

Philosophy 307: Philosophy of Mind (Spring 2015)

Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change.

Professor: Dr. Rachel Fredericks

I prefer to be called Rachel, but you may call me Professor or Doctor Fredericks if that makes you more comfortable.

Classes: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00–1:40 p.m. in Colgate 126

Email Address: rachel.fredericks@colby-sawyer.edu

I prefer to be contacted by email rather than telephone. If you send me an email, I will usually be able to respond within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Office Hours: M & W 11:00 a.m.-noon, T 1:45-2:45 p.m., & F 3:45-4:45, and by appointment

Office Location: Colgate 234

Office Phone: 603 526 3422

Course Description:

In this challenging survey course, we investigate the nature of the relationship between minds and bodies, thinking critically about various theories that attempt to explain their connection. In doing so, we grapple with related questions about knowledge of other minds, introspection, consciousness, and intentionality. The course is structured to illuminate the historical development of philosophy of mind, emphasizing how theories are developed in response to the shortcomings of earlier views. By drawing on our knowledge of psychology, cognitive science, computers and information processing, as well as historical, cultural, and religious conceptions of the mind/body connection, we deepen our understanding of the philosophical arguments under consideration and the ways they influence our thinking.

Prerequisite: To take this course, students must have previously completed a 100 or 200 level philosophy course or have officially obtained permission to waive that requirement.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will have learned to:

1. Define and use key concepts and theories employed in the philosophical study of the mind, its relation to the body, and our knowledge of that relation, such as consciousness, intentionality, dualism, behaviorism, identity theory, functionalism, qualia, etc.,
2. Recreate and analyze arguments about the relation between minds and bodies and our knowledge of that relation,
3. Evaluate both the content and structure of arguments about the relation between minds and bodies and our knowledge of that relation and thereby take a stand as an individual in favor of or against various philosophical views or parts of views,

4. Share, via discussion, their prior knowledge about historical/cultural/religious conceptions of the mind/body connection, scientific psychology, cognitive science, information (computer) processing, and integrate that knowledge with related contemporary philosophical arguments, and
5. Apply philosophical methodologies and theories in developing their conception of themselves as people with both minds and bodies.

Required Book

Heil, John, ed. *Philosophy of Mind: A Guide and Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2004. Print.

Additional required readings (not from this book) are available online via Moodle and are marked on the schedule with a *.

Recommended Books

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Persuasive Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007.

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. 4th ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2009.

More recommended readings (and videos) are available via Moodle. Pay attention to which resources on Moodle are strictly required and which are merely recommended!

Schedule:

All groups of students are different in their interests, needs, and talents, so I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule (although I try to do that as little as possible and give as much warning as possible if and when I do).

You should have all required readings done before class on the day for which they are scheduled, and you should always bring a copy (paper or electronic) of them with you to class on the day for which they are scheduled!

Introduction to Philosophy of Mind

1/20: Rachel Fredericks, "Philosophy of Mind Syllabus"*

1/22: Arguments, Intuitions, and Philosophical Writing

Recommended viewing: Julianne Chung, "Truth and Validity"*

Recommended viewing: Paul Henne, "Validity"*

Recommended viewing: Aaron Ancell, "Soundness"*

Dualism

1/27: René Descartes, "Minds and Bodies as Distinct Substances," pp. 36-58

Recommended viewing: Stephan Schmid, "Descartes' Cogito Argument"*

1/29: ACTIVITY TBD

Behaviorism

2/3: Behaviorism Intro, pp. 75-80 AND Hilary Putnam, "Brains and Behaviour," pp. 96-104

Identity Theory

2/5: Identity Intro, pp. 80-84

2/10: J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes" pp. 116-127

2/12: Saul Kripke, "Identity and Necessity," pp. 128-133

Recommended viewing: Alex Byrne, "Mind Body Dualism"*

2/17: Jaegwon Kim, "Token and Type Physicalism," pp. 101-105*

Functionalism

2/19: David Lewis, "An Argument for the Identity Theory," pp. 150-157

2/24: Hilary Putnam, "Psychological Predicates," pp. 158-167

Recommended listening: Radiolab, "The Turing Problem"*

2/24: PAPER 1 DUE AT 11:59 P.M.

Challenges to Functionalism / Materialism from Qualitative States / Qualia

2/26: Irwin Goldstein, "Identifying Mental States: a Celebrated Hypothesis Refuted," pp. 46-62*

3/3: Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," pp. 762-771

Recommended viewing: Caspar Hare, "Science, Can it Teach Us Everything?!"*

Objections to the Knowledge Argument

3/5: Terence Horgan, "Jackson on Physical Information and Qualia," pp. 147-152*

3/10: David Lewis, "What Experience Teaches," pp. 262-290*

Challenges to Functionalism from Consciousness

3/12: David Armstrong, "What is Consciousness?" pp. 607-616

3/16 – 3/20: SPRING RECESS (no classes!)

3/24: David Chalmers, "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness," pp. 617-640

3/24: PAPER 2 DUE AT 11:59 P.M.

