

**PHIL\*2370 Metaphysics and Mind**

**Winter 2023**

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight 0.50

Version 1.00-January 09,2023

**1 Course Details**

**1.1 Calendar Description**

This course studies major theories of the nature of reality, and of issues and problems that arise in the investigation of fundamental features of the world. Texts read may be either historical or contemporary. Among possible topics explored in the course are materialism, free will, and determinism, the nature of time, and the position of consciousness in the world.

Pre-Requisites: 2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL\*1000, PHIL\*1010, PHIL\*1030, PHIL\*1050)

**1.2 Course Description**

This course introduces you to the principal issues in the philosophy of mind by tracing the history of the subject from Plato and Aristotle through to the present day. By studying primary texts, this course helps students to see how the principal issues have been developed and changed through intellectual struggles within western philosophical heritage. From soul to agency, a wide range of interconnected issues are introduced and discussed through the course. Students will be expected to read independently from the course texts—both commentary and primary texts—not all material will be covered in the lectures. Although I will try to provide important details of primary texts in my lectures, throughout the class our main goal will be to develop the ability to critically discuss issues, rather than merely to report on it. That is, you should try hard to develop and assess arguments for and against the positions you will encounter.

**1.3 Timetable**

A week-by-week course timetable is available on CourseLink.

**1.4 Final Exam**

The Final Exam is scheduled for TBA Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

**2 Instructional Support**

**2.1 Instructional Support Team**

**Instructor:** Meisam Mirzaee

**Email:** [mmirzaee@uoguelph.ca](mailto:mmirzaee@uoguelph.ca)

**Office:** 325 Mackinnon

**Office Hours:** Every Friday from 10am to 11am

**3 Learning Resources**

The main content for this course—the content that you will be examined on—is the texts and your responses to them. Classes and lectures are intended to assist you in your engagement with the texts, rather than to summarize, supplement or replace them. As I mentioned before, in my lectures, I will try to provide necessary details and points for engaging directly with primary texts and discussions. I will be assuming that you will be devoting 4-5 hours a week outside of class time to reading and thinking about the texts (including time spent preparing for writing the essay).

**3.1 Required Resource**

Philosophy of Mind: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives – Third Edition

Edited by: Peter A. Morton; Myrto Mylopoulos

Publication Date: March 19, 2020

ISBN: 9781554814008 / 1554814006

Link: <https://broadviewpress.com/product/philosophy-of-mind-historical-and-contemporary-perspectives-third-edition/#tab-description>

**4 Learning Outcomes**

**4.1 Course Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you should have developed:

1. The ability to clarify the central assumptions and arguments informing a range of viewpoints, even when dealing with complex issues couched in specialized vocabulary.

2. The ability to clearly and accurately communicate complex issues in writing, and to argue successfully for one’s own view.

3. The ability to assess evidential weight and the balance of probabilities in very complex and difficult cases.

4. A sophisticated sense of some central metaphysical issues that are core to the intellectual traditions of the West.

5. The ability to identify and question the often-implicit presuppositions that inform various

viewpoints, and the confidence to propose novel and creative solutions.

**5 Teaching and Learning Activities**

**5.1 Provisional timetable**

**Monday (Jan 9th):** Introductory discussions

**Wednesday (Jan 11th):** 1 Plato: The Soul and the Forms

Reading commentary section (19-27) and Plato: Selections from *The Phaedo* (28-40)

My lecture on Plato: Selections from *The Phaedo*

**Monday (Jan 16th):** 2 Aristotle: Naturalizing the Soul

Reading commentary section (41-50) and Aristotle: Selections from *On the Soul and Sense and Sensibilia* (51-57)

My lecture on Aristotle: Selections from *On the Soul and Sense and Sensibilia*

**Wednesday (Jan 18th):** 4 Descartes: Knowledge of Mind and Matter

Reading commentary section (77-85) and René Descartes: Selections from *Meditations on First Philosophy* (86-102)

My lecture on René Descartes: Selections from *Meditations on First Philosophy*

**Monday (Jan 23th):** 5 Descartes’s Dualism

Reading commentary section (103-117) and René Descartes: Selections from *Principles of Philosophy* and *Discourse on the method of rightly conducting* (118-121)

René Descartes: Selections from *Principles of Philosophy* and *Discourse on the method of rightly conducting*

**Wednesday (Jan 25th):** 6 Materialism and Idealism

Reading commentary section (141-149) and Thomas Hobbes: Selections from *Leviathan*(150-155)

My lecture on Thomas Hobbes: Selections from *Leviathan*

**Monday (Jan 30th):** 6 Materialism and Idealism

Reading George Berkeley: Selections from *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (156-164)

My lecture on George Berkeley: Selections from *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*

**Wednesday (Feb 1st):** 7 Behaviorism and Linguistic Philosophy

Reading commentary section (167-185) and Gilbert Ryle: Selections from *The Concept of Mind*(207-217)

My lecture on Gilbert Ryle: Selections from *The Concept of Mind*

**Monday (Feb 6th):** 8 The Mind-Brain Identity Theory

Reading commentary section (225-242) and U.T. Place: “Is Consciousness a Brain Process?” (243-249)

My lecture on U.T. Place: “Is Consciousness a Brain Process?”

