

Florida International University
Department of Philosophy

PHI 3320 (1) Philosophy of Mind: Neurophilosophy

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Course description

Is science at odds with the arts and the humanities when it comes to addressing fundamental questions about what it means to be human? How might each benefit from a cooperative dialogue? The purpose of this course is to explore how our thinking about the nature of mind and self is transformed by synthesizing methods adopted from the humanities and brain sciences. We will especially consider successes and failures resulting from attempts to interface science and the philosophy of mind.

This course is a whirlwind tour of “neurophilosophy” – an approach to traditional philosophical issues from the standpoint of the brain sciences. We will explore how the basic framework of neuro and cognitive science mesh with philosophical approaches to consciousness, representation, and the self. As time permits we will discuss developments on the frontiers of cognitive science pertaining to blindsight, synaesthesia, dreams, religious experience, animal consciousness, phantom limbs, extended and embodied cognition, evolutionary psychology, mental illness, and the body image. No background in either neuroscience or philosophy is presupposed.

Readings

1. Churchland, P.S. (2002). *Brain-Wise: Studies in Neurophilosophy*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
2. Additional readings accessible from Blackboard

Evaluation

- Weekly reading assignments: these will require short-answer questions or brief (1 page) essays about the readings for that week. The purpose of these assignments is to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings and are aware of key terms, concepts, issues, and arguments.
- Participation: includes both showing up for class and contributing to class discussion.
- Test: this will be held on **OCTOBER 11**
- Critical Essay: The purpose of the essay is for you to develop a considered position about some issue discussed in the course, and to strengthen critical skills of analysis and clear writing. Due date: **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, in class**
- Exam: **DECEMBER 8**, 7:30-9:30 a.m., DM 190

Grading: 10 weekly reading assignments (total 20%), attendance and participation (total 10%), test (20%), essay (30%), exam (20%).

Lateness Penalty: Academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., will only be entertained if supporting documentation is provided (e.g. a doctor's note).

Reading Schedule

Note: This schedule may change slightly depending on class discussion.
Page numbers: C corresponds to Churchland's book.

August 25: Introduction to the course: the mind-body problem

August 27, 30, Sept. 1: Dualism (C up to p.10; Descartes *Meditations II & VI*).

September 3, 8, 10: Reductionism and consciousness (C11-34; Searle *Rediscovery of the Mind*, chapter 5, Papineau, "Power and consciousness on the Clapham omnibus":
<http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/the_tls/article3196720.ece>)

September 13, 15, 17: Metaphysics and science, Mysterianism (C37-43; McGinn "Natural Mysteries and Biased Minds," from *The Mysterious Flame*, chapter 2).

September 20, 22, 24: Split-brains (C43-50; Nagel "Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness"; Mortensen *et al.* "Distinctions: subpersonal and subconscious"
<<http://www.cogsci.ecs.soton.ac.uk/cgi/psyc/newpsy?4.62>>)

September 27, 29, Oct, 1: The Self (C59-74; Strawson "The Self")

October 4, 6, 8: Consciousness and qualia (C127-148; Ramachandran, "Do Martians See Red?")

October 11: TEST

October 13, 15, 18: Consciousness and zombies (C148-199)

October 20, 22, 25: Chalmers, "Facing up to the problem of consciousness"; Garrett "What the history of vitalism teaches us about consciousness and the "hard problem" (blackboard); Optional: Hauser, "Revenge of the Zombies,"
<<http://members.aol.com/lshauser/zombies.html>>)

October 27, 29, Nov. 1: How Do Brains Represent? (C273-319, Graham excerpts (blackboard), Dretske "A recipe for thought")

November 3, 5, 8: Phantom Limbs (Tye, "The Intentionality of Feelings and Experiences"; Ramachandran "Chasing the Phantom")

November 10, 12, 15: Extended mind: Clark and Chalmers "The extended mind,"
<google>; Clark "Curing Cognitive hiccups,"
<<http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/1842/1719/1/Cognitive+Hiccups.pdf>>

November 17, 19, 22: Stoerig, P & Cowey, A. (1997). "Blindsight in man and monkey," *Brain* 120: 535-59, "Blindsight in debates about qualia," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6 (5): 54-71, Guzeldere, Guven; Flanagan, Owen J. & Hardcastle, Valerie Gray

(2000). "The nature and function of consciousness: Lessons from blindsight," In Michael S. Gazzaniga (ed.), *The New Cognitive Neurosciences: 2nd Edition*. The MIT Press.

November 24, 29, Dec. 1: C74-90, C117-124, Buller, David J. (2005). "Evolutionary Psychology: The emperor's new paradigm," *Trends in Cognitive Science* 9 (6): 277-83. <<http://online.sfsu.edu/~thwaite/Darwin/Buller.pdf>>

December 3: wrap-up and review

Grading Scheme

A	90 – 100
A-	80 – 89
B+	77 – 79
B	73 - 76
B-	70 - 72
C+	67 - 69
C	63 - 66
C-	60 - 62
D+	57 - 59
D	53 - 56
D-	50 - 52
F	< 50