Philosophy of Mind (PHIL 235)
Bates College, Hathorn 104
Professor William Seeley
T/Th 1:10 – 2:30
Office Hours, T/Th 9:30-10:30

Course Description:
What is a mind? Are minds distinct from brains? If so, what is the relationship between minds and brains? Could a brain literally lose its mind? If it were possible, would the individual become a person without thoughts? Would it even be a person at all? Questions like these are the domain of philosophy of mind. In this field philosophers ask questions about the nature mind, the relationship between the mind and its environment, and the ability of anyone to know the contents of other minds. For instance, what is a belief, what is a desire, and how do these two types of mental states combine to form our human conception of the world. In this course we will examine these sorts of questions. The topics discussed will include: dualism, behaviorism, physicalism, the nature of psychological explanation, consciousness, and the nature of mental representation. This course is a good course for students who are also interested in cognitive science, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science.

Course Goals:
The goals of this course are threefold. We will try to come to an understanding of what the philosophical distinction between minds and bodies is, and more importantly what it is not. In this context we will evaluate contemporary debates about reduction, physicalism, and personhood. These debates will be used to evaluate the philosophical conception of mind, the commonsense conception of a person, and their relation to scientific theories in psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience.

Requirements:
Students will be asked to write two 3 page papers (worth 15% of the final grade each), a 6-page midterm paper (worth 30% of the final grade), and a final paper (worth 30% of the final grade). Students will be given a choice between two assigned topics for each paper. Class participation is a requirement. Attendance is a minimum requirement for class participation. Therefore, absences will affect a student’s final grade. In addition students will complete 10 short (2 minute) "surprise" reading quizzes during the semester on dates to be determined. The average of these quizzes will be factored in as 10% of the final grade.

Texts:
- David Chalmers, Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). (C)
- Electronic resources and pdf files on LYCEUM. (L)
Some Miscellaneous Notes and Guidelines:

Moral behavior is the grounds for, and the framework of, a healthy society. In this regard it is each of our responsibility as an individual within the community of our classroom to act responsibly. This includes following the rules and guidelines set out by the College for academic behavior. Plagiarism is a serious matter. It goes without saying that each of you is expected to do his or her own work and to cite EVERY text that is used to prepare a paper for this class. In general philosophy papers are NOT research papers. Your response papers should not involve any outside research and you should be able to manage your final papers using only material from the syllabus, assigned supplemental readings, and class discussion.

As a general rule, I ask that you not use the internet for your research except as assigned in class.

Response papers are designed to give students a chance to stretch their legs a bit with the material and give me a chance to assess your understanding of the material. These papers should offer a philosophical defense of your take on the issue at hand. But this does not mean that they are a free forum for opinions. Make sure that your papers set out the philosophical issues germane to the question and that your responses address the relative virtues and shortcomings of theoretical positions discussed in class.

Finally, the reading list for this class is arranged in topics as opposed to individual sessions. I will announce the particular readings for each class as we go along. This will allow us some flexibility in discussion so that we can spend more time on issues of interest to the class. Readings that we do not assigned in class should be treated as supplemental readings. I will also occasionally upload supplementary materials to LYCEUM for students interested in pursuing particular issues beyond class discussion.
Assignments:

All assignments are to be handed in **hard copy** in class the day that they are due **AND** in the dropbox on LYCEUM prior to class that day. I will not grade papers that have not been handed in both places.

**First Paper (15%)** - Please write a 3-page (900 word) paper on one of the topics distributed on LYCEUM. Your paper should be double spaced with one inch margins and in a 12 point font.

- Topics Distributed: 09/18/12
- Due Date: 09/27/12 (hardcopy in class and in the dropbox on LYCEUM)

**Midterm Paper (30%)** - Write a 6 page paper (1800 word) on one of two topics to be announced on the distribution date for the midterm. Your paper should be double-spaced in 12 point font with 1” margins. The purpose of this paper is twofold: a) evaluate a standard argument in the literature; and b) demonstrate that you can synthesize the material covered in the 1st half of the semester into a coherent position.

- Topics Distributed: 10/16/12
- Due Date: 10/26/12 (hardcopy in class and in the dropbox on LYCEUM)

**Third Paper (10%)** - Please write a 3 page (900 word) paper on one of the topics distributed on LYCEUM. Your paper should be double-spaced in 12 point font with 1” margins. The purpose of this assignment is to evaluate your understanding of the material introduced after the midterm.

