

PNP/Phil 315: Philosophy of Mind

L64 PNP 315 / L30 Phil 315

Spring 2024

Section 01: Tuesday/Thursday, ---

Location: ---

Instructor:

Michael Barkasi

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Office: ---

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, ---

Course Description

An introduction to philosophical analyses of the nature of mind, especially those developed by contemporary philosophers in the western tradition. The focus will be on questions such as the following: What is a mind? How does it relate to a person's brain? How does it relate to a person's body and the external world? How do the mind and body causally interact? What is consciousness? Can science explain it? Does thinking require a language-like code? What is a "self"?

Prerequisites: one course in Philosophy at the 100 or 200-level, or permission of the instructor. Priority given to majors in Philosophy and PNP.

Learning Objectives

This is a discussion-based course. The primary objective is to afford you the opportunity to discuss, in a careful and sustained manner, deep philosophical questions about the mind. In practical terms, you will engage in slow, deliberate and active reading of important philosophical work, then come to a class that will be evenly split between discussion and lecturing. For the discussion portion, you should come prepared to ask questions, makes comments, and (once in the semester) kick off our class with a handout. We will engage in the kind of reading and discussion that's rarely had in everyday life, not only in terms of content (i.e., abstract theorizing about the mind), but also in terms of style. We will seek to develop and practice epistemic virtues such as clarity, humility, charity, rigor, respect, thoughtfulness, consistency, and rationality.

Specifically, you can expect to:

1. Read classical western works on the mind-body problem (i.e., the problem of how the mind relates to the body) and the associated problem of mental causation (i.e., the problem of how the mind and body causally interact).
2. Learn standard statements of the mind-body problem and problem of mental causation, plus the traditional theories offered in response.
3. Learn to distinguish between the many different varieties of consciousness and understand why one of them, "phenomenal consciousness", presents a special "hard" problem that seems intractable to science.

4. Learn about standard accounts of how the mind “emerges” from physical material through the evolution of information processing and representation.
5. Further explore theories about how the external world defines the content of the mind and how the mind depends on the body beyond the brain.
6. Explore neuroscientific, Buddhist, and feminist approaches to the “self”.
7. Learn how to, and practice, active reading techniques which facilitate self-learning and deep understanding.
8. Improve your ability to engage in productive philosophical conversation which aims at getting to truth.

Graded Work

Attendance and Participation (20%): Absences will be excused (not counted against you) in line with university policy, *if you email me before the start of class*. Note that I will usually fully and automatically credit everyone who comes to class. However, if I notice a sustained pattern of coming to class unprepared or not contributing, I will first speak to you about it, then (if the pattern continues) cease crediting you for attendance (or reduce attendance credit) until you come more prepared and participate.

Module Exams (30%): 3 total, lowest score dropped. Exams will be timed. There will be 10-15 multiple choice questions and 1-3 short-answer essay questions. Exams will be taken at home. You can use any resources from class, including the readings and any notes you take. You cannot work with anyone else. Use of online resources (e.g., Google search or ChatGPT) is not allowed.

Metacognitive Autodidact Portfolio (MAP) (30%): Turned in twice per module (halfway through, and at the completion of, the module). Each of the six submissions will be graded such that you can miss one class’s worth of readings (within that submission) without a loss of points. In addition, the lowest of the six MAP grades will be dropped, meaning that you can skip one MAP assignment. Detailed instructions with grading rubric will be provided.

Discussion Kick Off (20%): Everyone will sign up to “kick off” our discussion for one day of class. At most two people can sign up for the same day. Sign-ups will be first come, first served. You will need to sign up by our fourth class (end of that day). The basic idea is that the person kicking us off will make a one-page handout (single-sided) that (1) states the question addressed by the reading, (2) states the argument the paper gives in response to that question, and (3) raises two or three substantive questions about the reading. If the day for which you signed up has two papers listed for reading, you should cover both (as they will be closely related). **You will submit the handout online (Canvas) at least an hour before the start of class and I will print enough copies for the class.** You will take a few minutes to talk us through your handout, but this is not a formal presentation. You’re not suppose to have all the answers or understand the reading(s) completely. You want merely to reconstruct the reading(s) as best you can, while raising the questions you had or issues you saw. The idea is that this handout will be a slightly more refined version of your MAP material from the reading(s). You should use this opportunity to point out key terms or ideas from the readings which you didn’t understand, as they most likely reflect things your classmates didn’t understand as well. I or the AI will be the one kicking us off the first few classes with a handout, so you will have an idea of how it will go. Instructions with grading rubric will be provided.

Readings

All readings will be from: *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 2th edition, edited by David J. Chalmers

See: <https://global.oup.com/ushe/product/philosophy-of-mind-9780190640859>

Available in the bookstore. Please purchase.

Meetings

Our class will meet in-person on the scheduled days/times, at the scheduled location. As this is a discussion-based class, you should come prepared to discuss the readings. **Do all assigned readings before class. You should read actively, as manifested in your MAP. Be ready to ask questions and engage.**

Technology. Laptops and tablets may be used to take notes. Phones should be kept away. If I notice you are not using your computer for an appropriate purpose during class, I reserve the right to ask you to put it away or use it properly. If you have a disability accommodation, let me know.

Grade Scale and Academic Integrity

The usual: 97-100% A+ // 93-96% A // 90-92% A- // 87-89 B+ // 83-86 B // 80-82 B- // 77-79 C+ // 73-76 C // 70-72 C- // 67-69 D+ // 63-66 D // 60-62 D- // 0-59 F // Passing (for Pass/Fail): C- (70%) or better.

