



Philosophy of Mind Course Descriptor

Course Title	Philosophy of Mind	Faculty	Philosophy
Course Code	NCHPH755	Course Leader	Dr. Brian Ball
Credit Points	15	Teaching Period	Either
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, theories, and issues in the philosophy of mind. What, if anything, is the mind, 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?

COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to:

- To develop students' skills in the interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of central philosophical theories of mind.
- To promote students' ability to categorize, elaborate, and compare, the primary theories of the nature of the mind and mental phenomena.
- To enable students to form and defend their own estimates of the merits of alternative positions in the philosophy of mind.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Formulate, interpret, and analyse key questions and debates concerning the natures of various mental phenomena.

K2d Engage sensitively and creatively with the texts and theories of key philosophers of mind.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

S1d Employ advanced scholarly techniques to interpret and clearly articulate key ideas and arguments in the philosophy of mind.

S2d Engage critically with central texts and theories in the philosophy of mind, 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 various mental phenomena.

TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

T1d Show self-direction in working independently, creatively, and to deadlines.

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:

- 15 hours of lectures
- A one-hour one-to-one tutorial

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

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

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Studying the philosophy of mind 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

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 the form of a single summative essay:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Written assignment	100%	Yes	N/A	4000 words

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

FEEDBACK

Students will receive formal feedback in a variety of ways: written (including via email correspondence); oral (within one-to-one tutorials, in discussion phases of lectures, and on an *ad hoc* basis). Students will also individually attend 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*, 2nd edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

ANTHOLOGIES

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.

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

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

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

INDICATIVE TOPICS

Students will study topics such as the following:

DUALISM AND BEHAVIOURISM

Is the mind a separate substance, causally interacting with the body? Or, when we attribute mental states to individuals are we simply re-describing their bodily behaviour?

IDENTITY THEORY AND FUNCTIONALISM

Are mental states identical with brain states? Are they to be identified by their functional roles? Or do these approaches leave the qualitative character of conscious experience completely out of account?

ANOMALOUS MONISM AND MENTAL CAUSATION

Might mental event tokens be identical to physical event tokens, though no reduction of types of the former to type of the latter is available? Or would this yield implausible consequences regarding mental causation?

INTENTIONALITY AND PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDES

Do subjects really have beliefs, hopes, and fears? If so, is this in virtue of standing in some relation to a sentence in the language of thought? How might such a sentence get its content?

Title: NCHPH755 Philosophy of Mind Course Descriptor					
Approved by: Academic Board					
Location: Academic Handbook/Programme specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/MA Philosophy & AI Programme Specification/Philosophy Course Descriptors					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Owner	Proposed next review date	Modification (As per AQF4) & category number
2.0	April 2022	April 2022	Brian Ball	April 2025	Category 3: Changes to Course Learning Outcomes
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Brian Ball	April 2025	