

Phil 236-1 (1027), 3 credits, Winter 2020, Online

<http://scottoconnor.org/self>

Self: Mind

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1/2/2020–2/19/2020

Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the faculty. Students will be notified of such changes ahead of time via Blackboard.

Copyright

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Catalog Description

This course introduces students to the philosophical study of mind. Students will learn how their unique psychologies play a role in distinguishing themselves from others, as well as consider how their psychologies are shaped by their environment and biology. The course also focuses on the relationship between mind and body.

Course Description

The primary goal of the course is to make students aware of their mental lives and the significance their mental lives have on questions about personal identity and naturalism. It will serve majors and minors in Philosophy and Religion as well as the wider student population. It introduces the former to the philosophical study of mind, which will serve as a spring-board to higher-level courses in mind, the philosophy of psychology, and related issues in epistemology and metaphysics. For the latter, the course will offer the opportunity to analyze the ways in which their unique psychologies shape who and what they are, and, at the same time, offer the opportunity to analyze the ways in which their psychologies are affected by their biology and environment.

The course also promises to teach students to be tolerant in three distinct ways. First, questions about whether the mind can be explained by the natural sciences is key to deciding the scope of natural science, and, by extension, the nature of the reality we inhabit. The study of mind thus serves as a useful bulwark against an over-confidence in current scientific paradigms. Second, questions about whether, and to what extent, animals have mental states has been taken as key to deciding what if any moral status they enjoy. The study of mind thus serves as a bulwark against speciesism. Third, questions about the nature of psychological traits are key to deciding whether, and how, our environment determines how we act. Thus the study of mind makes students aware of how the actions of their fellow citizens are affected by their environment, not merely their intrinsic features.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to (i) identify their own psychological characteristics, (ii) interpret readings ranging from newspaper articles to literary and philosophical texts, as well as artworks and movies, (iii) define fundamental philosophical ideas and concepts, (iv) compare different theories of the mind, (v) apply these theories to settle questions of survival and mentality, and (vi) manage their studies in a responsible and timely manner.

General Education Information

Successfully completing this course satisfies one Tier 2 Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies requirement. It teaches the following two University-wide Learning Goals: (1) Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, (2) Written Communication. For further information about the General Education Program see <http://njcu.edu/departments/general-education>.

Required Textbooks

Available in the campus book store and online retailers.

- Kim, Jaegwon. *The Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2010, listed as *Kim* in schedule of readings.

- Perry, John. *Dialogue on Consciousness: Minds, Brains, and Zombies*. Hackett, 2018, listed as *DIAL* in schedule of readings.

Required Media

- 'Star Trek: The Next Generation 'Second Chances' S6 E24' available on Netflix, and to rent for \$1.99 on Amazon, Apple TV, Google Play, etc.

Course Website

There is both a Blackboard site and website for this course (link on first page). Clicking the first link on the left panel within the Blackboard site will bring you to the course website. All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard. Readings, notes, etc. will be posted on the course website. Note that Blackboard difficulties are rare and automatically reported to instructors. Under no circumstance will a student's report of a Blackboard difficulty be reason for an extension. It is your responsibility to contact Blackboard support for help.

Requirements

- *Workload*: Expect to spend an average of 12–16 hours per week completing the readings and assignments. NJCU abides by the Federal and State definitions of a credit hour and adopts a policy consistent with the Carnegie Unit. A three-credit class represents 112.5 hours total of work. See [here](#) for more details.
- *Reading quizzes* administered through Blackboard. 7 will be assigned. You must complete 5. If you complete more than 5, the lowest grades will be dropped.
- *Essays (500–750 words)* submitted through Blackboard. 7 will be assigned. You must complete 5. If you complete more than 5, the lowest grades will be dropped. Your last submitted essay will serve as your signature assignment.
- *Grade distribution*: Reading quizzes—10 points each (50 total); Essays—10 points each (50 total).
- *Grade Breakdown*:

| | | | | |
|--------|----|--|-------|----|
| 96–100 | A | | 77–79 | C+ |
| 90–95 | A- | | 73–76 | C |
| 87–89 | B+ | | 70–72 | C- |
| 83–86 | B | | 60–69 | D |
| 80–82 | B- | | 0–59 | F |

Policies

- **Student Responsibility**: This syllabus outlines the required text, assignments, requirements, and policies for this course. By taking this course, you agree to read this syllabus and be bound by those requirements and policies.