Academic Integrity: Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others (including generative artificial intelligence) must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Washington University in St. Louis.

For additional details on the university-wide Undergraduate Academic Integrity policy, please see:

<https://wustl.edu/about/compliance-policies/academic-policies/undergraduate-student-academic-integrity-policy/>

Generative AI: You are free to use tools such as ChatGPT for working through any aspect of this course, **except the module exams.** However, if do you so, you must also **turn in the raw output** which you edited into your final submission. Attach it at the end under some heading like “Raw ChatGPT Output”. You must also, of course, **note all aids and resources used** (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.). Improper use of aids like ChatGPT without proper acknowledgement will count as academic dishonesty. You’re **responsible for the accuracy and quality of your work.** Know the limits of these tools.

Help

I am available during my **office hours** to **answer questions about the topics we’re discussing, answer questions about course policies, questions about your grades, and to help with completing the assignments.** I’m also happy to make appointments at other times if you’re unable to attend my regular office hours. You can also reach me by **email** at barkasi@wustl.edu.

Disability Resources

WashU supports the right of all enrolled students to an equitable educational opportunity, and strives to create an inclusive learning environment. In the event the physical or online environment results in barriers to the inclusion of a student due to a disability, they should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Disabled students requiring adjustments to equitably complete expectations in this course should contact WashU's Disability Resources (DR), and engage in a process for determining and communicating reasonable accommodations. Because accommodations are not applied retroactively, DR recommends initiating requests prior to, or at the beginning of, the academic term to avoid delays in accessing accommodations once classes begin. Once established, responsibility for disability-related accommodations and access is shared by Disability Resources, faculty, and the student.

Disability Resources: <http://www.disability.wustl.edu/>; 3147-935-5970

Other WashU Policies

For information on COVID, reporting sexual assault and harassment, military service leave, preferred names and personal pronouns, emergency preparedness, and the resources available to students at WashU, please see: [WashU policies](#)

Schedule

All dates listed below are approximate and may be adjusted as we go. Updates will be announced in class. Assignment due dates listed on Canvas.

Module 1: The Mind-Body Problem

- **T, 1/16:** Introduction
- **R, 1/18:** Descartes and Avicenna on early **modal arguments for dualism**. Chapters #1 and #5 (13 pages)
- **T, 1/23:** Descartes and Princess Elisabeth on **mental causation**: Chapters #2 and #3 (10 pages)
- **R, 1/25:** Huxley and Smullyan on **epiphenomenalism**. Chapters #6 and #7 (7 pages)
- **T, 1/30:** Ryle on **Descartes' myth**. Chapter #8 (7 pages)
- **R, 2/1:** Hempel on **logical behaviorism**. Chapter #9 (8 pages)
- **T, 2/6:** Putnam on "super-Spartans" and other **arguments against behaviorism**. Chapter #10 (9 pages)
- **R, 2/8:** Smart on the **identity theory**. Chapter #11 (8 pages)
- **T, 2/13:** Putnam on **machine functionalism**. Chapter #12 (7 pages)
- **R, 2/15:** Block and Nida-Rümelin on **problems with functionalism**. Chapters #15 and #16 (10 pages)

Module 2: Consciousness

- **T, 2/20:** Block on the many **concepts of consciousness**. Chapter #23 (13 pages)
- **R, 2/22:** Nagel on **what it's like to be a bat**. Chapter #24 (7 pages)
- **T, 2/27:** Rosenthal on **higher-order thought theories of consciousness**. Chapter #26 (14 pages)
- **R, 2/29:** Tye on **consciousness as representation**. Chapter #27 (10 pages)
- **T, 3/5:** Frankish on whether **consciousness is an illusion**. Chapter #28 (14 pages)
- **R, 3/7:** Chalmers on **Zombies** and other problems for materialism. Chapter #29 (23 pages)
- **T, 3/12:** Spring Break (no class)
- **R, 3/14:** Spring Break (no class)
- **T, 3/19:** Jackson on **the knowledge argument** and epiphenomenal qualia. Chapter #30 (7 pages)
- **R, 3/21:** Balog on the **phenomenal-concepts strategy**. Chapter #33 (15 pages)
- **T, 3/26:** Hassel Mørch on **panpsychism**. Chapter #34 (6 pages)

Module 3: Intentionality, Externalism, and Self

- **R, 3/28:** Brentano on **the mark of the mental**. Chapter #35 (5 pages)
- **T, 4/2:** Dretske on a **recipe for thought**. Chapter #37 (9 pages)

- **R, 4/4:** Fodor on **propositional attitudes** and the LOT. Chapter #43 (14 pages)
- **T, 4/9:** Churchland on **eliminative materialism**. Chapter #45 (12 pages)
- **R, 4/11:** Clark and Chalmers on **the extended mind**. Chapter #49 (8 pages)
- **T, 4/16:** Gallagher and Zahavi on **the embodied mind**. Chapter #51 (15 pages)
- **R, 4/18:** Siderits on the **Buddhist view of the non-self**. Chapter #67 (9 pages)
- **T, 4/23:** Clark and Churchland on **the brain and the self**. Chapters #68 and #69 (9 pages)
- **R, 4/25:** James and a **Feminist approach to personal identity**. Chapter #72 (11 pages)

No Final