

PHIL 331: Mind, Spring 2020
Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30–3:45 p.m., Macmillan 100 (classroom)

Cole Mitchell, Ph.D., Lecturer in Philosophy
 Macmillan 315 (office); cmitchell@wells.edu; 315-364-3314
 Office Hours: MW 12:55–2:25 p.m.; and by appointment

Course Description

What is it to have a mind? What is the mind's relation to the brain? What sort of mental life do other animals have, if any? Is it possible for man-made machines to have a mind, and what can we learn about the human mind from studying these machines? Is our common-sense understanding of minds as containing beliefs and desires a pre-scientific mistake? If not, how do our minds come to have these sorts of attitudes about something? And can we ever get a satisfying explanation of 'raw feels' or phenomenal consciousness? In this course, we consider these questions and related ones in recent philosophy of mind, occasionally bringing in research at the intersections of philosophy of mind, psychology, and neuroscience.

Required Texts

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

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate an ability to think critically and independently about philosophical questions and positions.
 - a. Students will develop papers and essays that critically evaluate philosophical views and address philosophical questions from their own perspective.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to articulate philosophical conceptions of mind.
 - a. Students will successfully complete papers and exams on philosophical conceptions of mind.
3. Students will increase their ability to engage in civil debate and argumentation.
 - a. Students will seek constructive ways to understand and assess conflicting views.
 - b. Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze arguments and recognize unsupported claims and other common problems with arguments.
4. Students will practice and develop their ability to work through difficult texts.

Class Requirements and Expectations

1. Attendance & Participation:

Students are expected to attend class on a highly consistent basis. In the event of an absence, it is best to contact a classmate or me immediately via e-mail to find out what was missed and to confirm the assignment for the next class period. It is your responsibility to make up work from missed classes—e.g., by meeting with classmates or borrowing class notes from classmates. Absences and tardiness will negatively affect your grade. If a student accumulates excessive absences, s/he either will be assessed a heavy penalty on the final grade for the course or will be dropped from the course altogether.

In addition to coming to class, you are expected to participate actively in class. This first requires reading the assigned material. As you read, try to develop an interpretation of what you are reading; highlight difficult passages and lingering questions to bring up in class; attempt to figure out the basic conclusion. Also, please note: excellent participation is courteous, thoughtful engagement. So treat everyone and all viewpoints with the basic courtesy that you desire for yourself and your own views.

Finally ...

- i. **Do not text or use your cell phone during class, as this is very distracting.**
- ii. **If you use an electronic device to take notes, do not use it for any other purposes during class.**

Violations of this policy will result in automatic letter grade deductions from your class participation grade and may result in expulsion from the class.

2. Writing Assignments:

I will distribute guidelines for these in class (or via email). Since they will often form the basis of our class discussions on the days that they are due, no late writing assignments will be accepted unless there are extraordinary reasons for their lateness. I will assign a 4–6 page essay due sometime in the middle of the semester, and you will have the opportunity to revise and improve it throughout the remainder of the semester.

3. Class Discussion Facilitation:

Class meetings will be organized around discussion of the assigned readings. Each student is required to facilitate class discussion, with my help and support, on a specific reading *one* time during the semester.

What's involved in a facilitation? First, succinctly present the arguments and most significant passages from the day's reading or a segment of it (do not try to give an exhaustive report of the reading). Second, engage classmates in dialogue through philosophically significant questions (you should have at least four prepared questions to raise for discussion). Third, explore possible implications and criticisms of the ideas raised in the reading. Finally, students are required to turn in an outline and guide to their facilitation at the beginning of the class period in which their facilitation occurs. Your facilitation grade will be based on your presentation and outline/guide. If an outline/guide is turned in late, points will be deducted, with no exceptions. Also, remember that I am available during office hours and by appointment to discuss with you ideas for your presentation.

4. Exams:

There will be a midterm and a final exam. I will distribute study guides for each exam a week in advance.

Grading Formula

1. Attendance & Participation	10%
2. Class Facilitation	5%
3. Writing Assignments (cumulative)	35%
4. Midterm Exam	25%
5. Final Exam	25%

Tentative Course Schedule

January

16: <i>Intro to Descartes</i>	
22: <i>Descartes' dualism</i>	Textbook chs. 1–2
27: <i>Descartes and his critics</i>	other readings
29: <i>Rivals to interactionism</i>	other readings

February

03: <i>Bayle on animal souls</i>	other readings
05: <i>Locke on thinking matter</i>	other readings
10: <i>Huxley on epiphenomenalism</i>	Textbook ch. 3
12: <i>Behaviorism</i>	Textbook chs. 5, 7
17–19: <i>Identity-theory</i>	Textbook chs. 8–10, 32
24–26: <i>Functionalism</i>	Textbook chs. 11–14

March

02–04: <i>Rivals to realism</i>	Textbook chs. 52–53
16–23: <i>Computational theories</i>	other readings
25–30: <i>Mental content</i>	Textbook chs. 46–47

April

01–13: <i>Metaphysical relations</i>	Textbook chs. 19, 22
15–29: <i>Consciousness</i>	Textbook chs. 25, 28–30, 27

May

06 <i>FINAL EXAM</i>	2:30 p.m.
----------------------	-----------