

Philosophy 462: Philosophy of Mind

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Class meetings: Tuesday and Thursday 12:40 – 2:00, 205 Natural Sciences Bldg.

Office hours: Tuesdays 4:00 - 5:00 **in Rm. 190 E. Holmes Hall** and Thursdays 11:30 –12:30 in Rm. 537 S. Kedzie, or by appointment.

Course description:

In this course we will examine the way in which the mind has been understood in philosophy and in cognitive psychology. Both disciplines have offered a number of different perspectives on the best way to understand the mind, as well as its relationship to the body. We will critically assess these different perspectives, including the similarities and the differences between philosophical and psychological theories and mutual influences between the disciplines. In the case of psychological approaches to the mind, we will also emphasize the way in which assumptions about the nature of the mind shape the methods that are viewed as appropriate for studying the mind. Topics covered will include introspectionism, behaviorism, functionalism and psychoanalysis.

Required texts:

Kukla, A. and J. Walmsley. *Mind: A historical and philosophical introduction to the major theories*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2006. [K&W]

Flanagan, O. *The Science of the Mind* 2nd Edition. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1991. [F]

Additional readings will be provided via D2L.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain a number of different positions on the nature of the mind that have been held by philosophers and by psychologists

2. Describe how the course themes (see below) arise in both philosophy and psychology throughout the historical periods we will be considering.
3. Develop and present their own analyses and arguments about the debates and issues discussed in the course.

Course requirements

- Weekly reading responses (1 ½ to 2 pages each) – **15%**
- In class and online writing assignments - **10%**
- Two short essays (2 ½ to 3 pages each) – **30% (15% each)**
- Seminar presentation – **10%**
- Participation in seminar discussions - **10%**
- Final paper – **25%**

Details of course requirements: (see also #5 under “Course Policies”)

Weekly reading responses: These short (1 ½ - 2 page) papers are due via D2L by the beginning of class on Tuesdays. The purposes of this assignment are to (1) encourage you to keep up with the readings for the course; (2) get you started thinking critically about the readings; and (2) prepare you to contribute to the class discussions for the week.

In each of the reading responses, you should do the following:

- Briefly summarize some aspect of the week's reading. You may choose to give a broad overview of both readings, identifying the main themes covered, or to focus on one reading in more detail, or to focus more closely on some particular aspect (e.g. argument) of the reading(s). In writing this part of the assignment, imagine you are explaining what we're reading in class to a friend who doesn't know anything about the topic.
- Describe one thing you want to make sure we discuss in class, either because you don't understand it yet or because you found it interesting. (This part of the assignment should be a solid paragraph, at least.)
- Briefly explain one way in which you see connections between this week's readings and (1) things we've read and/or talked about in previous classes, as well as (2) the course themes. (Note that these two things may be related to each other.) (This should also be at least a solid paragraph.)

In-class writing assignments: In some classes, we will take some time for you to write down your thoughts on something we have discussed in class. In some cases, I will give you specific prompts to write about. In others, the instructions will be more general (e.g., what is something interesting we discussed today? Is there something about the topics for today you are confused about and want us to discuss further?). Occasionally, we will have a discussion assignment on D2L. More information will be given in advance for these assignments.

Short essays: These essays will be graded using the grading scale posted above. The purposes of these assignments are (1) to help you to think critically about the course material and to develop an argument in support of your position; and (2) to help you to develop your skills in writing philosophy papers (and to give you feedback) before you write your term paper. We will talk further in class about how to write a philosophy paper, and resources have also been posted on D2L.

Topics for these assignments will be handed out two weeks before the paper is due. If you would like instead to write on a topic of your choosing, talk to me and get my approval. There will be three essay assignments over the course of the semester and you should do two of them. Since the due dates for all of these assignments are in the syllabus, you may want to plan ahead and choose which essays to write based on your other commitments.

Seminar Presentation: Many class meetings will be conducted, at least in part, using a seminar format, where the focus is on group discussion rather than on lecture. Each student will take responsibility for leading a seminar (you have the option to share this responsibility with another student). Details of the requirements will be given in class. In addition, everyone will be expected to participate regularly in discussions.

Final paper: We will discuss the format and requirements of the final paper in class. Briefly, you will have the choice of writing a term paper (with a similar structure to the short essays) or writing a reflective assignment that discusses what you have learned throughout the semester. Details of the two options will be given a few weeks into the semester.

