
PHILOSOPHY OF MIND in Spring 2021 (PL2070)

Course Code	PL2070	Professor(s)	Jula Wildberger
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	Off campus
Class Schedule	W: 10:35-13:30 in PL-4 W: 10:35-13:30 in RMOTE-00	Office Hours	Please make an appointment here: https://aup.libcal.com/appoin tments/julawildberger
Credits	4	Email	jwildberger@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	01 40 62 06 81

Course Description

What do we perceive? What does it mean to say that we act? How do we relate to the world through feelings, thought, and language? And, by the way, who is “we” and what “the world”? Do you know? If not, this course might be exactly the right offer for you.

You will encounter a diversity of accounts by leading experts in the field, both textbooks and original readings, that combine accessibility and clarity with the passion of someone defending their position in a shifting and highly controversial field. Making up your own mind, trying to answer questions like the ones posted above, and formulating your own questions, you will develop a terminology and a systematic understanding of competing concepts that allows you to think about what it means to be you in a precise, meaningful, and well-informed manner.

You will see, that it is necessary to think hard and give a serious, sustained learning effort if you want to join the debate, but the effort is worthwhile – not only because of the importance of the questions themselves but also because you train to become better at thinking and communicating clearly and effectively.

Course Learning Outcomes

Philosophical reading: improve your skills in reading, assessing and comparing arguments in the field of Philosophy of Mind within their respective theoretical background.

Philosophical analysis and reflective orientation: use of conceptual analysis to frame issues in the context of different theoretical approaches in the field of Philosophy of Mind.

Historical understanding: acquaintance with a range of theories of Philosophy of Mind from classical antiquity to the present, with a particular focus on the developments in the 19th-21st centuries.

Methods of interdisciplinarity: observe, from close up, how philosophy interacts with psychology

and the neuro- and cognitive sciences.

Oral expression and clarity: ability to speak about questions of Philosophy of Mind with high consistency and lucidity.

Written expression: ability to summarize, analyze and critique positions held in the field of Philosophy of Mind in a clear analytic idiom.

General Education

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course fulfills the General Education requirement –C (Comparing the World: “Being able to make comparisons across cultures and across periods of time is a critical interpretive skill for citizens of the 21st century, and gives its force to this rubric of the general education program. Courses listed under this heading include both diachronic and synchronic investigations, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, both liberal arts and pre-professional modes of knowing.”) As such it has the following learning outcomes:

- Awareness of a theoretical discourse that presupposes a shared idea of what it means to be human, an idea that – so these theories assume – can be spelled out in universal rational and/or scientific terms that are valid across cultural and historical borders.
- Introduction to the history of thought about the human mind or soul, and to some of the factors that impacted on the way this entity was conceived of.
- Exploring the interface between scientific research and theorization and forms of reasoning rooted in the humanities.

Course Outline

Here is an overview of what we will do each class. A [detailed schedule](#), materials and instructions are available on Blackboard.

Class 1 (20 Jan): What do we see?

Class 2 (27 Jan): The Zombie, the Bat, and the Knowledge Argument

Class 3 (3 Feb): What do we perceive?

Class 4 (17 Feb): Who or what is the (my?, our?) body?

Class 5 (3 Mar): What is an emotion?

Class 6 (10 Mar): What is agency? Who or what acts when an action happens, and how does that work? What is an action, by the way?

Class 7 (17 Mar): As philosophers of mind, what is it that we study? Which kinds of questions do

we ask? Which questions should be asked? Can we define consciousness? Can we study it at all, and if so, how?

Class 8 (24 Mar): How real are mental entities and the world that appears or is given with them? What does my first-person perspective show me? What are the commonalities and differences between idealism and phenomenology?

Class 9 (31 Mar): What do you make of the problem of mental causation? Is it a problem and, if so, what does it consist in? Can you think of a solution to it?

Class 10 (7 Apr): Dualistic and physicalist type-identity theories: Dualists say that the mind exists, either as a substance distinct from the physical stuff we (our body? parts of 'us'?) are made of or at least in form of distinct properties that cannot be reduced to our physical properties. Type-identity theorists claim that the mind is nothing else but our brain or our nervous system, or that our mental states are nothing else but neuronal states. Who is right? Does the mind exist as a distinct entity, and if so, is it an object or a property? Is it physical or mental? Do these questions make sense?

Class 11 (14 Apr): Functionalism and AI: Can we define the mind or consciousness as a function? And if so, a function of what? What might be achieved by defining mental entities in this way? Assuming that mind or or consciousness are multiply realizable functions, can they be transferred to or implemented in other objects than humans?

Class 12 (21 Apr): What is intentionality? Is it the "mark of the mental"? What about meaning? What is meaning, actually, and how does it relate to intentionality? Who or what has intentionality? Do you need to be conscious for it?

Class 13 (28 Apr): Do we know other minds? If so, how do we know them and what good does it do us to know them? What does this mean "knowing other minds"? What kind of knowing is it and what are those "minds" we are supposed to know? And who or what is the "other"?

