



## Philosophy of Mind and Language Course Descriptor

Course Title	Philosophy of Mind and Language	Faculty	Philosophy
Course Code	NCHPH730	Course Leader	Dr Brian Ball
Credit Points	20	Teaching Period	Any
FHEQ Level	Level 7	Date Approved	June 2020
Compulsory/ Optional	Optional		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

### COURSE SUMMARY

This course introduces students to foundational concepts, problems, and theories in the philosophy of mind and language. Beginning with the mind: what, if anything, is it, and how does it relate to the body? What is the nature of a mental state, such as a qualitative sensation (e.g. pain) or a propositional attitude (e.g. belief)? What is consciousness? Can there be mental causation, and if so, how? Is there an asymmetry between our knowledge of our own minds and those of others? Turning to language: how are the meanings of our expressions fixed? Are they determined by what's in our heads or are these meanings partly constituted by our environment and our practices of interpreting each other? And how do the meanings of simple expressions combine to determine those of more complex ones, especially in indirect discourse and ascriptions of propositional attitudes?

### COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to:

- Develop students' skills in the interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of central philosophical theories of mind and language.
- Promote students' ability to categorize, elaborate, and compare, the primary theories of the nature of the mind and mental phenomena; of the nature of language; and of the interrelations between them.
- Enable students to form and defend their own estimates of the merits of alternative positions in the philosophy of mind and language.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Demonstrate wide-ranging knowledge of, and recognition of systematic connections between key questions and debates concerning the natures of the mental and linguistic phenomena and the interrelations between them.
- K2d Engage sensitively, constructively and creatively with the texts and theories of key philosophers of mind and language.

### SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1d Employ advanced scholarly techniques to interpret and clearly articulate key ideas and arguments in the philosophy of mind and language.
- S2d Engage critically with central texts and theories in the philosophy of mind and language, select and analyse information, and question assumptions.
- S3d Employ a range of philosophical devices to articulate, develop, and defend positions on contentious issues in relation to mental and linguistic phenomena and their interrelations.

### TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1d Show self-direction in working independently, creatively, and to deadline.
- T2d Organize and synthesise information, question assumptions, and engage with competing arguments.
- T3d Produce clear, sophisticated, and persuasive presentations on complex topics.
- T3d Consistently apply an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English, using an advanced application of scholarly terminology, that demonstrates the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and with sophistication.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- 30 hours of lectures
- Two one-hour one-to-one tutorials

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Students are required to attend and participate in all timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The study of philosophy cultivates skills that are employable across a range of sectors. These include the abilities to:

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines.

- Conduct research and explore relevant existing knowledge.
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex ideas and materials.
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty.
- Solve problems through logical reasoning.
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing.
- Engage in collaborative and constructive discussion.

## ASSESSMENT

### FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, both written and oral.

### SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in one form:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Written assignment	100%	Yes	N/A	5000 words

The written assignment will be assessed in accordance with the assessment aims set out in the Programme Specification.

### FEEDBACK

Students will receive feedback in a variety of ways, written and oral, within one-to-one tutorials, in discussion phases of lectures, and on formatively and summatively assessed assignments. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback is provided on summative assessment and is made available to the student either via email, the VLE or another appropriate method.

### INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

### INTRODUCTIONS

Heil, J. (2004), *Philosophy of Mind: a Contemporary Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

Kemp, G. (2013), *What is this Thing Called Philosophy of Language?*, Abingdon: Routledge.

### ANTHOLOGIES

Byrne, D., and Kolbel, M. (2010), *Arguing about Language*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Chalmers, D. (ed.) (2002), *The Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**PRIMARY TEXTS**

Burge, T. (1979), 'Individualism and the Mental', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 4.

Davidson, D. (1967), 'Truth and Meaning', *Synthese*, 17.

Dennett, D. (1991), 'Real patterns', *Journal of Philosophy*, 88.

Descartes, Rene, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, meditations 2 and 6. (Any scholarly edition.)

Frege, G., 'On Sense and Reference' in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, P. Geach and M. Black (eds and trans.) (1980), Oxford: Blackwell, 3rd edition.

Putnam, H. (1975), 'The Nature of Mental States' in *Mind, Language and Reality*, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**INDICATIVE TOPICS**

- Dualism and Behaviourism
- Theory and Functionalism
- Anomalous Monism and Mental Causation
- Intentionality and Propositional Attitudes
- Meaning
- Externalism and Anti-Individualism

<b>Title: NCHPH730 Philosophy of Mind and Language Course Descriptor</b>					
<b>Approved by: Academic Board</b>					
<b>Location: Academic Handbook/Programme specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/MA Philosophy Programme Specification/Philosophy Course Descriptors</b>					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Owner	Proposed next review date	Modification (As per AQF4) & category number
2.0	January 2022	April 2022	Brian Ball	April 2025	Category 3: Changes to Course Learning Outcomes
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Brian Ball	April 2025	