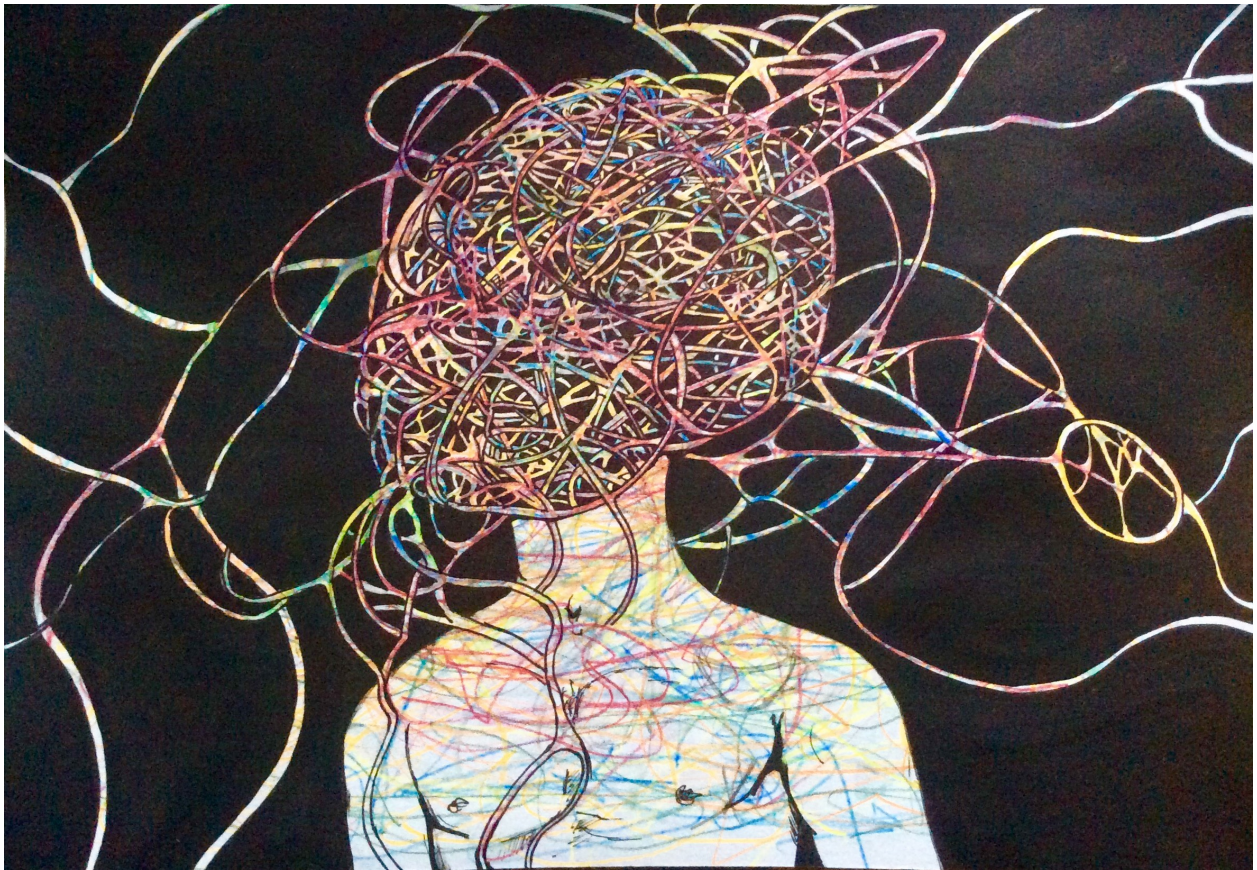


Phil 7: Philosophy of Mind

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Office Hours: TBD

Office: Dodd Hall 375

TA: ...

