PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (PH 4710)
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

MEETING INFORMATION

Room: 18
Mondays: 11.10 to 2.00
Instructor: Marga Vega, email: mvega@dspt.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How can the mind, supposedly an immaterial entity, have any causal influence in the body which is material? How is intentionality, the capacity of our mind to have contents about the world, possible? These questions posed by Descartes and others are part of one of the most discussed disciplines in contemporary Philosophy: The Philosophy of Mind. This course reviews the main problems in the Philosophy of Mind focusing mainly in the mind-body problem and the relation between intentionality and consciousness. We will study the main theories that try to account for the mind-body problem (dualism, behaviorism, identity theory, functionalism, eliminativism, anomalous monism, supervenience, biological naturalism). We will study the difficulties as well as advantages that each one of these theories presents. Counterarguments to reductive materialism will be presented as well as the difficulties entailed by the dualist approach. We will turn to the History of Philosophy, more specifically to Aristotle, to present a non-dualist, non-reductionist model for the mind-body problem.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is a seminar. In the first period of our weekly meeting we will study a prominent theory of the mind and objections and replies. In the second period we will focus in one of the main contemporary questions in the Philosophy of Mind where the students will take turns presenting the topics assigned.

COURSE GOALS

Following DSPT institutional goals of deep learning (integrative thinking, intellectual humility and self-direction) and of effective leadership, in this course the student will have an opportunity to:

1. Acquire systematic knowledge of the main problems in the Philosophy of Mind. The instructor’s lectures will present the main approaches to the problems of the mind in the discipline.
2. Become familiar with some milestone texts on the Philosophy of Mind. Every week the student will read some of the most representative papers on the different theories of the mind.
3. Develop critical thought on the problems of the Philosophy of Mind presented. The student is encouraged to participate in class and engage in philosophical conversation.
4. Expand the scope of the problems dealt with by the discipline, bringing together different traditions that may shed a new light on the topics discussed. The instructor will provide an integrative approach to the topic by contrasting contemporary current approaches with different paradigms in the history of philosophy.
5. Improve argumentative skills in Philosophy. The student will participate in active discussion.

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester the student will be able to:

1. Present the main points of both dualist and materialist theories of the mind as well as the main objections that these theories face.
2. Articulate the main problems that the Philosophy of Mind studies.
3. Elaborate a personal reflection on the possible solution to these problems.
4. Show proficiency in the academic literature on the topic.

ASSIGNMENTS

PRESENTATIONS: Students will be required to present weekly on the reading assignments. The grade for the course will be based on these presentations.

READINGS

- Assigned readings and handouts can be found at the course website on Moodle. Students will need the key to access the course website. The instructor will provide during the first meeting.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

September 1 - September 7
Labor Day

September 8 - September 14
PROBLEMS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND/DUALISM
Readings:
Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. II and VI
Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Meditation VI
NO PRESENTATIONS

September 15 - September 21
BEHAVIORISM/PUTNAM: MINDS, BRAINS AND BEHAVIOR
Readings:

PRESENTATIONS SESSION:
The Philosophy of Neuroscience
Cognitive Science

September 22 - September 28
IDENTITY THEORY/KRIPKE
Readings:

PRESENTATIONS SESSION:
Consciousness
The Unity of Consciousness

September 29 - October 5
FUNCTIONALISM/CHINESE ROOM
Readings:

PRESENTATIONS SESSION:
Consciousness and Representation
The Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness

October 6 - October 12
ELIMINATIVISM/NAGEL
Readings:

PRESENTATIONS SESSION:
Intentionality
Ancient Intentionality
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 20 - October 26</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| October 27 - November 2     | EPIPHENOMENALISM/ZOMBIES                                              | ZOMBIES, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
SUPERVENIENCE, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
EPIPHENOMENALISM  Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy |
|                             | PRESENTATIONS SESSION:                                                 | Mental Representation  
Theories of Mental Representation                                                                 |
|                             | PRESENTATIONS SESSION:                                                 | Concepts  
Belief                                                                                           |
|                             | PRESENTATIONS SESSION:                                                 | Phenomenology  
Qualia                                                                                           |
|                             | PRESENTATIONS SESSION:                                                 | Teleological Theories of Mental Content  
Externalism about Mental Content                                                                 |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRESENTATIONS SESSION:</td>
<td>Abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRESENTATIONS SESSION:</td>
<td>Narrow Mental Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nonconceptual Mental Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1 - 7</td>
<td>PRESENTATIONS SESSION:</td>
<td>Animal Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language of Thought Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collective Intentionality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>