Grading scale:

Final grade	Percentage
4.0	90 – 100
3.5	85 – 89.9
3.0	80 – 84.9
2.5	75 – 79.9
2.0	70 – 74.9
1.5	65 – 69.9
1.0	60 – 64.9
0.0	<59.9

Course policies:

1. Students are expected to attend classes and to come prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the class. While you are doing the readings for the class, you should make note of any questions or problems you had and raise them in class. Similarly, you should be prepared to contribute anything you found particularly interesting in the readings.
2. Do not use cell phones, or send text messages (or paper notes), or talk with your neighbor in class. All of these activities are disruptive and disrespectful of others in the class. Arrive on time for class and don't leave early.
3. The attached schedule of readings may be revised if we spend more or less time than anticipated on some of the course material. If it is revised, a copy of the new reading list will be posted on D2L and an announcement will also be made in class that the new version of the list has been posted.
4. If you miss a class, including classes early in the semester that you miss because you registered late, you are responsible for getting the notes from a classmate. If you miss an in-class assignment, you are responsible for providing documentation that justifies your absence (e.g. a doctor's note). If you cannot produce appropriate documentation, you will receive a grade of zero for that test/assignment.
5. Late **short essays** will be accepted up to one week after they are due, but there will be a late penalty of one letter grade per day that the assignment is late. Saturday and Sunday count as one day. If you believe that you deserve an extension on an assignment or if you miss an assignment due to, e.g., an extended period of illness or a family emergency, you must make arrangements with me as soon as possible. As with missed tests, documentation may be required to support your request for an extension or a make-up assignment. **Reading responses** are due on the day the reading is covered. **Late reading responses will not be accepted.** That said, I recognize that there are situations that justify making exceptions to these rules. These include prolonged illness, bereavement, family emergencies, and alien abductions. In these and similar circumstances, I will work with you to help you to complete the required work, but you should know that (1) documenting of extenuating circumstances may be required, and (2) in some cases we will also need to work with your advisor or other people who can help you to stay, or to get back, on track with your classes. In particular, you should be aware of MSU's [grief absence policy](#).
6. Students are required to keep any work that has been graded and returned until the end of the semester. This is in your best interests; if you believe that an error has been made with regard to your final grade, you will need to show this work in support of your claim.
7. Any student who is found to have plagiarized any part of the course work will fail the course. Plagiarism is preventable; if you have any doubts or questions about what counts as plagiarism, you should talk to me. Resources for preventing plagiarism are posted on D2L.
8. More generally, students are expected to adhere to the Spartan Code of Honor, which reads: "As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do."

MSU policies that will apply in this course:

[taken (mostly) verbatim from <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/classroom-policies/syllabus-faq.html#question3>]

1. **Academic Honesty:** Article 2.III.B.2 of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See [Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#) and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.)

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the [Academic Integrity](#) webpage.)

2. **Limits to confidentiality.** Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me:

--Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,

--Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and

--Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

3. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** (from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD): Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for

accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

4. **Commercialized Lecture Notes:** Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials not permitted in this course.
5. **Disruptive Behavior:** Article 2.III.B.4 of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the [SRR](#) states that "The student and the faculty share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.
6. **Attendance:** Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

Dates	Topics	Readings and Assignments
August 28	Course introduction	None
<i>Philosophical Background</i>		
September 3, 5	Introduction: folk psychology, scientific psychology Dualism and rationalism	F, Ch 1 K&W, Ch. 1
September 10, 12	Empiricism and associationism	Locke Book 1, chapters 1 and 2 Book 2, chapters 1-3, 8, 12 Mandler and Mandler **first essay question handed out September 12
<i>Structuralism and Introspectionism</i>		
September 17, 19	The new scientific psychology: introspectionism and structuralism	K&W, Ch. 2 Wundt Titchener
<i>Criticisms of Structuralism</i>		
September 24, 26	“Early” functionalism	F, Ch. 2 Angell **first essay due September 26
October 1, 3	Psychoanalysis	K&W, Ch. 3 and 4 F, Ch. 3 ** second essay question handed out October 3
<i>Behaviorism</i>		
October 8, 10	Behaviorism I	K&W, Ch. 5, Ch. 6.1, 6.2 F, Ch. 4
October 15, 17	Behaviorism II Identity theory	Ryle K&W, Ch. 6.3, 6.4

		Churchland **second essay due October 17
<i>The Cognitive Revolution and the New Functionalism</i>		
October 22, 24	The cognitive revolution	K&W, Ch. 6.5, Ch. 7.1, 7.2 F, Ch. 6 pp. 175 – 224 **third essay question handed out October 24
October 29, 31	Folk psychology and LOT	K&W, Ch. 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 Cain
November 5, 7	Minds and machines	K&W, Ch. 7.7 – 7.9 Lycan **third essay due November 7
November 12, 14	Eliminative materialism and neuroscience	Churchland
November 19, 21	Neuroscience	Bechtel Crick Fodor
November 26	Final paper workshop	No readings
November 28	Thanksgiving break	
December 6, 8	Kinds of minds	Dennett
December 12 – Final paper due		