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Humanities 3362-001
Philosophy of Mind
Fall 2018

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Instructor: Daniel Skibra

Time and Location: Wednesday 9:00AM - 12:00PM, Lakeview 205

Contact: email: dskibra@saic.edu

Office Hours: M/W 12:00 - 12:30 Lakeview building # 1008, or by appointment

Course Description

This course is a philosophical investigation into the nature of thought and consciousness. What is it to have a mind? How does your mind relate to your brain or your body? Is your mind really nothing more than a product of electrical impulses in your brain, or is it something more than and distinct from any physical phenomenon? Or is the very idea that there are such things as thoughts a sort of illusion? Can computers think? Could minds continue to exist after death, or could your mind be transferred into a computer? If so, what would make that mind your mind, rather than a brand new mind? What is it to be conscious of one's experiences? Is there any way to explain the phenomenon of consciousness, or is it fundamentally mysterious? We will read texts by both historical and contemporary philosophers.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- learn to understand philosophical arguments

- develop their own informed views on the topics of study

- present the arguments of the philosophers ands theorists as well their own views in clear prose

- subject both the views studied as well as their own to critical scrutiny.

Course Requirements

Assignments

Weekly responses (10 over the course of the semester): 10%
Paper 1 (3-4 pages) (**due Oct. 30**): 20%

Paper 2 (5-6 pages) (**due Dec 1**): 20%
Mid Term Exam (**Oct. 10**): 20%
Final Exam (**Dec. 12**): 20%
Class discussion/ participation: 10%

You need at least a 75% to earn credit for this course.

There are no extra credit opportunities associated with this course. All assignments for course credit are required as stated in this syllabus, and students should fully utilize all these assignments in order to successfully complete the course. Students requesting individual extra credit opportunities will be referred back to their copy of the syllabus and this course policy.

Notes on assignments

Resources for writing a philosophy paper:

- http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html

- http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf

- https://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/

Course Policies

Attendance

You are required to attend the class meetings; attendance will be taken. However, I understand that emergencies arise, people get sick, and other factors may legitimately prevent you from coming to a particular class. Therefore, I will adopt the following attendance policy. Your grade will not be affected by up to **2** absences. You do not need to provide any kind of written excuse or justification for these absences (although you are welcome to provide them). However, more than two absences will begin to have an effect on your final grade, bringing your final average down by a third of a grade (approx. 5%) for each additional day missed. Since this class only meets once a week, and one meeting is 3 classroom hours, this is a very generous attendance policy, so it will be enforced. *If at some point in the term you expect to miss more than this (due to a serious illness, for example), let me know as soon as you can, **before** you accumulate the absences!* It will be your responsibility to distribute your absences however you see fit. My advice: try not to use them. You never know when something comes up.

Importantly, you are responsible for the material covered in class. Any slides presented in class will be made available on Canvas, but class time will often not be devoted to lecture, and material will not always be on the slides. There is simply no substitute for being in class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

Writing Center Resources

Writing Center
Lakeview Building, 116 S. Michigan Ave., 10th Floor
writingcenter@saic.edu
312.499.4138
http://www.saic.edu/academics/academicresources/writingcenter/

Appointments
Schedule in advance: https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter
Short-notice: Call 312.499.4138 to see if there are any openings

Hours
Monday - Thursday: 9:00 AM - 7:15 PM
Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:15 PM
Walk-in hours: Monday - Thursday: 4:15 - 7:15 PM

Auditing (Non-Credit Enrollment) Policy

All students participating in this course must be enrolled as credit-seeking students. Given the nature of the course, requests to enroll in the course as a non-credit (audit) student will not be approved. Participation in class activities by non-enrolled students is prohibited without advance, specific consent from the instructor.

Email/ Communication

The best way to reach me outside class is via email. However, give me 24 hours to respond during the week. If you email me after 5pm on Friday, don't expect a response until Monday morning. Most of the time, I will be able to respond to you sooner than this, but When there is a paper due, get all of your questions to be 48 hours before the due date.

I will answer *simple, specific* questions over email pertaining to the course material or the logistics of the course. I can also address simple interpretive questions you have with the material, or arguments you are trying out for your papers. To address anything more involved, you'll need to meet with me in office hours. (I highly encourage you to come to office hours in any event.)

Technology & Digital Devices

In this class, we will regularly engage in small group instruction and activities, as well as discussions with the whole class. Technology such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops easily become a distraction and create an obstacle to engagement during class time. For this reason, the policy of the class will be as follows. Do not use these devices during class time. Any lecture slides will be made available on the online course site, and any notes you might need to make should be taken by hand. There are two exceptions. First, if you have the need for such a device as an accommodation. (If you have a need for such a device, please consult the instructor.) Second, for class time that is dedicated to revising, editing, or peer reviewing assignments for this class, laptops and such devices will be allowed. I will make clear in advance when class time will be devoted to such tasks.

