

PHILOSOPHY 322
Philosophy of Mind
Section AB1 — January, 2011

<p>INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Peter B. Raabe CLASSROOM: A 315 TIME: Mondays 8:30 to 11:20 am OFFICE: D3089 OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Tuesdays 4 to 6 pm PHONE: Office 4758 – Home: 1-604-986-9446 e-mail: peter.raabe@ufv.ca web site: http://www.ufv.ca/philosophy/raabep</p>

COURSE OUTLINE

OBJECTIVES: This course is an introduction to the concepts, arguments, and terminology relevant to a discussion of the mind and its relationship to the brain. We'll be dealing with questions such as, What are mental states? Are they states of a physical brain or of a non-physical 'soul'? Does the word 'mental' have any meaning at all? What is consciousness? How can non-material mental states be about or represent material things outside the mind? Are mental states identical to brain states? Or are they perhaps something more, or less? Are mental states like computer calculations? and so on. The goal of this course is to help you understand the points of view presented, come up with your own arguments and conclusions, and be able to discuss and write coherently about them.

TEXT: required: *Philosophy of Mind: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford UP, 2005)
by Ian Ravenscroft

EVALUATION: There will be two short essay assignments, a midterm, and a final exam

Distribution of Marks:	Essay 1 (max. 4 pages double spaced)	20%
	Midterm examination	20%
	Essay 2 (max. 6 pages double spaced)	30%
	Final examination	30%

ESSAYS: You may use any citation style you wish as long as you keep it consistent throughout your entire essay. Quoted passages must be properly cited to avoid plagiarism. Please **do not** put any sort of plastic cover on your essay. A title page is acceptable. Always put your student number on anything you hand in.
NOTE: I **do not** accept assignments sent to me by e-mail.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class.
Late assignments (without good reason) will be given an automatic 0%.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

- 1) Jan 10 Welcome and introductions. & Dualism — Chap. 1
- 2) Jan 17 Behaviorism — Chap. 2
- 3) Jan 24 The Identity theory — Chap. 3
- 4) Jan 31 Functionalism — Chap. 4
- 5) Feb 7 Eliminativism and fictionalism — Chap. 5 >>(Essay #1 due)
- Feb 14 NO CLASS — MID-TERM BREAK
- 6) Feb 21 The computational theory of mind — Chap. 6
- 7) Feb 28 **MIDTERM EXAM**
- 8) March 7 Connectionism — Chap. 7
- 9) March 14 Physicalism & supervenience/Content — Chaps. 8,9
- 10) March 21 Mental Causation — Chap. 10 >>(Essay #2 due)
- 11) March 28 Varieties of consciousness — Chap. 11
- 12) April 4 Phenomenal consciousness — Chap. 12 & Review for final exam.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “PHILOSOPHY”?

Philosophy involves examining the reasons we have for the values we hold as good, and the beliefs we hold as true, so that we can free ourselves from blindly following tradition, obeying the dictates of some authority figure, or simply acting on our emotions.

Personal philosophy: my philosophy; my approach to life; my “Weltanschauung;” what leads me to act the way I do; what I believe, not just spiritual.

Being philosophical: critical and creative thinking and discussion; good reasoning about an issue; a thoughtful and thorough exploration; a learned skill.

History of philosophy: the study of the origin and evolution of ideas; what great thinkers have said on various important topics.

Academic philosophy: structured courses studying philosophers and their theories and ideas; systematic examination of various, mostly abstract, issues.

Applied philosophy: discussion and research into problems arising in specific areas such as medicine, business, the environment, etc.

Philosophical counselling: A philosopher helps a non-philosopher resolve real-life issues and problems by examining conflicting values, problematic assumptions, dubious beliefs, unjustified biases, things learned as a child, etc.

Epicurus (341 B.C.-271 B.C.): “Empty is the argument of the philosopher which does not relieve any human suffering; for just as there is no benefit in medicine if it does not drive out bodily diseases, so there is no benefit in philosophy if it does not drive out diseases of the soul.”

HOW TO WRITE A GOOD PHILOSOPHY PAPER

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO WRITE ⇒ Think and Discuss

- Think about your topic before you start to write to clarify it in your mind.
- A good paper is a good **argument**, so decide which side of the issue you're going to argue.
- Organize your thoughts by making an outline of what you might want to say.
- Discuss your thoughts and outline with others; ask for feedback and input.
- Organize the source material you plan to cite to support what you say.
- Write in your own voice. Don't try to copy someone else's style (like Plato).
- Use simple and direct language.

THE BEGINNING ⇒ Introduce

- When you begin to write, state the position for which you are going to argue. In a single, short, and precise sentence state the point you are trying to make, and of which you're trying to convince your reader. (This is the **thesis** of your essay). Don't expect the reader to understand the argument you're trying to make in your paper if you're not sure about it yourself.

THE MIDDLE ⇒ Elaborate

- Give grounds, reasons, justifications, and facts which support your position. Support your opinions with **citations** from respected sources. Don't ask your reader to simply accept your unsupported opinion. Don't expect your reader to agree with everything you say just because you say it.
- Use a different paragraph for each new point in your argument.
- Anticipate objections. Offer the strongest **counter-arguments** against your position that you can think of, then argue against them to show how your position is more reasonable. Your job is to convince the reader that your point of view is better than all others. It's not necessary to dispute all the counter-arguments you can possibly think of. The three or four best ones are all you need.
- If your essay seems "too short" make sure what you've written is sufficient to justify your position. If your essay seems "too long" eliminate unnecessary filler passages and digressions to side issues.
- Make sure you cite every writer you quote. If you quote but don't cite it's **plagiarism**.

THE END ⇒ Summarize

- Briefly restate your arguments in the conclusion to demonstrate how you have made your point.
- Make up a good title, one that will grab your reader's attention.

AFTER YOU FINISH WRITING ⇒ Review & Rewrite

- Check for spelling errors, poor grammar, incomplete sentences, sentences that are too long and complicated, and technical terms that need explaining. Don't leave sentences in your essay that don't make sense to you.
- Put your essay aside for a few hours or days; read it again later; then make changes and improvements. Don't assume your first draft is perfect. It never is! Careful editing and rewriting are the keys to achieving a first class mark.