**Wednesday (Feb 8th):** 8 The Mind-Brain Identity Theory

Reading Saul Kripke: Selections from “Identity and Necessity” (260-270)

My lecture on Saul Kripke: Selections from “Identity and Necessity”

**Monday (Feb 13th):** 9 Functionalism

Reading commentary section (271-292) and Jerry A. Fodor: “The Mind-Body Problem” (301-312)

My lecture on Jerry A. Fodor: “The Mind-Body Problem”

**Wednesday (Feb 15th):** **MID-TERM EXAM**

**Monday (Feb 27th):** 9 Functionalism

Reading Ned Block: Selections from “Troubles with Functionalism” (313-322)

My lecture on Ned Block: Selections from “Troubles with Functionalism”

**Wednesday (Mar 1st):** 10 Can Machines Have Minds?

Reading commentary section (325-348) and Alan Turing: “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” (349-359)

My lecture on Alan Turing: “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”

**Monday (Mar 6th):** 10 Can Machines Have Minds?

Reading John R. Searle: “Minds, Brains and Programs” (360-374)

My lecture on John R. Searle: “Minds, Brains and Programs”

**Wednesday (Mar 8th):** 11 Consciousness and “What It Is Like”

Reading commentary section (407-432) and Thomas Nagel: “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” (433-443)

My lecture on Thomas Nagel: “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”

**Monday (Mar 13th):** 11 Consciousness and “What It Is Like”

Reading Frank Jackson: “Epiphenomenal Qualia” (443-450)

My lecture on Frank Jackson: “Epiphenomenal Qualia”

**Wednesday (Mar 15th):** 11 Consciousness and “What It Is Like”

Reading Daniel C. Dennett: “Quining Qualia” (450-471)

My lecture on Daniel C. Dennett: “Quining Qualia”

**Monday (Mar 20th):** 12 What Is Consciousness For?

Reading commentary section (507-528) and Ned Block: “On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness” (529-551)

My lecture on Ned Block: “On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness”

**Wednesday (Mar 22th):** 12 What Is Consciousness For?

Reading David J. Chalmers: Selection from *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Theory of Conscious Experience* (552-559)

My lecture on David J. Chalmers: Selection from *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Theory of Conscious Experience*

**Monday (Mar 27th):** 12 What Is Consciousness For?

Reading David J. Chalmers: Selection from “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness” (560-572)

My lecture on David J. Chalmers: Selection from “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness”

**Wednesday (Mar 29th):** 12 What Is Consciousness For?

Reading Michael A. Cohen and Daniel C. Dennett: “Consciousness Cannot Be Separated from Function” (580-594)

My lecture on Michael A. Cohen and Daniel C. Dennett: “Consciousness Cannot Be Separated from Function”

**Monday (Apr 3rd):** 13 What Is an Action?

Reading commentary section (595-607) and Donald Davidson: “Actions, Reasons, and Causes” (607-617)

My lecture on Donald Davidson: “Actions, Reasons, and Causes”

**Wednesday (Apr 5th):** 14 When Do Agents Act?

Reading commentary section (649-654) and Tim Bayne: “The Sense of Agency” (706-726)

My lecture on Tim Bayne: “The Sense of Agency”

**6 Assessments**

There will be two essays (worth 40%), a mid-term exam (worth 30%), and a final exam (worth 30%). You do not need to pass all of the assignments in order to pass the course, but students who do not sit the final exam and write one of the essays will be graded as “Incomplete.”

**6.1 Assessment Details**

**Essays (40%)**

First Essay (15%)

Due date: Feb 6th 2023

Return and comments: Before midterm on Feb 15th 2023

Words count: 1000

Topic: One of the discussed issues in the course

Late policy: 2% cut off per day until Feb 13th 2023

Learning Outcome: 1, 2, 3

Second Essay (25%)

Due date: April 10th 2023

Words count: 1500

Topic: One of the discussed issues in the course

Late policy: 2% cut off per day until Final Exam

Learning Outcome: 1, 2, 3

**Midterm Exam (30%)**

Date: Feb 15th 2023

Location: Our class

Policy: you can bring a ‘cheat sheet’ to exams. On a standard sheet of 81⁄2"x11" paper you can write anything at all that you think might help you, on either or both sides, and you can refer to that sheet (but nothing else) during the exam.

Learning Outcome: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

**Registrar-scheduled Final Exam (30%)**

Date: TBA

Location: Subject to chance, check Webadvisor

Policy: you can bring a ‘cheat sheet’ to exams. On a standard sheet of 81⁄2"x11" paper you can write anything at all that you think might help you, on either or both sides, and you can refer to that sheet (but nothing else) during the exam.

Learning Outcome: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

**7 University Statements**

**7.1 Email Communication**

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

7**.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

**7.3 Drop Date**

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

**7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

**7.5 Accessibility**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website <https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

**7.6 Academic Integrity**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct [https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08- amisconduct.shtml](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-%20amisconduct.shtml)

**7.7 Recording of Materials**

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

**7.8 Resources**

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars <https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

**7.9 Disclaimer**

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/) and circulated by email.

**7.10 Illness**

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g. final exam or major assignment).

**7.11 Covid-19 Safety Protocols**

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:

• [https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your- safe-return/](https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-%20safe-return/)

• <https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

Please note, these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.