Instructor: Alonso R Molina
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Lecture: MWF 11:30-12:50 PM
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3

Phil 7: Introduction to Philosophy of Mind

Description

In this class we will discuss classical topics in philosophy of mind. There will be many questions that we consider. Here are a few:

- Is the mind the same as your brain?
- Is the mind a physical entity or something distinct?
- Can computers think? Are they conscious?
- How do we know others are conscious?
- How do we know our minds?

We will review and evaluate the classic answers to these and other fundamental questions in the philosophy of mind. Our goal will be to gain a solid understanding of what a mind is. We will discuss several prominent philosophical positions on the nature of the mind, from dualism, a position that claims that the mental and the physical are two radically different kinds of things, to functionalism, a position that claims that what makes something a mental state depends on its functioning and not on its internal constitution. After getting a sense of what theorists have said about the nature of the mind, we'll move on to think about introspection and how we know our own mind, if at all.

Readings

All required readings will be provided.

Learning Outcomes

- To develop sustained analytical responses to the central themes of the course.
- To engage in critical discussion and dialogue with peers about the views covered.
- To synthesize ideas from different readings in order to grasp broader philosophical concepts.
- To write essays that demonstrate working knowledge of the course material and to analyze that material in a clear, systematic, original, and well-developed manner.

Assignments & Grading

Philosophical texts are invariably complicated; thus, it significantly helps with understanding to come to class with questions and thoughts in advance. For this reason, it is required and extremely important that you do the reading before the class meets.

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and active participation in discussions and classroom activities are essential parts of the class. Excellent participation can happen in multiple ways and does not require getting things right all of the time or speaking for its own sake.
The participation grade will be assigned based on attendance* (10%) and oral and written participation in class and on the course discussion section (10%) for a total of 20% of your final grade.

Class Policies

Paper Extensions: Your papers are to be submitted on the date and time specified in class. Should circumstances outside your control make this impossible, you must request an extension from your TA at least 24 hrs before the deadline. This can be done via email before the due date. In case of an emergency, please let us know as soon as possible.

Late Submission: For all assignments, late papers submitted without contacting me 24 hours before the deadline will be subject to a penalty of one third of a letter grade. You will be excused from this penalty only if I have explicitly notified you in writing (e.g., by email) that you are exempt.

Office Hours: Office hours are a good time to ask questions you might not have formulated in lecture, or to discuss certain details, problems, possible alternatives to what we've discussed in lecture and sections, and more.

Respectful Language: Please be mindful of how we communicate with each other. Any language that is discriminatory or abusive will not be tolerated. At all times, I ask that we approach sensitive topics with sensitivity and communicate in ways that show respect for divergent views.

Learning Accommodations: Your success in this course is my primary goal. Should you need accommodations, please let me know early on, either in person or through email. I will provide any accommodations you require, as directed by you and in conjunction with the Center for Accessible Education. For more information, visit http://www.cae.ucla.edu/.

Recording & Electronic Devices: Sections will be recorded for your use during the quarter. You are not to record on your own devices without explicit consent. Students with learning accommodations should disregard this policy and follow their accommodations.

Sending Emails: Emails must be sent professionally and respectfully in the following fashion to promote promptly responses:

- Subject "Phil 7 - Last name; brief description of subject"
- Greeting (e.g., Hello, Alonso); body; signature
- Emails with questions that are answered by the syllabus will receive a "Refer to syllabus" response or none at all.

Plagiarism: The unacknowledged use of others' words or ideas constitutes plagiarism, and this violates the University's code of academic conduct, whether intentional or not. Any instance of plagiarism will be immediately reported to the university administration, and you will be subject to whatever consequences they determine. For more info: http://guides.library.ucla.edu/citing/plagiarism/avoid.

Covid-19 Mitigation Protocols for In-Person Discussion Sections
Ensuring a safer campus depends on each of us following the latest UCLA health and safety guidelines. The most current information is available at https://covid-19.ucla.edu.

Schedule

Week 1: Dualism

6/24

Kind - Philosophy of Mind - the basics - Chapter 2: Dualism

6/26

Descartes - Meditations I, II, VI excerpts

Smullyan - "An unfortunate dualist"

6/28

Princess Elisabeth and Descartes - Correspondence

Kim - Philosophy of Mind - p. 46-50

Week 2: Behaviorism

7/1

Ryle - *The Concept of the mental* - Descartes' Myth

Kim- *Philosophy of Mind* - p. 61-68

7/3

Kim- *Philosophy of Mind* - p. 68-82

7/5

Putnam - "Brains and Behavior"

Week 3: Identity theory

7/8

Kind - *Philosophy of Mind - the basics* - Chapter 3: Physicalism - pp. 48-63

7/10

Place - "Is consciousness a Brain Process?"

7/12

Smart - "Sensations and Brain Processes"

Kim - *Philosophy of Mind* - p. 98-102

Week 4: Functionalism

7/15

Kim - *Philosophy of Mind* - p. 129-151

7/17

Putnam - "The Nature of Mental States"

7/19

Armstrong - "The Causal Theory of Mind"

Turing - “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”

Week 5: Functionalism & Consciousness

7/22

Searle - “Can Computers think?”

7/24

Block - “Troubles with Functionalism”

7/26

Nagel, “What is it Like to be a Bat?”

Week 6: Consciousness & Introspection

7/29

Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia”

7/31

Armstrong - *A Materialist Theory of Mind* - Chapter: Introspection

Gopnik - “How we know our minds: The illusion of first-person knowledge of intentionality”

8/2

Schwitzgebel - “Introspection, what?”