

# Philosophy of Mind — PHIL 3650

Spring 2023

**Professor:** Yanssel Garcia

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Class times: Mondays and Wednesdays; 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Classroom: Arts and Sciences Hall — Room 210

Office hours: Tuesdays, 12:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. (ASH 200C)

## Course Description

Our minds are full of beliefs and desires, and they are full of qualities such as colors, smells, tastes, pains, and joys. Philosophers and scientists have long struggled to fit this qualitative world of experience into the quantitative world of physics. In order to have any hope of reconciling the two, we need to know: what are our minds? The objective of this course is to seek an answer to that question. We'll begin by getting a clear understanding of exactly what we're asking, and then the rest of the course will be dedicated to trying to figure out where minds fit into the physical world, if indeed they do.

## Grading, Assignments, and Policies

Here's the grade breakdown for the course:

Discussions: 10%

First essay: 20%

Second essay: 25%

Midterm exam: 20%

Final exam: 25%

## Attendance

Attendance in this course is mandatory. Sometimes, life gets in the way and unforeseen circumstances can make attending class impossible. In these instances, be sure to let me know what the emergency is and that you won't be able to attend. Failing to attend writing workshops will result in a 5% grade deduction on the relevant writing assignment.

## **Discussions**

Every week, you will be expected to contribute to the posted discussion board. Your contributions are graded on a pass/fail basis. I will offer you greater detail in class.

## **Midterm and Final Exams**

In this course, you will have a midterm and final exam. The exams are not cumulative, and you will be provided with study guides ahead of time.

## **Essays**

You will be assigned two approximately 1600 word essays. You will have the opportunity to choose between a few prompts. I'll be grading based on the degree of accuracy of your exposition and the incisiveness of your criticisms in addition to the effort and care that you put into the essays.

## **Submitting Assignments**

All assignments will be submitted via Canvas.

## **Lateness Policy**

Assignments that are submitted in late will suffer a penalty of five points per day. Thus, if the work you submit deserves 95 out of 100 points, it shall receive 90 out of 100 points if late by one day, 85 out of 100 points if late by two, etc. Please submit things on time.

## **Office Hours and Email Policy**

You don't need an appointment to come to my office hours; you're always welcome. You're also generally welcome to email me whenever you'd like with any questions you may have. I'll do my best to respond in a timely manner; it almost always takes me under 24 hours to respond. That being said, if I haven't gotten back to you, don't be afraid to email me again. Seriously, it's not a bother at all, and it's possible that your first email just got buried.

## **Course Materials**

There is one text that you are required to have for this course:

Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings — David Chalmers

You should find this text available at the bookstore. All other readings will be uploaded to Canvas. If a reading is on Canvas, I'll place a '(C)' beside it on the schedule below. If it's in your text, I'll place a '(PoM)' with the pagination I expect you to read instead.

## **Accessibility Services**

Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact ASC (Location: HK 104, Phone: 402.554.2872, Email: [unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu](mailto:unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu)).

## **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism or cheating of any form will not be tolerated. All of the work you submit must be your own, and instances of academic dishonesty will result in severe penalties. UNO has an academic integrity policy and procedures available at:

<https://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/student-conduct-and-community-standards/policies/academic-integrity.php>

I ask that you please take the academic integrity policy seriously. Proceedings for cases of plagiarism are arduous, and the consequences can be as severe as expulsion from the University. It's not worth the risk. If you find yourself struggling with the material, reach out to me; I am always happy to help out.

# Part One

## What Minds Are

### Introduction

Jan 23rd — Syllabus and Introduction  
Readings: *None*

### Souls

Jan 25th — Cartesian Souls  
Readings: *Descartes, Meditations I, II, and VI (C)*

Jan 30th — Problems with Souls  
Readings: *The Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth and Rene Descartes (C)*  
*Robb and Heil, SEP article on Mental Causation (C; 1.1 - 2.3)*

Feb 1st — Idealism  
Readings: *Berkeley, A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge (C)*

### Brains and Behaviors

Feb 6th — Behaviorism  
Readings: *Hempel, The Logical Analysis of Psychology (C)*  
*Putnam, Brains and Behavior (PoM 45 - 50)*

