

PHIL 1002: INTRODUCTION TO MIND AND WILL

FALL 2022 (online)

Instructor

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Course Description

Most of us think that we know our own minds as well as, or better than, we know anything else. But it is very hard to see how minds fit in with the rest of nature. Why would the firing of neurons give rise to something so remarkable as conscious experience? And if the mind is entirely physical, must it be governed by the laws of physics? If so, is free will just an illusion? On the other hand, if the mind is not physical, how does it manage to causally interact with the physical world? These are some of the fundamental questions in the philosophy of mind. This course is an introduction to the debates surrounding them. Other topics may include the question of whether machines can think, and the relationship of thought to language. There are no prerequisites.

Course Texts

All required texts for this course will be provided through Canvas.

Course Requirements and Grading

Weekly Quizzes (40%) 10 total/40 points each: A quiz will be posted on Canvas most weeks and will be due the following week. These quizzes will be short answer/essay and are intended to help you build your philosophical argumentation and writing.

Midterm Exam (25%) 250 points: The midterm exam will consist of several short essay questions covering material up to that date. Students will submit their exams through Canvas in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. Writing a philosophical paper can be difficult – for this reason, notes on how to best structure your responses will be given prior to assigning the midterm.

Final Exam (35%) 350 points: The final exam will be a comprehensive exam. The exam will consist of a mix of objective (multiple choice) and subjective questions (short essay questions and some longer form questions).

Letter grades will be assigned as a percentage: 94%+ is an A; 90-93% is an A-, 87%-89% is a B+, 84-86% is a B, 80-83% is a B-, 77-79% is a C+, 74-76% is a C, 70-73% is a C-, 67-69% is a D+, 64-66% is a D, 60-63% is a D-, 59%- is an F.

Course Policies

Late Work: I cannot guarantee that I will be able to accept your late work, thus you should make every effort to complete your work on time. If you miss an assignment, it is best practice to contact me as soon as possible to increase your chances that we can come to some arrangement. However, if you experience some personal difficulty or have some extenuating circumstance, I will make reasonable efforts to accommodate you.

Contact: As this is an asynchronous online class, all communication will be digital. I highly encourage you to utilize my email if you have any questions whatsoever related to the course. I will make every effort to respond to you in a timely manner, though you should not expect immediate responses during the weekend or late at night. When emailing me, it would be immensely helpful if you could include the course name in your subject or message body.

There are no set office hours for this course, but I will announce scheduled Zoom meetings (for the purpose of review) throughout the semester. We may also schedule individual Zoom meetings if you have questions that are not easily addressed through email.

All assignments, readings, course adjustments, etc. will be announced through Canvas. I will also provide you with ample feedback on your assignments for this course through Canvas.

Academic Integrity: Do not plagiarize. It is extremely easy to detect, and you expose yourself to great academic risk for very little possible gain. You will not receive credit for submissions containing plagiarism in this course and you may become subject to further sanctions in accord with UC's code of conduct.

The University of Cincinnati's code of conduct will be in effect. Those in violation will fail the course and be subject to applicable penalties from the University. UC's rules are available at the following link: http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Academic_Integrity.html.

Special Needs and Accommodations

I want all students to have an equal opportunity to succeed in this course. If you have a disability (visual, hearing, physical, psychological, cognitive, learning, ADD, medical condition, etc.) which may influence your performance in this course, the university will make reasonable accommodations for you to ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all the requirements of this course. If you require accommodations due to disability, please contact Accessibility Resources at 513-556-6823, Campus Location: [Commons Edge North](#). You will be provided an Accommodation Form indicating your accommodation needs for the semester. Please present this form to me as soon as possible to ensure your accommodation needs are discussed, agreed upon, and provided.

Any student requiring accommodation for religious observances should notify the instructor in advance so that adequate accommodation can be provided.

This syllabus (including the Course Schedule below) may change at the instructor's discretion, though students will be promptly notified of such changes.

Course Schedule

Week & Dates	Assignments & Holidays	Topics	Readings
Week 1 8/22 – 8/26	Quiz 1	Course Mechanics Introducing the Mind-Body Problem	Nagel, “The Mind-Body Problem” from <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> ”
Week 2 8/29 – 9/2	Quiz 2	Dualism	Excerpts from Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> Excerpts from Descartes, <i>The Passions of the Soul</i>
Week 3 9/5 – 9/9	Labor Day (9/5)	Dualism II	McWeeny, “Princess Elisabeth and the Mind-Body Problem” Ryle, “Descartes’ Myth” from <i>The Concept of Mind</i>
Week 4 9/12 – 9/16	Quiz 3	Behaviorism	Skinner, <i>Science and Human Behavior</i> pp. 27-35 Armstrong, “The Nature of Mind”
Week 5 9/19 – 9/23	Quiz 4	Identity Theory	Hamilton, “Why Brain Scientists are Still Obsessed with the Curious Case of Phineas Gage” Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes”
Week 6 9/26 – 9/30	Quiz 5	Functionalism	Putnam, “The Nature of Mental States”
Week 7 10/3 – 10/7	Quiz 6	Functionalism II	Levin, “Functionalism”, Sections 1-3 Excerpts from Block, “Troubles with Functionalism”
<i>Midterm Posted</i>			
Week 8 10/10 – 10/14	Reading Day (10/10)	Consciousness	Nagel, “What is it Like to be a Bat?” Akins, “What is it Like to be Boring and Myopic?”
Week 9 10/17 – 10/21	Quiz 7	Consciousness II	Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know” Kind, “Chalmers’ Zombie Argument”

Midterm due by October 23rd

Week 10 10/24 - 10/28	Quiz 8	Consciousness III	Chalmers, "The Hard Problem of Consciousness" Churchland, "Are Mental States Irreducible to Neurobiological States?" from <i>Neurophilosophy</i>
Week 11 10/31 - 11/3	Quiz 9	Artificial Intelligence	Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" Searle, "Can Computers Think?"
Week 12 11/7 - 11/11	Reading Day (11/8), Veterans Day (11/11)	Boundaries of the Mind	Clark and Chalmers, "The Extended Mind"
Week 13 11/14 - 11/18	Quiz 10	Free Will	Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity"

Final Posted

Week 14 11/21 - 11/25	Thanksgiving (11/24 - 11/25)	Zoom review sessions (times TBA)	
Week 15 11/28 - 12/2		Free Will II	Nahmias, "Is Free Will an Illusion? Confronting Challenges from the Modern Mind Sciences"

Final due December 5th