PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (7AAN2061)
SYLLABUS: 2016-17 SEMESTER 1

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Consultations Hours: Tuesdays 11am to 12pm, and Thursdays 3-4pm.
Lecture Hours: Thursday 9-10am

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 physicalism, consciousness, 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:


J. Heil: Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction
SCHEDULE

Week 1: Type Identity Physicalism

Core Reading:


Heil, J. Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction Ch. 5: The Identity Theory

Further reading:


Week 2: Anomalous Monism

Core Reading:
‘Mental Events’, by Davidson, in his Essays on Actions and Events. Also in Chalmers ed.


‘Philosophy as Psychology’, by Davidson, in his Essays on Actions and Events

‘Anomalous Monism and the Irreducability of the Mental’, by McLaughlin, in Lepore and McLaughlin ed. Actions and Events

Further Reading:
‘Psychophysical Laws’, by Kim, in Lepore and McLaughlin ed.


**Week 3: Functionalism**

*Core Reading*


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


S. Shoemaker, ‘Some Varieties of Functionalism’, and ‘Functionalism and Qualia’ in his *Identity, Cause and Mind*

*Further reading*


**Week 4: Mental Causation**

*Core Reading*


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

S. Yablo: 'Mental Causation', in Chalmers.

*Further reading*


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.

F. Jackson: 'Epiphenomenal Qualia', in Chalmers.


Further reading


D. Dennett: 'Quining Qualia', in Chalmers.


Week 6: Modal Arguments for Dualism

Core Reading:


Further Reading:

Gendler and Hawthorne, Introduction., *Conceivability and Possibility*


Week 7: Self-Knowledge and the Metaphysics of Mind
Core Reading:
Ryle, G. (1949). ‘Self-Knowledge’, in *Concept of Mind* (Ch. VI), and reprinted in Cassam ed.

Further Reading:

Week 8: Introspection and First-Person Authority

Core Reading:

Further Reading:

**Week 9: Other Minds and the Metaphysics of Mind**

*Core Reading:*


*Further Reading:*


**Week 10: The Epistemological Problem of Other Minds**

*Core Reading:*


*Further Reading:*


SUGGESTED TITLES FOR FORMATIVE ESSAYS

Are all mental states multiply realisable? If so, should this lead us to reject type identity physicalist theories?

Are there any good reasons for thinking that there can be no strict psycho-physical laws?

Is Davidson’s anomalous monism an objectionable form of epiphenomenalism?

Explain what you take to be the best version of an identity theory, justifying your choice against competitors.

Are functionalist theories improvements on identity theories, and if so why?

What are the most powerful objections to Functionalist accounts of the mental? Are there any adequate responses to them?

Can functionalism account for the qualitative character of mental states, and if not does this mean that we should reject functionalism?

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

Critically assess what you take to be the best argument for property dualism.

‘The fact that our conscious experiences and sensations have phenomenal properties should lead us to reject all physicalist accounts of the mental’. Discuss.

Critically assess Kripke’s argument against type-identity physicalist theories.

Do we have privileged access to our own states of mind? If so, what explains this?

Can we acquire perceptual knowledge of what another person is thinking or feeling?
Is our knowledge of other minds best understood as involving inference to the best explanation?

What is the conceptual problem of other minds, and what is the best solution to it?