PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (7AAN2061)

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Lecture Hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on questions in the philosophy of mind. We will approach this topic by thinking through some problems that arise from reflecting on the metaphysics and epistemology of the mind. What is the mind? How does the mind relate to the brain? What is consciousness? How do we know about our own thoughts, feelings, and desires and how do we know about those of other people? In addressing these questions, we will cover topics central to contemporary philosophical discussions of the mind, including consciousness, intentional content, mental causation, and self-knowledge.

READING

The readings for the course are separated into the following two categories:

Core Reading: reading that everyone who wants proper coverage of the subject must read.

Further Reading: additional readings to help further develop your views on a particular subject.

Many of the readings for the course can be found either online or in the following collection of essays:


Another useful collection is:


The following are good introductory texts:

**Schedule**

**Week 1: The Mark of Mentality**

*Core Reading*
J. Kim: 'Is there a "Mark of the Mental"?' from Chapter 1 of his *Philosophy of Mind* pp. 17-27.
F. Brentano: 'The Distinction between Mental and Physical Phenomenon', in Chalmers.

*Further Reading*
T. Crane: 'Intentionality as the Mark of the Mental', in Anthony O'Hear (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Week 2: Mind-Brain Identity**

*Core Reading*

*Further Reading*
J. Kim: *Philosophy of Mind*, Chapter. 4.
P. Churchland: 'Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes', in Chalmers.
W. V. O. Quine: 'States of Mind', in Rosenthal.

**Week 3: Functionalism**

*Core Reading*
D. Lewis: 'Psycho-physical and Theoretical Identifications', in Chalmers.

*Further Reading*

**Week 4: Mental Causation**

J. Kim: 'The Many Problems of Mental Causation (Excerpt)', in Chalmers.
S. Yablo: 'Mental Causation', in Chalmers.

**Further reading**
D. Davidson: 'Mental Events', in Chalmers.

**Week 5: Consciousness**

**Core Reading**
T. Crane: The Elements of Mind, Chapter 3.
N. Block: 'On a Confusion about the Concept of Consciousness', in Chalmers.
T. Nagel: 'What it is Like to Be a Bat?' in Chalmers.

**Further reading**
D. Dennett: 'Quining Qualia', in Chalmers.

**Week 6: Consciousness**

**Core Reading**
F. Jackson: 'Epiphenomenal Qualia', in Chalmers.

**Further reading**
B. Loar: 'Phenomenal States', in Chalmers.
D. Chalmers: The Conscious Mind, Chapter 3.
D. Papineau: Thinking about Consciousness, Chapter 2.

Week 7: Intentionality

Core reading
T. Crane, The Elements of Mind, Chapter 1

Further reading
F. Dretske: 'A Recipe for Thought', in Chalmers.

Week 8: Intentionality

Core reading
J. Fodor: Psychosemantics, Chapter 2.

Further reading
A. Clark and D. Chalmers: 'The Extended Mind' in Chalmers.

Week 9: Self-Knowledge

Core reading
Further Reading
S. Shoemaker: Self-Knowledge and 'Inner Sense', in his *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
A. Byrne: 'Introspection', *Philosophical Topics*, 33: 79-103.

Week 10: Knowledge of others' minds

Core reading
A. Gomes: 'Testimony and Other Minds', forthcoming in *Erkenntnis*.
B. Russell: 'Analogy' in Rosenthal.

Further reading

QUESTIONS FOR FORMATIVE ESSAYS

Essay 1

1) 'Having an experience is surely one good way, and surely the only practical way, of coming to know what that experience is like. Can we say, flatly, that it is the only possible way? Probably not.' (Lewis) Discuss.

2) What reason, if any, is there to think that the term 'mental state' picks out a unified category?

3) If every physical event has a sufficient physical cause, how can a functionalist account for mental causation?

4) 'Even if every behavioral and cognitive function related to consciousness were explained, there would still remain a further mystery.' (Chalmers) Discuss.

5) Is the fact that mental states are causally efficacious a good reason to think that they must be identical to physical states?
Essay 2

6) If a neuroscientist can stimulate the brain in such a manner as to generate thoughts, can an externalist account of mental content be correct?

7) In what ways is my knowledge of my own mental states fundamentally different from my knowledge of others’ mental states? In what ways is it similar?

8) What is the most plausible framework for giving a naturalistic account of intentional content?

9) What does the claim that the mental supervenes on the physical tell us about the nature of the mind?

10) Can we acquire perceptual knowledge of what another person is thinking or feeling?