Web: **TBD**

Class Hours: M/W/F

Class Room: TBD

Sections: TBD

Course Overview

This course provides a general introduction to central topics and debates in the Philosophy of Mind. The course is organized around a set of thematic units, each corresponding to core philosophical questions about the nature and workings of the mind:

- **Metaphysics of Mind:** What is the nature of the mind? Are minds physical entities, or are they immaterial like a soul? What are mental states such as beliefs, desires, and intentions?
- **Consciousness:** What does it mean to be a conscious creature? How can consciousness be studied, and what would it take to construct an empirical science of consciousness?
- **Mental Content:** How does the mind represent the world? What makes our thoughts meaningful or about things? What determines the content of beliefs, desires etc...?
- **Operations of the Mind:** Is the mind a kind of computer? If so, what kind? How should we understand computational models of cognition, and what do recent advances in artificial intelligence, such as large language models like ChatGPT, tell us about the nature of minds?

While each of these themes is philosophically significant in its own right, a central goal of the course is to equip students with the conceptual tools needed to evaluate contemporary questions at the intersection of philosophy, cognitive science, and artificial intelligence. In particular, the course will devote special attention to theorizing about whether large language models can genuinely be said to have minds.

Course Materials

- All required readings and supplementary materials will be conveniently accessible on BruinLearn.

Meeting Times and Office Hours

TBD.

Course Objectives

To succeed in this course students are expected to:

1. Attend lectures regularly and take notes.
2. Attend sections regularly and engage in discussion.
3. Come to class having read the required material
4. Write frequently on course material and proactively seek feedback.
5. Come prepared for class quizzes
6. Write, Write, Write

Course Structure

Class Structure

Without the experience or proper scaffolding, reading philosophy can be extremely difficult. So, much of lecture will aim at preparing students for each of the bi-weekly reading assignments. By exposing student to relevant concepts and ideas, students will come out of class not only prepared to read the next assignments but also able to fruitfully engage with it. Another aim of lecture is review and discuss previous course material to strengthen students' understanding. In service of this, there will be reading quizzes held in each class.

Course Evaluation

Getting a good grade in this class is designed to be both easy and challenging: easy because earning a high grade on individual assignments will not be difficult, given lecture and the reading materials. However, the challenge is to stay on top of all the assignments.

Class Quizzes

There will be 5 randomly assigned quizzes throughout the course. These quizzes are graded as Pass/Fail and only 4 of them (the highest grades) will contribute towards your final grade.

These quizzes are intended to be easy. They're constructed to incentivize comprehension of reading and lecture materials.

Weekly Writing Assignments

There will be a writing assignment due at the end (Sunday) of each week (excluding week 6). The purpose of these assignments is to get you in the practice of writing and engaging with the weekly course material and to prepare you for the Midterm and Final Papers.

These assignments will roughly come out to 1-2 pages, and will be graded on a basis of either check minus (75 percent), check (88 percent), and check plus (97 percent).

More detailed instructions on these assignments can be found on Bruinlearn (Link:TBD)

Midterm and Final Paper

Both the Midterm and Final Paper are intended to be extensions of your weekly writing assignment. Prior to the assignment you will receive feedback from either the instructor or the TA on one of your weekly reading assignments. This feedback is intended to hone and develop the reasoning of your writing assignment. Typically, this feedback will have you extend the essay to around 5-7 pages.

This assignment will be letter graded primarily on the basis of how well the student has developed their paper in response to the feedback they received.

For more detailed instructions visit the relevant Bruin-learn Document(Link: TBD)

Grading Policy

The course will be graded on the typical scheme: A+ 97-100, A 93-96, A- 90-93. A final curve may be applied at the end of the course, however it will only ever help your overall letter grade. Your overall grade will be weighted to the following:

- 30% of your grade will be determined by your *midterm* paper.
- 30% will be determined by your *final* paper.
- 30% will be determined by your 5 weekly writing assignments.(i.e., 5% each)
- 10% will be determined by 4 out of 5 weekly quizzes

Course Policies

During Class

There are numerous studies evidencing the distracting nature of screens in a classroom environment. Thus, to foster an learning environment for everyone, *electronic devices are prohibited* (unless needed for legitimate accommodations).