- Topics Distributed: 11/13/12
- Due Date: 11/29/12 (hardcopy in class and in the dropbox on LYCEUM)

**Final Paper – cumulative (40%)**

- Due Date: 12/15/12 @ 12:30pm (hardcopy in my mailbox in Hedge and in the dropbox on LYCEUM)
Schedule of Readings:

**Topic 1: Introduction: The Nature of Mind?**

**Dualism:**
- Descartes
- *Meditation II*

**Behaviorism:**
- Gilbert Ryle
- *Descartes' Myth*
- Jaegwon Kim
- *Mind as Behavior*
- Hilary Putnam
- *Brains and Behavior*

**Identity Theory**
- Place
- *Is Consciousness a Brain Process?*
- Jaegwon Kim
- *Mind as the Brain*

**Functionalism**
- Hilary Putnam
- *The Nature of Mental States*
- David Armstrong
- *The Causal Theory of the Mind*
- William Bechtel & Jennifer Mundale
- *Multiple Realizability Revisited*
- Kandel
- *In Search of Memory* (excerpt)

**Topic 3: Consciousness and Content**
- Ned Block
- *Concepts of Consciousness*
- Thomas Nagel
- *What Is It Like to Be a Bat?*
- Kathleen Akins
- *A Bat Without Qualities*
- Howard Hughes
- *Sensory Exotica* (excerpt)
- Kathleen Akins
- *What It Is Like to be Boring and Myopic.*
- Frank Jackson
- *Epiphenomenal Qualia*
- Daniel Dennett
- *Quining Qualia*
- David Lewis
- *What Experience Teaches*
- David Chalmers
- *Two Concepts of Mind*

**Topic 4: The Nature of Intentionality**
- Roderick Chisholm
- *Intentional Inexistence*
- Fred Dretske
- *A Recipe for Thought*
- Ruth Millikan
- *Biosemantics*
- Kathleen Akins
- *Of Sensation and the "Aboutness" of Mental States*
Philosophy of Mind: syllabus

Bibliography:


Kathleen Akins, "What It Is Like to be Boring and Myopic," in B. Dahlbom, Dennett and His Critics (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1993)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings (* = suggested supplementary reading)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/06</td>
<td>Descartes, Meditation II: 10-13. (C)</td>
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| 09/11      | Ryle, The Concept of Mind: 32-38. (C)  
Kim, Ch. 3, Mind and Behavior: 61-90. (K)                      |                                                  |
| 09/13      | Putnam, Brains and Behavior: 45-54. (C)                                                                        |                                                  |
| 09/18      | Place, Is Consciousness a Brain Process: 55-60. (C)  
Kim, Ch. 4, Mind as Brain: 91-128. (K)                      | Topics assigned for 1st paper                    |
| 09/20      | Putnam, The Nature of Mental States: 73-79. (C)                                                               |                                                  |
| 09/25      | Armstrong, The Causal Theory of Mind: 80-88. (C)                                                              |                                                  |
| 09/27      | Bechtel & Mundale, Multiple Realizability Revisited: 175-207. (L)                                           | 1st Paper Due 9/28                               |
| 10/02      | Kandel, *In Search of Memory*: 135-316. (K)  
*Mayford & Kandel, Genetic Approaches to Memory Storage: 463-470. (L) |                                                  |
| 10/04      | Kandel, *In Search of Memory*: 135-316. (K)  
*Mayford & Kandel, Genetic Approaches to Memory Storage: 463-470. (L) |                                                  |
| 10/09      | Discussion: Multiple Realizability and the Nature of Mind                                                    |                                                  |
| 10/11      | Block, Concepts of Consciousness: 206-218. (C)                                                                |                                                  |
| 10/16      | Nagel, What Is It Like to Be a Bat?: 219-226. (C)                                                             | Midterm Topics Assigned                          |
| 10/17 &    | !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!FALL BREAK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! |                                                  |
| 10/21      |                                                                                                              |                                                  |
| 10/23      | Akins, A Bat Without Qualities: 345-358. (L)                                                                  |                                                  |
| 10/30      | Akins, What It Is Like to be Boring and Myopic. (L)                                                            |                                                  |
| 11/01      | Jackson, Epiphenomenal Qualia: 273-280. (C)                                                                    |                                                  |
| 11/06      | Dennett, Quining Qualia: 226-246. (C)                                                                           |                                                  |
| 11/08      | Lewis, What Experience Teaches: 281-294. (C)                                                                   |                                                  |
| 11/13      | Discussion: Consciousness and Phenomenal Content  
Chalmers, Two Concepts of Mind: 11-31. (L)                    | 3rd paper topics assigned                         |
| 11/15      | Chisolm, Intentional Inexistence: 479-484. (C)                                                                  |                                                  |
| 11/17 -    | !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!Thanksgiving BREAK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! |                                                  |
| 11/25      |                                                                                                              |                                                  |
| 11/27      | Dretske, A Recipe for Thought: 491-499. (C)                                                                    |                                                  |
| 11/29      | Milliken, Biosemantics: 500-509. (C)                                                                             | 3rd paper due                                   |
| 12/04      | Akins, Of Sensory Systems and the "Aboutness" of Mental States: 337-372. (L)                                    |                                                  |
| 12/06      | Discussion: What if intentionality really were narcissistic?                                                    |                                                  |
|            | Final Paper Due on the Day the Exam Is Scheduled (there is no exam)                                             |                                                  |
First Paper, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy 235, Professor Seeley
Due: September 28, 2012 @ Midnight in my office mailbox and the LYCEUM dropbox.