3/26: Colin McGinn, "Can we Solve the Mind-Body Problem?" pp. 781-797

3/31: John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs," pp. 235-252

Challenges to Functionalism from Intentional States / Propositional Attitudes

4/2: Margaret Boden, "Escaping from the Chinese Room," pp. 253-266

4/7: Ned Block, "The Mind as Software in the Brain," pp. 267-271

Reduction and Multiple Realization

4/9: Derk Pereboom and Hilary Kornblith, "The Metaphysics of Irreducibility," pp. 709-725

4/14: Jaegwon Kim, "Reduction, Reductive Explanation, and Physicalism," pp. 273-308*

Eliminativism and the Materialist Stance

4/16: Paul Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes," pp. 382-400

4/21: SCHOLARS' SYMPOSIUM (No regular classes, but stay tuned for alternate plans!)

4/22: PAPER 3 DUE AT 11:59 P.M.

4/23: Bas van Fraassen, "What is Empiricism and What Could it Be?" ONLY pp. 47-61 are required*

Students' Choice

4/28: Students' Choice: TBA

Final Exam

The final exam will be on Thursday, April 30th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in our usual location, Colgate 126.

Assignments & Assessment

1. Attendance & Participation

- a. Attendance and active participation in class discussions is crucial to success in mastering the course material and developing your skills. You are expected to come to class with informed questions and opinions about the relevant readings. I will keep track of attendance in class, but it is only one factor relevant to your participation grade. The quality and quantity of your contributions to discussion will be the primary basis for the participation aspect of your grade, but the quality and quantity of your participation in office hours, email exchanges with the professor, and communication via note cards will also be factored into your participation grade.
- b. If you miss five classes without communicating an adequate justifying or excusing reason to me, I may initiate an administrative withdrawal to remove you from the course, based on your performance in the course so far and my best estimation of whether you will be able to successfully complete the course.

2. Written Assignments

- a. All written assignments must be typed (double-spaced) and submitted via Moodle.
- b. All assignments will be processed using Turnitin, a plagiarism-detecting technology that also allows me to efficiently give you individualized, legible comments on your work.
- c. Thus EVERY assignment MUST include appropriate citations for all quotations and paraphrases within the main text, as well as a complete list of bibliographic references at the end.
 - i. You must use the MLA style guide to format your citations and references, but contrary to the MLA style guide:
 1. You do not need to put the Works Cited section on a separate page, and
 2. You do need to provide the URL for any source materials found on the Internet.
- d. You must always submit your assignments as Microsoft Word documents.
 - i. To ensure consistent, correct formatting, I have posted an assignment template on the Moodle site for the course for you to use as the starting point for each assignment.

3. Reading Responses

- a. Each student must write reading responses in preparation for each of two different class periods (after January 29th).

- i. After the add/drop deadline on January 26, Rachel will randomly assign each student to write responses for two specific days, to ensure that at least one student has written a response in preparation for each class.
 - ii. If you would prefer to write a reading response on a different reading/day (for whatever reason), then you must convince the person assigned to that other day to trade with you (rather than doubling up), and you must BOTH email Rachel to tell her about the agreement you have reached at least 24 hours before the relevant class begins.
 - iii. You may turn in a third reading response on any class day of your choosing; if it earns a higher score than either of your others, that higher third score will replace the lower of the two other scores.
 - iv. You are welcome to write more than three reading responses for your own use as study aids, but I will not be grading more than three responses per student and thus the additional ones will not count toward your grade.
 - b. Reading responses must be turned in via Moodle by 11:00 a.m. on the day that the reading under consideration is due (which is to say, an hour BEFORE our class discussion of the material begins).
 - i. Late reading responses will not be accepted for credit.
 - c. In your two reading responses, your highest priority is quality (accuracy, clarity, precision, and detail), not quantity. So the responses will be quite short: 2 pages, double-spaced.
 - i. The first page of your reading response should be exposition (description or reporting of what the author has said, which may require some careful, charitable interpretation on your part) of some PART of the assigned text. The exposition should be focused, detailed, and precise; you should not attempt to summarize the entire reading.
 - ii. The second page of your reading response should go beyond the text. You may (a) give reasons why you (or someone else might) object to what the author said in the bit of text under discussion, (b) give an argument for why you favor one interpretation of that bit of text over another, (c) develop an example of your own that you think supports or undermines the point being made by the author, (d) apply the lesson from that bit of text to some other question, problem, or context, (e) explain how the relevant bit of text made you change your mind about something you previously believed, or (f) complete some other task that involves evaluation, criticism, or application (that is, critical thinking under your own steam, in your own voice).
 - d. These reading responses help you work toward all the Learning Outcomes, but especially 4 & 5.
- 4. Papers
 - a. The papers you write will be short (3–7 pages double-spaced) and focused on demonstrating core philosophical skills (see Learning Outcomes 1–3).
 - b. Since philosophy papers tend to be an unfamiliar and challenging form of writing for students, I recommend that (a) you devote some quality attention to the detailed writing guidelines and tips that I post to Moodle and (b) you spend plenty of time revising them.
 - c. Papers will always be due at 11:59 p.m. via Moodle.

