to start mulling over potential topics early and to run your ideas past me.

READING

Class discussion works best when you to come to class with opinions about what the author argues for and how she argues for it, and, most importantly, with critical thoughts about the position and arguments. See Pryor's helpful guidelines:



<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

After you do the reading you should be able to extract and *concisely* present the author's main line of argument. You should then be able to use your presentation to pinpoint a premise or inference that you have a criticism or comment about.

Please *bring the day's reading to class*. We do a fair amount of close reading in class and to participate you must have...the thing we are reading. Either bring a paper copy or work directly from your computer. (If you bring your computer you might want to get to class early to ensure you get a seat at the big table.)

POLICIES

Lateness is bad, very bad; unexcused lateness is penalized **one point** (on Pomona's weird 12-point scale) **per day late**. Extenuating circumstances should be serious enough to require attention from a doctor, your adviser, or your College's dean. On the other hand, I am generally flexible if you let me know *well in advance* that a particular due date poses a problem for you.



You are expected to abide by the code of conduct of your college, and we'll be discussing the application of these codes to specific assignments as they approach. In particular, any work that is submitted as your own but written in whole or in part by someone else is plagiarism. *Just for the record*: violation of the honesty code results in an F for the course and is subject to further disciplinary action.

No early final exams. Please make your travel plans accordingly!

SCHEDULE

BMJ = Braddon-Mitchell & Jackson

WHAT'S TO EXPLAIN? WED 1/21
Descartes, Meditation II

SUPERVENIENCE MON 1/26
BMJ, chapter 1

DUALISM WED 1/28
Hart, from *Engines of the Soul*
Descartes, Meditation VI
BMJ, chapter 1



CONSCIOUSNESS
The first person perspective Mon 2/2
Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?"
Chalmers, "The puzzle of conscious experience"

Efron Preparation Wed 2/4
Likely readings: Rosenthal on higher-order theories of consciousness and Block on phenomenal vs. access consciousness.

EFRON LECTURES

Ned Block, New York University
David Rosenthal, City University of New York
Mon 2/9, 4:15 p.m. &
Tue 2/10, 11 a.m.

Attendance at both talks is **required**. No regular class meeting that week. More information, including location and readings, TBA.

PRESIDENT'S DAY, 2/16

How do we study consciousness? Wed 2/18

Goldman, "Science, publicity, and consciousness"
Dennett, "Who's on first? Heterophenomenology explained"

MATERIALISM

Mind as Behavior: Behaviorism Mon 2/23

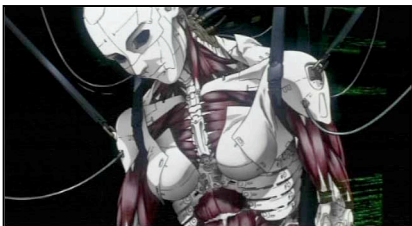
Ryle, "Descartes' Myth"
Turing, "Computing, machinery and intelligence"
BMJ, chapter 2

Mind as Brain: Identity theory Wed 2/25 Mon 3/2

Smart, "Sensations and brain processes"
Armstrong, "Causal theory of mind"
BMJ, chapter 6

Mind as Computer: Functionalism Wed 3/4 (Mon 3/23)

Turing, "Computing, machinery and intelligence" (focus on §§ 3–5, rather than the stuff on the Turing text)
Putnam, "The nature of mental states"
Block, "What is functionalism?"



Block, "Troubles with functionalism"
BMJ, chapters 3, 5, & 7

MID-TERM EXAM, WED 3/11 SPRING BREAK

PUZZLES ABOUT CONSCIOUSNESS

Something About Mary Wed 3/25

Sacks, "Stereo Sue"
Jackson, "Epiphenomenal qualia"
Kathleen Akins, "A Bat Without Qualities"



BMJ, chapter 8

Modal arguments Mon 3/30, Wed 4/1

Kripke, from *Naming and Necessity*
Shoemaker, "The first person perspective"
BMJ, chapters 4 and final section of chapter 6

THOUGHT

Content Externalism Mon, 4/6

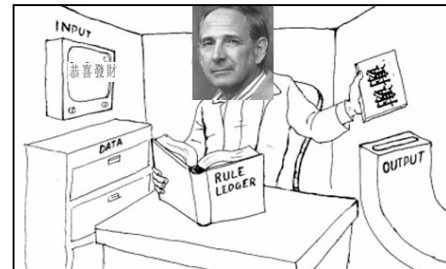
Putnam, "The meaning of 'meaning'"
BMJ, chapter 12

Theory of Content Wed, 4/8 & Mon 4/13

Dretske, "A recipe for thought"
Fodor, on asymmetric dependence
Millikan, "Biosemantics"
BMJ, chapters 11 & 13

TERM PAPER DUE MON 4/13 AT 9 A.M.

Chinese Room Wed, 4/15



Searle, "Is the brain's mind a computer program?"
Churchlands, "Could a machine think?"
BMJ, chapter 7

The Intentional Stance Mon, 4/20

Dennett, "True believers"
BMJ, chapter 9

HOW WE LEARN ABOUT THE MIND WED, 4/22 Mon 4/29

Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, "Does the autistic child have a 'theory of mind'?"
Gordon & Baker, "Autism and the 'theory of mind' debate"
Carruthers, "Autism as Mind-Blindness"

FINAL EXAM WEDNESDAY MAY 13, 2 P.M. (PER 5C SCHEDULE)