

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Philosophers have always taken a keen interest in the human mind. In this course, we will investigate (and try to make headway in understanding) two perplexing aspects of our mental lives:

In the first part of the course, we will consider a class of mental states that are sometimes labelled ‘the propositional attitudes’ – e.g., your *belief that it’s raining* or *desire to race snails*. Mental states of this sort often seem to cause our behavior – for instance, your desire to race snails coupled with your belief that that the snail race is in Pasadena might cause you to rush out the door. But is this just loose talk, or do we literally have beliefs and desires inside our heads that cause our behavior in this way?

In the second part of the course, we’ll turn to the mysterious nature of conscious experience. When you look at a tomato there is something it is like to see its redness and roundness. But what about other properties of the tomato, like *it’s being a tomato*; is this something that we can literally see, or do we merely judge that the thing we’re looking at is a tomato given its seen color and shape? Somewhat distinctly: Could knowing things about tomatoes change the way that tomatoes look? And what does neuroscience have to tell us about these matters – could an advancing neuroscience show that your red is like my green? These are just some of the questions we’ll consider in class.

Course Reading:

Each week, you will be assigned papers or book chapters to read. These will all be posted on Brightspace, but they should also be pretty easy to find by googling or using the library website.

I only assign readings that are written by clever people. If a reading seems silly, or obviously false, it’s not; take a step back and try to think carefully about the ideas being put forward and the specific reasons why the author endorses them. If – after thinking hard and charitably – a paper still seems wrong, or misguided, you might have a good objection! This is great! Please raise it in class or come and discuss it with me during my office hours!

If you would like more background on the topics we will discuss in the first part of the course, the following textbook is excellent:

Crane, T. (2016) *The Mechanical Mind* (3rd Edition). Routledge.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is also a fantastic resource, although the articles vary in difficulty and clarity. Less authoritative, but often easier as an entry point, are articles on *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (Try googling both of these)

Course Assessment:

Your performance in this class will be assessed based on:

- (1) One 6page paper (worth 30% of your final grade, pertaining to part one of the course – due 11.59pm on October 4th)

- (2) Ten 1-page summaries of the week's readings (worth 10% of your final grade – **to get credit you must submit a 1page summary of Week N's readings before the Wednesday of class on Week N and attend and participate in both classes of Week N**)
- (3) A detailed plan of your final term paper (worth 10% of your final grade, **to be discussed with me in person during the last week of semester**)
- (4) One 8page paper (worth **50%** of your final grade – **due December 13th**)

In all assignments, it is completely unacceptable to use the words or ideas of someone else without proper acknowledgment. If you are unsure what counts as plagiarism, see the Trojan Integrity Guide at https://ece-classes.usc.edu/ee591/pvs_sem/fall09/acad_integ.pdf and the Undergraduate Guide for Avoiding Plagiarism at <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/plagiarism>.

No less egregious is the use of ChatGPT. ChatGPT is very impressive and can produce nicely written essays that are often riddled with factual errors and bizarre statements. It's really important for me to be able to check that *you* wrote your essays/responses, and not ChatGPT. **As such, you should be able to provide evidence to this effect.** While this is a pain for all involved, I recommend the following:

- You could write your essays/assignments on Google Docs. This will automatically save each change that is made to the file, thereby documenting its development (with the added bonus of automatically backing up your work!)
- You could keep notes, essay plans, or earlier drafts, and be ready to share these (in general, the more you redraft and plan an essay, the better it will be - it's often helpful to save drafts as separate documents anyway to permit bigger structural changes, etc.)
- You could come to my office hours to discuss the ideas you're developing.

If you are unable to provide evidence of this sort when asked, you will receive 0% on the offending assignment (Note: it should never come to this if you take the above steps). *I am sorry about having to do this!*

Other General Policies:

Please don't use your laptops or other electronic devices in class – the internet is too tempting, and it will distract you. There is also evidence that you will remember your notes better if they are taken by hand: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability should register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) and email me about the requested accommodations. (DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number is (213) 740-0776. See also <https://osas.usc.edu>.) Please get in touch if I can help.

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Weekly readings (your 1-pagers should summarize the readings for *that week*):

Week 1: Realism and Eliminativism (Week beginning Aug 26th)

- Fodor, Jerry A. (1987). Chapter 1 of *Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind*. MIT Press.
- Churchland, Paul M. (1981). Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes. *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (2):67-90.

Week 2: The Intentional Stance (Week beginning Sept 2nd - *note, no class on the Monday)

- Dennett, Daniel C. (1981). True believers: The intentional strategy and why it works. In Anthony Francis Heath (ed.), *Scientific explanation: papers based on Herbert Spencer lectures given in the University of Oxford*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 150--167
- Peacocke, Christopher (1983). Chapter 8 of *Sense and Content: Experience, Thought and Their Relations*. Oxford U. Press.
- Dennett, Daniel C. (1991). Real patterns. *Journal of Philosophy* 88 (1):27-51.

Week 3: The Extended Mind (Week beginning Sept 9th)

- Clark, Andy & Chalmers, David J. (1998). The extended mind. *Analysis* 58 (1):7-19.
- Gertler, Brie (2007). Overextending the mind. In Brie Gertler & Lawrence A. Shapiro (eds.), *Arguing About the Mind*. London: Routledge. pp. 192--206.
- Spaulding, Shannon (2012). Overextended cognition. *Philosophical Psychology* 25 (4):469 - 490.
- Clark, Andy (2010). Memento's revenge: The extended mind, extended. In Richard Menary (ed.), *The Extended Mind*. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press. pp. 43--66.