Policies on Incomplete Grades and Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted if accompanied with a timely excuse to either the instructor or TA. Additionally, Short extensions will be granted liberally upon request. Longer extensions need to be negotiated with your TA

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious offense that will be dealt with in accordance with university policy, which you are expected to be familiar with. If you are in doubt about what needs to be cited or what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me or the TA before you turn your paper in.

For information about academic integrity at UCLA, see the Dean of Student's Site on Academic Integrity: <https://deanofstudents.ucla.edu/academic-integrity>

- Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial: An essential guide available on the UCLA Library website (<https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/workshops/avoiding-plagiarism/>), which can help students understand and steer clear of plagiarism.

Writing Help

- Philosophy Writing Center Programs: Specifically tailored for philosophy students, offering invaluable support. Details can be found here: <https://uwc.ucla.edu/philosophy-writing-center/about-the-pwc/>.
- The Undergraduate Writing Center also offers drop-in sessions and other resources, as detailed at <https://uwc.ucla.edu/drop-ins/>.
- Professor Jim Pryor's writing tips for philosophers: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you are already registered with CAE, please request your Letter of Accommodation on the Student Portal. If you are seeking registration with CAE, please submit your request for accommodations via the CAE website. Please note that the CAE does not send accommodation letters to instructors – you must request that I and the TA view the letter in the online Faculty Portal. Once you have requested your accommodations via the Student Portal, please notify me and the TA immediately so we can view your letter. Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations should submit their request for accommodations as soon as possible, as it may take up to two weeks to review the request. For more information, please visit the CAE website, visit the CAE at A255 Murphy Hall, or contact them by phone

Schedule and weekly learning goals

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. Readings annotated with an asterisk (*) indicate material that might be omitted if the course runs a bit slower than planned.

Week 01, 08/10 - 08/14: Unit 1:

What is a mind? And what are mental states?

- M Course Introduction
- W *The Mind Body Problem*:
 - René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (*Meditations II-VI*)
 - Elisabeth of Bohemia, *Correspondence with Descartes* (1643; selected letters)
- F *Behaviorism and Identity Theory*:
 - Ryle, *The concept of mind* (excerpt)
 - J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes" (excerpt)
 - *Jaegwon Kim, "Against Psychoneural Identity" ((2011) excerpt)

Week 02, 08/17 - 08/21: Unit 1 Cont'd and Unit 2: Consciousness

- M/W *Functionalism*
 - Hilary Putnam, "The Nature of Mental States"
 - Ned Block, "Troubles with Functionalism" and "What is Functionalism"
- The nature of Conscious Experience:
 - Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"
 - Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia"

Week 03, 08/24 - 08/28: Unit 2 Cont'd and Unit 3: Mental Content

- M Chalmers, "How Can We Construct a Science of Consciousness?"
- W/F *Externalism*:
 - Putnam, "The meaning of "meaning""
 - Burge, "Individualism and the Mental" (excerpts)

Week 04, 08/31 - 09/04: Unit 3 Cont'd

- M *The intentional Stance*: Dennett, "The intentional Strategy and Why it Works"
- W/F: *Information*
 - Cohen, <https://aardvark.ucsd.edu/mind/informationalsemantics.html> (excerpt)
 - *Dretske, "Explaining Behavior" (excerpts)
 - *Dretske, "Misrepresentation"
- Midterm Paper Due

Week 05, 09/07 - 09/11: Unit 4: Intelligence and Operations of the Mind

- M/W *Computational Theory of mind*
 - Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"
 - * Ned Block, "The Mind as the Software of the Brain"
- F: Margaret Boden, "Escaping from the Chinese Room"

Week 06, 09/14 - 09/18: Unit 4 Cont'd

- M: *Beyond Classical Computing*
 - Churchlands, "Could a Machine Think"
 - Andy Clark, "MindWare" (excerpt on connectionism)
- W/F *LLMS*
 - *Buckner Millière, "A Philosophical Introduction to Language Models"
 - *Bender "On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots" (tentative)
 - *Goldstein and Levinstein, "Does ChatGPT have a mind?"
- Final Paper Due