**Minds, Brains, and Persons**

PHIL 20208—01/02

University of Notre Dame

Spring 2019

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Office Hours: TBD

Location: TBD

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of mind, focusing on the mind-body problem and issues in personal identity. Questions to be discussed include the following: Is there anything more to the mind than overt behavior? Are mental states like visual experiences, itches, pains, beliefs, and desires identical with neural states of the brain? Is the mind a computer program? Will neuroscience ever be able to completely explain consciousness? Are persons like you and I identical with our bodies? Do we have souls? Can we survive biological death? Is bodily resurrection possible?

**Texts**

1. *Philosophy of Mind: A Beginner’s Guide*, by Ian Ravenscroft
2. *Persons and Personal Identity*, by Amy Kind
3. All articles will be posted on the course website.

**Course Requirements**

*Participation* (10%): Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your overall grade. Please come to class regularly, and be ready to actively and respectfully contribute to discussion,

*Three Short Papers* (60% total, 20% each): There will be a total of eight units in this course. You will write a short (~2 page) summary paper at the end of three of these units. You can choose which three units to write about, so long as you write at least one short paper *before* midterm break. I will distribute prompts at the beginning of each unit, which will ask you to clearly explain the main view, argument, or problem that is the unit’s focus.

*Final Exam* (30%): There will be an essay-based written exam at the end of the semester.

**Course Policies**

*Late Assignment Policy*: If a paper is one day late, its grade will be lowered by a full letter (so an A paper will be given a B, an A- paper will be given a B-, and so on). If a paper is two days late, its grade will be lowered by two full letters. If a paper is more than three days late, its grade will be lowered by three full letters. If you know in advance that you won’t be able to take the midterm or the final in class on the specified dates, please arrange the time and place for a make-up exam with me beforehand. If you simply don’t show up to an exam without notifying me in advance, your exam will be docked a full letter grade per day until I hear from you. Your grade will *not* be lowered if you have a legitimate reason for turning an assignment in late (ex. serious illness, family emergency, disability, etc.)

*Disabilities*: I am committed to providing accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are eligible for accommodations, please contact me and/or Disability Services ([574-631-7157](tel:574-631-7157)) at the beginning of the semester.

**Schedule of Readings**

**Week 1: Introduction**

*Day 1—Schedule & course requirements*

*Day 2*—*Overview*: Introduction to Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*.

**Week 2: Substance Dualism**

Chapter 1 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1*—*Substance Dualism*: Paul Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness* (selections); Alvin

Plantinga, “Against Materialism” (selections)

*Day 2*—*The Interaction Problem*: Princess Elizabeth, letters to Descartes (selections)

**Week 3: Behaviorism**

Chapter 2 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1*—*Behaviorism*: Carl Hempel, “The Logical Analysis of Psychology”

*Day 2*—*Problems for Behaviorism:* Hilary Putnam, “Brains and Behavior”

**Week 4: Identity Theory**

Chapter 3 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1*—*Type Identity*: J.J.C. Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes”

*Day 2*—*Type Identity*: Smart, cont.

**Week 5: Identity Theory**

Chapter 3 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1*—*Token Identity*: Jerry Fodor, “Special Sciences” (selections)

*Day 2*—*Token Identity*: Fodor, cont.

**Week 6: Functionalism**

Chapter 4 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1*—*Functionalism*: Hilary Putnam, “The Nature of Mental States”

*Day 2*—*Functionalism*: Ned Block, “Troubles With Functionalism”

**Week 7: Computationalism**

Chapter 6 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1*—*Machine Functionalism*: Alan Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”

*Day 2*—*The Chinese Room Argument*: John Searle, “Mind, Brains, and Programs”

**Week 8: Physicalism**

Chapter 8 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1*—*Physicalism*: Daniel Stoljar, “Physicalism” (selections); Ian Ravenscroft, “Physical

Properties”

*Day 2*—*Supervenience*: Terrance Horgan, “Supervenience and Microphysics”

**Week 9: Physicalism**

Chapter 8 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1—Supervenience*: Horgan, cont.

*Day 2—*Midterm Exam

**Week 10: Consciousness**

Chapter 11 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1—Qualia*: Thomas Nagel, “What is It Like to Be a Bat?” (selections)

*Day 2—The Knowledge Argument*: Frank Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know”

**Week 11: Consciousness**

Chapter 11 of Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind*

*Day 1—Zombies*: David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind* (selections)

*Day 2—Zombies*: David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind* (selections)

**Week 12: Personal Identity**

*Day 1—The Problem of Personal Identity*: Amy Kind, Chapter 1

*Day 2—The Psychological View*: Amy Kind, Chapter 2

**Week 13: The Psychological View**

Chapter 3 of Amy Kind, *Persons and Personal Identity*

*Day 1—The Reduplication Problem*: Bernard Williams, “Personal Identity and Individuation”

*Day 2—The Reduplication Problem*: Williams, cont.

**Week 14: The Organism View**

Chapter 4 of Amy Kind, *Persons and Personal Identity*

*Day 1—The Biological View*: Eric Olson, “An Argument for Animalism”

*Day 2—The Biological View*: Olson, cont.

**Week 15: Surviving Death**

*Day 1—Surviving Death*: Trenton Merricks, “The Resurrection of the Dead”

*Day 2—Wrap-up and Review for Final Exam*