Feb 8th — The Identity Theory  
Readings: *Place, Is Consciousness a Brain Process? (PoM 55 - 59)*  
*Smart, Sensations and Brain Processes (PoM 60 - 67)*

Feb 13th — The Identity Theory: Problems  
Readings: *Kripke, Naming and Necessity (excerpt; PoM 329 - 333)*

Feb 15th — Recap and Writing Advice  
Readings: *None*  
***First Essay Assigned***

## Functionalism and Psychology

- Feb 20th — Machine Functionalism  
Readings: *Putnam, The Nature of Mental States (PoM 73 - 79)*
- Feb 22nd — The Turing Test and Intentionality  
Readings: *Turing, Computing Machinery and Intelligence (C)*  
*Searle, Can Computers Think (PoM 669 - 675)*
- Feb 27th — Folk Psychology  
Readings: *Russell, Analogy (PoM 667 - 669)*  
*Dennett, True Believers (PoM 556 - 567)*
- Mar 1st — Writing Workshop  
*Bring your essays to class!*
- Mar 6th — A Problem for Folk Psychology  
Readings: *Nisbett & Wilson, Telling More than We Can Know (C)*  
**First Essay Due**
- Mar 8th — Causal-Theoretical Functionalism  
Readings: *Lewis, Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications (PoM 88 - 93)*

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## Spring Break

March 12th - March 19th

*Itty Bitty Break*

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## Problems with Functionalism: Intentionality

- Mar 20th — Connectionism and The Language of Thought  
Readings: *Crane, The Mechanisms of Thought (C)*
- Mar 22nd — Midterm Exam
- Mar 27th — Asymmetric Dependence and the Problem of Error  
Readings: *Adams & Aizawa, Causal Theories of Mental Content (C; 3, 3.1, 3.4)*

## Problems with Functionalism: Consciousness

- Mar 29th — The Problem of Consciousness  
Readings: *Nagel, What Is It Like to Be a Bat (PoM 219 - 225)*

## Part Two

### The Explanatory Gap

- Apr 3rd — Physicalism, Qualia, and the Explanatory Gap  
Readings: *Jackson, Epiphenomenal Qualia (PoM 273 - 278)*  
*Levine, The Explanatory Gap (PoM 354 - 359)*  
*Dennett, What RoboMary Knows (C)*

- Apr 5th — Qualitative Skills  
Readings: *Lewis, What Experience Teaches (PoM 281 - 294)*  
*Conee, Phenomenal Knowledge (C)*

- Apr 10th — The Hard Problem of Consciousness  
Readings: *Chalmers, Consciousness and Its Place in Nature (PoM 247 - 268)*

## Part Three

### Mental Causation

- Apr 12th — Supervenience and Causation  
Readings: *Chalmers, Supervenience and Explanation (C)*

- Apr 17th — Anomalous Monism  
Readings: *Davidson, Mental Events (PoM 116 - 124)*

- Apr 19th — Causal Qualia  
Readings: *Kim, The Myth of Nonreductive Physicalism (C)*  
*Bennett, Why the Exclusion Problem Seems Intractable... (C)*  
***Second Essay Assigned***

## Part Four

### Qualia and Representationalism

- Apr 24th — Representational Qualia  
Readings: *Tye, Visual Qualia and Visual Content Revisited (PoM 447 - 455)*  
*Bourget, Why Are Some Experiences 'Vivid' and others 'Faint'? (C)*
- Apr 26th — Nonrepresentational Qualia  
Readings: *Block, Attention and Mental Paint (C)*
- May 1st — Finishing Remarks  
Readings: *None*

## Part Five

### A Physical Place for Experience

- May 3rd — The Possibility of Panpsychism  
Readings: *Strawson, Realistic Monism (C)*  
*Nagel, Panpsychism (C)*
- May 8th — Problems with Panpsychism & Writing Workshop  
*Bring your essays to class!*  
Readings: *None*
- May 10th — Final Review  
Readings: *Everything*
- May 12th — ***Second Essay Due***

**Final Exam**  
Wednesday, May 17th  
12:30 p.m.