Optional C. Nolan's 'Memento' (FILM)

Week 4: The Language of Thought Hypothesis (Week beginning Sept 16th)

- Fodor, Jerry A. (1987). Why there still has to be a language of thought. In *Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind*. MIT Press.
- Camp, Elisabeth (2007). Thinking with maps. *Philosophical Perspectives* 21 (1):145--182.

Week 5: Concepts (Week beginning Sept 23rd)

- Laurence, Stephen & Margolis, Eric (1999). Concepts and Cognitive Science. In Eric Margolis & Stephen Laurence (eds.), *Concepts: Core Readings*. MIT Press. pp. 3-81. (*Lots of refs to follow up on if writing a term paper on this*)
- Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of Categorization. In D. J. Levitin (Ed.), *Foundations of cognitive psychology: Core readings* (pp. 251--270). MIT Press.

You should have now planned and drafted your first essay!

Week 6: Nature versus Nurture (Week beginning Sept 30th)

- Laurence, Stephen & Margolis, Eric (2001). The poverty of the stimulus argument. *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 52 (2):217-276.
- Carey, Susan (2011). Précis of the origin of concepts. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 34 (3):113-124.
- Laurence, Stephen & Margolis, Eric (2002). Radical concept nativism. *Cognition* 86 (1):25-55.

Your first essay is due on the Friday of week 6 (October 4th)

Week 7: Connectionism and AI (Week beginning Oct 7th)

- Churchland, Patricia S. & Sejnowski, Terrence J. (1989). Neural representation and neural computation. In L. Nadel (ed.), *Neural Connections, Mental Computations*. MIT Press. pp. 343-382.
- Fodor, Jerry A. & Pylyshyn, Zenon W. (1988). Connectionism and cognitive architecture: A critical analysis. *Cognition* 28 (1-2):3-71.
- Clark, Andy (1991). Systematicity, structured representations and cognitive architecture: A reply to Fodor and Pylyshyn. In Terence E. Horgan & John L. Tienson (eds.), *Connectionism and the Philosophy of Mind*. Kluwer Academic Publishers. pp. 198--218.

Optional Andy Clark's textbook *Mindware* (OUP) [in particular Ch.4] is very helpful on these topics.

Week 8: Animal Thought (Week beginning Oct 14th)

- Camp, Elisabeth (2009). A language of baboon thought. In Robert W. Lurz (ed.), *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 108--127.
- Boyle, Alexandria (2019). Mapping the Minds of Others. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 10 (4):747-767.

Week 9: Consciousness (Week beginning Oct 21st)

- Chalmers, David J. (2002). Sections. 1-3 of Consciousness and its place in nature. In David John Chalmers (ed.), *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press USA.

- Nagel, Thomas (1974). What is it like to be a bat? *Philosophical Review* 83 (October):435-50.
- Akins, Kathleen (1993). What is it like to be boring and myopic? In B. Dahlbom (ed.), *Dennett and His Critics: Demystifying Mind*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Week 10: Phenomenal Overflow (Week beginning Oct 28th)

- Block, Ned (1995). On a confusion about a function of consciousness. *Brain and Behavioral Sciences* 18 (2):227–247.
- Clark, Andy (2000). A case where access implies qualia? *Analysis* 60 (1):30-37.
- Phillips, Ian B. (2011). Perception and Iconic Memory: What Sperling Doesn't Show. *Mind and Language* 26 (4):381-411.

Week 11: Cognitive Penetration (Week beginning Nov 4th)

- Macpherson, Fiona (2011). Cognitive Penetration of Colour Experience: Rethinking the Issue in Light of an Indirect Mechanism. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 84 (1):24-62.
- Firestone, Chaz & Scholl, Brian J. (2016). Cognition does not affect perception: Evaluating the evidence for “top-down” effects. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 39:1-72.

Week 12: Contents of Experience (Week beginning Nov 11th – Note: no class on the Monday)

- Siegel, Susanna (2006). Which Properties Are Represented in Perception. In Tamar Gendler & John Hawthorne (eds.), *Perceptual experience*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 481-503.
- Macpherson, Fiona (2011). Introduction: The Admissible Contents of Experience. In *The Admissible Contents of Experience*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 1–15.
- Price, Richard (2009). Aspect-switching and visual phenomenal character. *Philosophical Quarterly* 59 (236):508-518.

Week 13: The Laws of Appearance (Week beginning Nov 18th)

- Pautz, Adam (2020). The puzzle of the laws of appearance. *Philosophical Issues* 30 (1):257-272.
- Sainsbury, Mark (2022). Visual Experience and The Laws of Appearance. *Erkenntnis* 88 (7):2933-2940.
- Davies, Will (2020). Colour Relations in Black and White. *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* 27:87-100.

Week 14: Pain and Emotion (Week beginning Nov 25th)

- Casser, Laurenz C. (2020). The Function of Pain. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 99 (2):364-378.
- Corns, Jennifer (2018). Recent Work on Pain. *Analysis* 78 (4):737-753.

Week 15: (Week Beginning Dec 2nd)

- **Make an appointment with me to discuss a plan of your final essay This is worth 10% of your grade**

Final essay due December 13th