

Chapman University

PHIL340: Philosophy of Mind

Tuesday/Thursday 11:30-12:45pm in Hashinger Science Center 003
Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Kelvin J. McQueen

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Office hours: email to schedule appointment.

Course Description

The course focuses on what is arguably the most contested area in the philosophy of mind, the nature of consciousness or conscious experience. On the one hand, everyone knows what consciousness is: it is what vanishes every night when we fall into dreamless sleep and reappears when we wake up or when we dream. On the other hand, it is widely believed that we are currently unable to explain consciousness, and some think we may never. There are two key questions. Firstly, conscious experiences are tightly correlated with physical states of the brain. But correlations stand in need of explanation. Why are some physical states associated with consciousness? Put bluntly, why does consciousness exist at all? Secondly, we believe that we (humans) are conscious. We (perhaps hesitantly) ascribe consciousness to other animals, such as our pets. But as creatures become increasingly different from us, we struggle to say what has consciousness and what doesn't (is an octopus conscious? insects? bacteria? intelligent robots?). Could we therefore ever build a "consciousness meter" a device that determines, for any physical system, whether and to what extent it is conscious? Philosophers have been debating these questions for centuries. In recent years these questions have become the focus of intense interdisciplinary inquiry engaging not only philosophers, but also neuroscientists, computer scientists, physicists, biologists, and others. We begin studying key contributions from the history of philosophy that have shaped how we now understand these problems. We then look to the contemporary literature and focus on modern attempts to solve these problems.

Course objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Identify the main positions in the contemporary philosophical and scientific study of consciousness, articulate the motivations and reasons supporting these positions, and evaluate the relative merits of the arguments given in their defence.
2. Formulate your own views about topics in the contemporary study of consciousness (at least provisionally) and defend them orally (in class discussion) and in writing (in assessments).
3. Critically analyse academic journal articles, identify their primary arguments as well as any potential weaknesses or flaws in them.
4. Collaborate with others in the class, helping them clarify and strengthen the defence of their views.
5. Come away with a much deeper understanding of your own conscious mind and its relationship to the physical universe.

Course Delivery

Lectures are given every Tuesday and Thursday 11.30-12.45pm. The lectures are recorded. We will cover 14 topics, one for each week of class. You will find 14 corresponding modules on canvas. The Tuesday lecture will typically be a lecture on that week's topic. You will need to have read the assigned reading for that lecture beforehand. The Thursday lecture will typically involve discussion activities that enable you to discuss that week's topic in depth. Each week you will also contribute to discussion boards for a portion of your grade. The remainder of your assessment will require you to write papers, details below.

Assessment and grading

Participation. 10%

You receive 10% simply for attending all lectures and participating constructively in discussions. You are allowed three unexcused absences. Every subsequent unexcused absence will cost 1%. Failure to participate in discussion activities will also cost 1% per activity.

Weekly discussion board contributions. 25%

Beginning week 2, you will be required to make **at least two** discussion board contributions per week. Links to discussion boards are found in the Canvas modules. Each week, you will **(1) respond to a posted prompt** (try to do this early in the week) and then **(2) provide constructive feedback** on someone else's response to the prompt. You have until Saturday night at midnight each week to complete your two contributions. **Late contributions will not be graded. Missed contributions cannot be made up.**

Short paper. Due: Sunday 11.59pm October 17. 25%

Write a philosophical paper on a topic from weeks 3-7.
500-700 words. Upload to Canvas before deadline.

Long paper. Due: Thursday 11.59pm December 16. 40%

Write a philosophical paper on a topic from weeks 8-14 (A bibliography is necessary and must include at least 6 references including references to readings from multiple modules.)
1500-2500 words. Upload to Canvas before deadline.

In preparation for writing philosophical papers please read:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

The following is a helpful guide to general academic writing:

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/jfb/bengor.pdf>

General note: No late papers will be accepted without a doctor's signed medical excuse or without proof of some other serious emergency. If a student is going to miss a paper deadline, he/she must contact the instructor in advance to give a reason. Proof of the student's excuse is due asap.

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A	93 - 100	B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	D+	67 - 69
A-	90 - 92	B	83 - 86	C	73 - 76	D	60 - 66
		B-	80 - 82	C-	70 - 72	F	0 - 59

Schedule and required readings

Most required readings are linked to below. Unlinked and additional readings are on Canvas modules.