Class 14 (5 May, 15:00 = final exam time): Who are you?

12 May: Last day to submit the final version of your assignment: "I am ..."

Finally, here some information about how we are going to work toward achieving the learning outcomes of this course:

- *Philosophical reading*: improve your skills in reading, assessing and comparing arguments in the field of Philosophy of Mind within their respective theoretical background

Even though we will read predominantly textbooks, you will learn a lot about how to take apart a text that often will not make sense to you at first sight, to identify and assess claims, and to engage critically with what is being proposed. You will understand what you need in order to *really* make sense of such a text, how to identify weaknesses in an exposition or argument, and you will learn how reading comprehension depends on at least some familiarity with the terminology of a field and a proper academic vocabulary – which you will enlarge significantly if you do your homework as you should.

- *Philosophical analysis and reflective orientation*: use of conceptual analysis to frame issues in the context of different theoretical approaches in the field of Philosophy of Mind

Philosophy of Mind as a discipline has been closely aligned with the approaches of analytic philosophy. This means that we will prioritize conceptual clarity and conceptual analysis and demand that both our authors and we ourselves be in control of our terms, as much as this is possible. While getting to know key theories, concepts and arguments of modern philosophy of the mind, you will increasingly understand how the way you conceptualize a question shapes the question itself, maybe even creates it in the first place, and also determines the answers you can give. This will become even clearer when we look at the challenges that analytic philosophers face in the field of consciousness studies and in their engagement with phenomenological approaches that have become increasingly popular in recent years.

- *Historical understanding*: acquaintance with a range of theories of Philosophy of Mind from classical antiquity to the present, with a particular focus on the developments in the 19th-21st centuries

We will see how questions change with the passing of time, because of the socio-political, cultural, technological and economic context in which they are raised, and because of scientific progress.

- *Methods of interdisciplinarity*: observe, from close up, how philosophy interacts with psychology and the neuro- and cognitive sciences

One of our textbook authors is a psychologist, the other a philosopher. Philosophers of Mind work closely with neuroscientists and psychologists to devise research questions. We will see to which degree scientific progress may make philosophical ideas obsolete? Or do the same ideas become even more relevant than before? Or is this a false alternative?

- *Oral expression and clarity*: ability to speak about questions of Philosophy of Mind with high consistency and lucidity

You will have ample opportunity to practice this in our class discussions and numerous group work tasks by submitting your thoughts to the attentive and constructive criticism of your peers.

- *Written expression*: ability to summarize, analyze and critique positions held in the field of Philosophy of Mind in a clear analytic idiom

This course prioritizes small-scale writing and precision in less formal exchanges on Blackboard. You will be encouraged to use precise terminology and an analytic idiom in order to relate philosophical reasoning to issues and experiences of your everyday life. Advanced

students have the option to build a well-organized and well-researched argument, but generally, this course is designed rather as a propaedeutic toward this hallowed aim.

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
This Is Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction (2013)	Pete Mandik	Wiley-Blackwell	9780470674505 (pbk)	Yes
Consciousness: An Introduction (3rd edition, 2018!! used copies of older editions won't work)	Susan Blackmore Emily Troscianko	Taylor & Francis/Routledge	9781138801318 (pbk)	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

60 % Twelve weekly questionnaires on key points presented in the readings and video lectures. The grading is cumulative, i.e. each diligently completed questionnaire will earn the grade A. If your answers are very off the mark, I might need to ask you to rewrite them, but it's OK to get things wrong. What is important is that you try and give a serious effort. The questionnaires are due before each class.

30 % In-class participation, including well prepared attendance of group meetings and active contribution to the tasks given to you and your group.

10% Final written assignment/project "I am ..."

Other

A note on plagiarism

Unfortunately, some students try to gain credit for work they have not done themselves. For the sake of fairness and academic integrity, and in order to maintain the reputation of the degree you are earning with us, we are committed to prevent that such attempts succeed. There will be no tolerance with plagiarism and other such forms of academic misconduct.

Ignorance is no excuse. This is a junior-level course, and you will be expected to know the rules as you can find them described, e.g., on our webpage at <https://www.aup.edu/academics/academic-career-resources/academic-resource-center/writing-lab/plagiarism>. If you are in doubt or have questions concerning this issue, you are very welcome to seek further advice. But it will not help you at all to say that you did not know you should not have done it or had not known how to do it correctly. What counts is what has happened. Any conduct, whether intentional or unintentional, which creates the impression that some of the coursework you submit for grading is your own achievement when it is not will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and penalized at least with a fail grade.

Sometimes students present alien work as their own not because they want to earn an unfair advantage over their peers but rather because they feel unable to cope with the workload for some academic or personal reason. If this is the case, please do not hesitate to seek our support: there is a lot that can be done to help you, and it will certainly be much better for you if you solve your problems together with us rather than against the rules.