Please write a 3 page (900 word, double spaced) paper on one of the following topics. Your paper should identify and explain the philosophical problem and theoretical solution referred to in the prompt, explicitly state your position on the matter, and then provide an argument for this position based on the relevant material from our readings.

**Topic 1:** What is the beetle-in-the-box argument against dualism? Why does Ryle think that the dualist project is a "non-starter"? Do you find that either is a definitive argument against dualism?

**Topic 2:** Is it plausible to think that conscious experiences are identical to brain states?

**Topic 3:** Do you find the possibility of X-Worlders, Super-Spartans, and their cousins are sufficient to challenge the plausibility of logical behaviorism?

**Topic 4:** Logical Behaviorism and Identity Theory (also called the Topic Neutral Approach) can be interpreted as linguistic theses. Do you find either of these strategies to be a plausible method for constructing a theory of mind and explaining away attendant philosophical difficulties? Choose one theory and defend your analysis.

Good Luck! Have Fun!

Bill
Midterm Paper, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy 235, Winter 2011, Professor Seeley

Due: November 2nd at 5pm in the dropbox on LYCEUM and in hard copy in my mailbox

Please write a 6 page (1800 word, double spaced) paper on one of the following topics. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that you can synthesize the material from the first half of the semester and evaluate a range of solutions to some general problem within philosophy of mind.

**Topic 1:** One can argue that debates in the philosophy of mind between dualists, behaviorists, and identity theorists are primarily linguistic, or about understanding how to treat the language we use to refer to mental states. Explain what this means in each of these cases and and evaluate the general adequacy of this strategy for understanding what a mind is and what mental states are like.

**Topic 2:** Are functionalists dualists? Is this OK?

**Topic 3:** What do you think about multiple realization now after reading Bechtel & Mundale and Kandel?

**Topic 4:** How does what you have learned about bats challenge the multiple realization argument? Does the answer to this question raise the prospects for a successful rapprochement between neuroscience and philosophy of mind?

**Topic 5:** Is there really something that we cannot understand about what it is like to be a bat? What can neuroscience contribute to our understanding of bat minds and what does this tell us about the prospects for a materialist or physicalist theory of mind.

**Topic 6:** If we can't tell what it is like to be a bat do we need to be dualists?

Good Luck! Have Fun!

Bill
Third Paper, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy 235, Professor Seeley
Due: November 30, 2012 @ Midnight in my office mailbox and the LYCEUM dropbox.

Please write a 3 page (900 word, double spaced) paper on one of the following topics. Your paper should identify and explain the philosophical problem and theoretical solution referred to in the prompt, explicitly state your position on the matter, and then provide an argument for this position based on the relevant material from our readings.

   **Topic 1:** What is the issue raised by the discussion of the magnetosome in Ruth Millikan's paper and is her proposed solution satisfactory?

Good Luck! Have Fun!

Bill
Philosophy of Mind: syllabus