Week	Tuesday lecture	Thursday lecture
1	<u>August 31</u> <i>Topic:</i> What is consciousness?	<u>September 2</u> <i>Topic:</i> Historical background: Galileo. <i>Required reading:</i> Goff, 2017a
2	<u>September 7</u> <i>Topic:</i> Historical background: Descartes. <i>Required reading:</i> Descartes, 1641 [med. II and med. VI (par. 9 and par. 19 - 22)]	<u>September 9</u> <i>Topic:</i> Historical background: Elizabeth. <i>Required reading:</i> Elizabeth, 1643 [1-8]
3	<u>September 14</u> <i>Topic:</i> What is it like to be a bat? <i>Required reading:</i> Nagel, 1974 [435-445]	<u>September 16</u> <i>Topic:</i> What is it like to be a bat? <i>Required reading:</i> Nagel, 1974 [446-450]
4	<u>September 21</u> <i>Topic:</i> The knowledge argument. <i>Required reading:</i> Jackson, 1982 [127-132]	<u>September 23</u> <i>Topic:</i> The knowledge argument. <i>Required reading:</i> Jackson, 1982 [133-136]
5	<u>September 28</u> <i>Topic:</i> The hard problem of consciousness. <i>Required reading:</i> Chalmers, 2010 [sec. 1-3]	<u>September 30</u> <i>Topic:</i> The hard problem of consciousness. <i>Required reading:</i> Chalmers, 2010 [sec. 4-5]
6	<u>October 5</u> <i>Topic:</i> Panpsychism. <i>Required reading:</i> Chalmers, 2010 [sec. 6-10]	<u>October 7</u> <i>Topic:</i> Panpsychism. <i>Required reading:</i> Goff, 2017b
7	<u>October 12</u> <i>Topic:</i> Representationalism <i>Required reading:</i> Jackson, 2003 [9-26]	<u>October 14</u> <i>Topic:</i> Objections to Representationalism. <i>Required reading:</i> Alter, 2007.
8	<u>October 19</u> <i>Topic:</i> Integrated information theory. <i>Required reading:</i> Morch, 2017	<u>October 21</u> <i>Topic:</i> Integrated information theory. <i>Required reading:</i> Tononi, 2008 [216-219]
9	<u>October 26</u> <i>Topic:</i> Objections to IIT. <i>Required reading:</i> Pautz, 2019 [188-200]	<u>October 28</u> <i>Topic:</i> Objections to IIT. <i>Required reading:</i> Pautz, 2019 [200-212]
10	<u>November 2</u> <i>Topic:</i> Perceptual filling-in <i>Required reading:</i> Hopkins and McQueen	<u>November 4</u> <i>Topic:</i> Perceptual filling-in <i>Required reading:</i> Hopkins and McQueen
11	<u>November 9</u> <i>Topic:</i> Illusionism <i>Required reading:</i> Frankish, 2016 [11-29]	<u>November 11</u> <i>Topic:</i> Illusionism <i>Required reading:</i> Frankish, 2016 [30-39]
12	<u>November 16</u> <i>Topic:</i> Illusionist IIT. <i>Required reading:</i> McQueen, 2019 [141-162]	<u>November 18</u> <i>Topic:</i> Illusionist IIT. <i>Required reading:</i> McQueen, 2019 [162-167]
Thanksgiving Break November 22-27		
13	<u>November 30</u> <i>Topic:</i> Consciousness and quantum mechanics <i>Required reading:</i> Chalmers and McQueen, 2020 [sec. 1]	<u>December 2</u> <i>Topic:</i> Consciousness and quantum mechanics <i>Required reading:</i> Chalmers and McQueen, 2020 [sec. 8-9]
14	<u>December 7</u> <i>Topic:</i> TBA <i>Required reading:</i>	<u>December 9</u> <i>Topic:</i> TBA <i>Required reading:</i>

No electronic device policy

Due to their [detrimental effect on learning](#), laptops, tablets, and similar devices are not permitted during class. Failure to comply may result in the loss of participation grades. If special circumstances require the use of such devices at some point during the semester, you must clear this with me in advance and provide the relevant documentation.

Mask Policy

As of 8/31/2021 face coverings are required for faculty, staff and students in all indoor facilities unless alone in a private office with the door closed, or while actively eating or drinking. Until this policy changes, an approved accommodation is required to not wear a face covering during class.

Syllabus Change Policy and Course Schedule

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, the above syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Most of our time in class will be spent working through the readings. The rate at which we move through the readings will largely depend on the progress of our in-class discussion. The above is therefore a guide only.

Lectures are Recorded

Software will be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded to assist those who cannot attend the live session, or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. These recordings will be made available only to students who are enrolled in the class, and only during the period in which the course is offered. All recordings will become unavailable to students in the class shortly after the course ends. Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Please discuss this option with your instructor.

Academic Integrity Principle Statement

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the University's Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions up to and including expulsion. For further information see: chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class should inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University no longer makes the initial contact with professors--the student does. The University will determine what accommodations are suitable based on documentation and individual student needs, and students will email this information, in pdf form, to their teachers. Contact Ms. Andrea Tedford, the Counselling & Disability Services coordinator, at atedford@chapman.edu or 714-516-4520 (410 N. Glassell St.). The Disability Services Specialist, Mr. Jason Alexander, will then work with faculty members, who are asked to provide appropriate accommodations for these students. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Philosophy Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's)

PLO1: Writing

Ability to state and support a thesis, apply knowledge of critical reasoning, accurately interpret philosophic sources, and clearly communicate a balanced account in writing.

PLO2: Critical Reasoning

Ability to construct and analyze complex arguments, and distinguish good reasoning from bad.

PLO 3M&E: Metaphysics & Epistemology.

Ability to demonstrate knowledge of some of the most important figures and theories in metaphysics and epistemology.

PLO 3L: Logic

Ability to demonstrate knowledge about and skill in deductive or inductive reasoning.

General Education Learning Outcomes

7VI: Values and Ethical Inquiry: Students will be able to articulate how values and ethics inform human understanding, structures, and behavior.

7SI: Social Inquiry: Students will be able to identify, frame and analyze social and historical structures and institutions in the world today.