- i. Late papers will be accepted (via email), but they will be penalized 5% for the first minute they are late and an additional 5% for each day that passes between the deadline and submission.
5. Final Exam
- a. The final exam will be comprehensive (cumulative), and will be divided into two sections. The first section will have questions that must be answered in 1 to 5 complete sentences. The second section will have essay questions. You must answer a fixed number of questions from each section, but you will have some choice about which questions you answer. If you answer more questions than I ask you to, you will not receive credit for the surplus answers. A much more detailed explanation of what to expect will be provided via Moodle as the exam approaches.

Your grade will be based on the following:

- Participation: 15 points
- Reading responses: 10 points each x 2 responses = 20 total
- First paper: 25 points
- Second paper: 25 points
- Third paper: 40 points
- Final exam: 50 points
- Total: 175 points

Final letter grades are determined by the number of points earned throughout the term; one needs at least the number of points listed below in order to earn the corresponding letter grade. I will not “round up” the sum of points that you earn, and I do not grade on a curve.

A = 95% = 166 points	C = 73% = 128 points
A- = 90% = 158 points	C- = 70% = 123 points
B+ = 87% = 152 points	D+ = 67% = 117 points
B = 83% = 144 points	D = 63% = 110 points
B- = 80% = 140 points	D- = 60% = 105 points
C+ = 77% = 135 points	F = <60% = ≤104 points

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization
 - a. Is the assignment well organized?
 - b. Does it have a clear introductory paragraph, thesis statement, and concluding paragraph?
 - c. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?
2. Exposition and Interpretation
 - a. Do you give a clear, accurate, and charitable interpretation of the view(s) under consideration?
 - b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) as well as their implications?
 - c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?
3. Argument and Critical Evaluation

- a. Do you provide rational arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
- b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
- c. Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?

4. Writing Style

- a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
- b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
- c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

Student Conduct

A respectful, civil environment is crucial for learning any subject, but especially so for philosophy, which involves questioning, defending, and criticizing the beliefs and practices that mean the most to us. Conduct that interferes with other students' ability to learn or my ability to teach is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In particular, students should not interrupt other students or me, otherwise dominate class discussion, disparage or otherwise disrespect the ideas and beliefs of others (which does not mean that one cannot or should not respectfully provide reasons to disagree), habitually arrive late or leave early, make or receive phone calls, text, surf the internet, or use other technology that is not directly related to course goals.

Schedule Conflicts

Students are responsible for meeting all of their academic obligations, even if they are engaged in college-sponsored activities, i.e. theatre, athletics, or field trips. There are no excused absences for such activities. In the case of a scheduling conflict between two classes, students should make appropriate arrangements with the course instructors, being mindful that a regularly scheduled class has the higher priority.

Colby-Sawyer acknowledges that religious practices differ from tradition to tradition and that the demands of religious observance in some traditions may cause conflicts with student class schedules. If religious observance will cause a student to be absent from class or otherwise affect his or her ability to complete academic assignments, he or she must notify the instructor in advance and make necessary arrangements to complete the course materials.

Academic Integrity

All Colby-Sawyer College students are expected to understand the meaning of academic honesty and to behave in accordance with the college's policies on academic honesty as published in the Code of Community Responsibility. To read these policies, see the links found at <http://www.colby-sawyer.edu/campus-life/conduct/honesty/index.html>

Plagiarism is the use of creations, ideas, or words of others without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarizing is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought, whether it is intentional (on purpose) or unintentional (an accident).

More detailed resources explaining what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarizing are posted on the Moodle site for the class. If, after investigating those resources, you have questions about how to cite appropriately, please contact me *as soon as possible*. It is much better for everyone involved if a student gets help clearing up any confusion right away, before turning in the assignment, rather than waiting and having to deal with the bigger problem of plagiarism.

If I discover that a student has plagiarized or cheated in any way, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question (and this may be sufficient to cause the student to receive a failing grade for the course overall). Whenever a student receives a score of zero for this reason, I arrange a meeting with the student so I can explain why the assignment constitutes plagiarism (or another form of academic dishonesty) and answer the student's questions. The main purpose of these meetings is to ensure that the student understands how to avoid similar problems in the future. After the meeting, I document my findings about the assignment and the content of our discussion in a letter, and send copies of that letter and the related evidence both to the student and to Dean Burton Kirkwood. The student is then asked to sign a copy of the letter (indicating that it is an accurate representation of what has occurred) and return the signed copy to Dean Kirkwood. Generally, for a first offense, no further penalties are assigned beyond the grade penalty on the specific assignment, but decisions about such things are in the hands of the dean, since only he has access to information about whether the student has been reported for a similar infraction before.

Disability Accommodations

Students who have a documented disability will be provided with reasonable accommodations. They are encouraged to contact Access Resources (accessresources@colby-sawyer.edu) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. All accommodations must be approved by CSC Access Resources.

Concerns or Problems

If you have a concern or problem relating to any aspect of the course or your performance in it, get in touch with me, the professor, as soon as possible. I want to be able to help you, but if I do not know about your concern, I cannot address it. If discussing your concern with me (and implementing any plan we agree upon) does not resolve the issue, your next step would be to contact the chair of the department, Prof. Tom Kealy.