- *Academic Integrity:* All the work you turn in (including papers, drafts, and discussion board posts) must be written by you specifically for this course. It must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Being a student at NJCU requires you to follow [NJCU's Academic Integrity Policy](#). Penalties for violations are as follows: 1st infraction will result in a 0 for the assignment. 2nd infraction will result in a 0 for the entire course & application for permanent record on student's transcript. (Repeated violations can lead to expulsion from NJCU).
- *Communication:* To comply with Federal Privacy Laws (FERPA) and NJCU policies, all communication will be through Blackboard and/or official NJCU e-mail. Check Blackboard daily. For further information see <http://scottoconnor.org/contact/>.
- *Format for Written Work:* Submit work to Blackboard as either a MS Word file or pdf. Blackboard will not allow any other format. All work must be typed and neatly presented. Note that NJCU students have free access to MS Word through Office 365 Online.
- *General Education Program Assessment:* General Education courses participate in programmatic assessment of the six University-wide student learning goals. They include instruction in, and assessment of, at least two of these learning goals. Signature assignments, which may include document, picture, sound, or video files, are scored using approved program rubrics. Results are aggregated to provide information about the Gen Ed program as a whole. Your name will not be included in any programmatic assessment data.
- *Grading:* Grades will be available within 1–2 weeks of an assignment being submitted. See: <http://scottoconnor.org/resources/grading> for further information.
- *Late work & Make-up Policy:* See the assignment schedule below. No make-ups or late work accepted under any circumstances. No exceptions under any imaginable circumstances.
- *Statement for students with disabilities:* If you are a student with a disability and wish to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, please register with the Office of Specialized Services and Supplemental Instruction (OSS/SI). To begin this process, complete the registration form available on the OSS/SI website at <http://www.njcu.edu/oss> (listed under Student Resources-Forms). Contact OSS/SI at 201-200-2091 or visit the office in Karnoutsos Hall, Room 102 for additional information.
- *Turnitin:* Students agree that by taking this course all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. For further information about Turnitin, please visit: <http://www.turnitin.com>

- *SafeAssign*: Students agree that by taking this course all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review through Blackboard SafeAssign. Assignments submitted to SafeAssign will be included as source documents in SafeAssign's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents.

Weekly Course Schedule

Readings marked with a '**' can be found on the course website. All other listed readings can be found in the required textbook. Changes to the syllabus will be announced through Blackboard. A course week begins on Thursday and ends on Wednesday. All assignments must be submitted at 11:59pm on the last day of the course week, e.g., quiz 1 is due on 1/8/2020 at 11:59pm. No late work accepted. No exceptions.

Table 1: Course Schedule

| Week | Assignments | Reading |
|------------------------|-------------------|---|
| [1.] Personal Identity | Quiz 1 Essay 1 | –** <i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality</i> , J. Perry Star Trek: The Next Generation 'Second Chances' S6 E24 |
| [2.] Dualism | Quiz 2 Essay 2 | – Kim, ch.2, pp.31–58 –DIAL, <i>Monday</i> , pp.1–23 |
| [3.] Behaviorism | Quiz 3 Essay 3 | –Kim, ch.3, pp.61–87 –** <i>The Concept of Mind</i> , Gilbert Ryle |
| [4.] Mind as Brain | Quiz 4 Essay 4 | –Kim, ch.4 & ch.7, pp.193–209; 214–217 –**“Mental Causation”, sections 1-4, 7-8, S. Yablo |
| [5.] Mind as Computer | Quiz 5 Essay 5 | –Kim, ch.5, pp.129–138; 156–165 –**“Computing Machinery and Intelligence”, A.M. Turing –**“Minds, Brains, and Programs”, J. Searle |
| [6.] Consciousness 1 | Quiz 6 Essay 6 | –Kim, ch.9, pp.263–289 –DIAL, <i>Wednesday</i> , pp.25–33 –**“What is it like to be a bat?”, T. Nagel –**“Knowing Our Minds”, A. Byrne |
| [7.] Consciousness 2 | Quiz 7 Essay 7 | –Kim, ch.10 –DIAL, <i>Friday</i> , pp.56–70 –**“Epiphenomenal Qualia”, F. Jackson |