Participation

Participation in class discussion constitutes a significant part of your grade. You will be expected to attend class having done the readings and thought about them enough to discuss the arguments they make, to ask informed questions about them, and to engage with the other members of the class on these matters. Two expectations in service of these aims are worth making explicit. First, you'll need to be well-prepared, having read and thought about the assigned readings before class. Secondly, we will all need to foster a respectful, open environment where we can clarify, interpret and critically engage the philosophical issues dealt with in readings. Maintaining a respectful classroom atmosphere is crucial, and part of your responsibility.

Academic Misconduct

From the SAIC Student Handbook: "Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one?s own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic misconduct extends to all spaces on campus, including satellite locations and online education. Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place that protect student privacy and uses LDAP authentication to verify student identity."

Specific procedures for faculty to follow in the case of academic misconduct are detailed

in the Student Handbook.

Additional resources for students:

- Read "Plagiarism: How to Recognize It and Avoid It" - a short guide prepared by the Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee in 2004.

- Read the Flaxman Library's quick guide titled "AVOID PLAGIARISM."

Required Texts

There is one required book for this course:

- Pete Mandik - *This is Philosophy of Mind*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014 (ISBN: 978-0-470-67450-5)

All other readings will be posted on the course's Canvas site as pdf files.

Course Outline

Wednesday, August 29 course introduction

- **Readings:** Mandik - Chapter 1: *Meet Your Mind*

- Also: Read over this (online):
  http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html

Wednesday, September 5 are the mind and brain different things?

- **Readings:** Descartes - excerpts from *Meditations on First Philosophy*
  Elizabeth of Bohemia - correspondence with Descartes
  Mandik - Chapter 2: *Substance Dualism*

Wednesday, September 12 is "the mind" our behavior?

- **Readings:** Ryle - *Descarte's Myth* (from *the Concept of Mind*)
  Hempel - *the Logical Analysis of Psychology*
  Mandik - Chapter 5: *Behaviorism and Other Minds*

Wednesday, September 19 are the mind and the brain the same thing?

- **Readings:** Smart - *Sensations and Brain Processes*
  Mandik - Chapter 6: *Mind as Brain*

Wednesday, September 26 how common are minds?

- **Readings:** Berkeley - *First Dialogue* from *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*
  Nagel - *Panpsychism*
  Mandik - Chapter 4: *Idealism, Solipsism, and Panpsychism*

Wednesday, October 3 is your mind a physical thing?

- **Readings:** Jackson - *Epiphenomenal Qualia*
  Mandik - Chapter 4: *Property Dualism*
  Levine - *Materialism and Qualia: the Explanatory Gap* (read this last)

Wednesday October 10 are minds a kind of computer?

- **Mid Term** - In-class, short essay exam

- **Readings:** Turing - *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*
  Mandik - Chapter 7: *Thinking Machines*

Wednesday October 17 more on minds and computers

- **Readings:** Putnam - *the Nature of Mental States*
  Mandik - Chapter 8: *Functionalism*

Wednesday, October 24 resistance to the idea of the mind as a computer

- **Readings:** Searle - *Minds Brains and Programs*
  Second reading to be announced

Wednesday, October 31 what is consciousness?

- **Readings:** Armstrong - *What is Consciousness?*
  Chalmers - *Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness*
  Mandik - Chapter 14: *Consciousness and Qualia*

Wednesday, November 7 where are your thoughts?

- **Readings:** Clark and Chalmers - *the Extended Mind*
  Burge - *Individualism and the Mental*
  Mandik - Chapter 13: *Intentionality and Mental Representation*

Wednesday, November 14 what is free will? do you have it?

- **Readings:** Nietzsche - excerpts from *Twilight of the Idols*
  Frankfurt - *Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*
  Mandik - Chapter 12: *the Will: Willpower and Freedom*

Wednesday, November 21

- **Thanksgiving break** No class

Wednesday, November 28 WHAT ARE YOU?

- **Readings:** Locke - *Of Identity and Diversity* (from *An Essay Concerning Human Knowledge*)
  Sider - *Personal Identity*
  Mandik - Chapter 15: *Is this the End? Personal Identity, the Self, and Life After Death*

Wednesday, December 5

- **Critique Week**: no class

Wednesday, December 12

- **Final Exam** - In-class, short essay exam