

Phi 344

Seminar in Philosophy of Mind

Instructor: Ms. Sarah Beth Lesson

E-Mail:

sblesson@umail.miami.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Overview

In this course, we will consider some of the most important and influential debates in philosophy of mind, including the Mind/Body Problem, Problem of Mental Causation, Artificial Intelligence, Consciousness, and the possibility of Life After Death. The goal is for each student to be able to personally communicate each question examined, articulate the various philosophical responses to those issues, and evaluate those positions critically. This course requires active participation, including reading assigned material, taking part in online activities, and completing required assignments on time.

This course will help you

- Improve critical reasoning
- Communicate topics in philosophy
- Engage in respectful discussion
- Evaluate philosophical arguments and positions
- develop your own positions on philosophical issues

Requirements and Grading:

- Thirteen discussion points throughout the eight modules, each worth 5pts for a total of 65pts, or 65% of final grade
- One term paper written in three parts: proposal, rough draft, and final draft. The proposal is worth 5 points, the rough draft is worth 10 and the final draft of the term paper is worth 20 points

Text:

This is Philosophy of Mind,
Pete Mandik

The usual grading scale will apply (0-59% F, 60-62% D-, 63-66% D, 67-69% D+, 70-72% C-, 73-76% C, 77-79% C+, 80-82% B-, 83-86% B, 87-89% B+, 90-92% A-, 93-100% A). There will be no curve.

Requirement Information

1. Reading assignments must be completed to achieve success in this course
2. The term paper is the only main assignment in the course, and must be taken seriously. This means following all requirements set out in the assignment prompts, contacting me if you have any questions or concerns, and writing original work that reflects your understanding of the topics covered in the paper. You are encouraged to meet with me in office hours (physically or virtually) to discuss your paper. I will read drafts and offer feedback up to 5 days before the paper is due to provide feedback for revision.
4. Class participation is worth 20% of your grade. Attendance and reading the assigned articles are both necessary to receive participation points via quizzes.
5. This class can satisfy a writing credit requirement, but does not do so automatically. You need to schedule time to talk with me to receive instructions on the extra steps that must be taken to receive writing credit.

Academic Ethics:

All students at the University of Miami are expected to understand and uphold the student Honor Code. Cheating and/or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated and will be referred to the Honor Council. Cheating and/or plagiarism will also result in a zero for the assignment and up to or including a failing grade for the class.

Accommodation of Disabilities:

All reasonable accommodation will be made for students with disabilities. Anyone who requires ADA accommodations for unique learning styles should contact Disability Services in the Academic Development Center and should seek proper approvals from within the University.

SCHEDULE

Module 1

Meet Your Mind: An overview of aspects of mind, scientific and philosophical methodology geared at studying the mind, and the classic problems of cognition.

- ❖ Reading: *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 1, pages 1-14
- ❖ Assignments: 1.1 Emotions Discussion
1.2 Free Will Discussion

Module 2

Substance and Property Dualism: Arguments from history for a dualistic theory of mind, Descartes, Considering objections, Contemporary Dualism.

- ❖ Reading: *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 2, pages 15-28
Chapter 3, pages 29-42
- ❖ Assignments: 2.2 Find the Gap Discussion
2.3 Substance Dualism

Module 3

Behaviorism and the Problem of Other Minds; History of Behaviorism, Objections, and contemporary considerations

- ❖ Reading : *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 5, pages 61-73
- ❖ Assignments: 3.2 Category Mistakes Discussion
3.3 Mental States and Behaviorism Discussion

Module 4

Mind as Brain; Physicalism, Mind-Brain Identity thesis, Advantages of the view; an overview of the neuroscience, objections considered

- ❖ Reading: *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 6, pages 77-91
- ❖ Assignments: 4.2 Brain and Facial Recognition Discussion
4.3 Psychological Conditions Discussion

Module 5

Functionalism: introduction and history, Arguments for Functionalism and varieties thereof, objections considered

- ❖ Reading: *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 8, pages 109-122
- ❖ Assignments: 5.2 Neural Plasticity Discussion
5.3 Proposal for Term Paper Due

Module 6

Problem of Mental Causation; causal closure, Interactionism, and Qualia

- ❖ Reading: *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 9, pages 123-137
- ❖ Assignments: 6.2 Dualism and Interactionism Discussion

Module 7

Consciousness and Qualia; Explaining Consciousness, Higher Order Thought and Representational theories of consciousness

- ❖ Reading: *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 14, pages 203-215
- ❖ Assignments: 7.1 Self-Consciousness and Science Discussion
7.2 Rough Draft of Term Paper Due

Module 8

Is this the end? Personal Identity, the Self, and Life After Death

- ❖ Reading: *This is Philosophy of Mind* Chapter 15, pages 217-230
- ❖ Assignments: 8.1 Identity and the Ship of Theseus Discussion
8.2 Term Paper, Final Draft Due

