PH-4500: Approaches to Embodiment
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

Spring 2017
Tuesdays, 9:40 AM-12:30 PM
DSPT 2

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Course Description and Objectives:

Since the time of Descartes, modern philosophy has struggled to explain the relationship between the human mind and body, and more generally, between the material and the spiritual. Analytic philosophy of mind has proposed a number of possible solutions to the mind-body problem: substance dualism, property dualism, and various forms of materialism. But problems and paradoxes with these accounts have persisted, leading a number of philosophers and scientists to suggest that a new, more adequate understanding of both mind and body is needed. Meanwhile, promising insights into the human mind and body have arisen from disciplines and methods outside the Analytic tradition: Embodied cognitive science and phenomenological analyses of embodied experience have provided a deepening appreciation of how the body shapes perception, cognition, self-identity, practical intentionality, and our relationships with others; Aristotelian-Thomistic Hylomorphism has also been re-discovered as a philosophical alternative to the standard post-Cartesian understanding of the body, allowing for a richer, more intimate integration of mental and bodily capacities.

This course will examine these alternative approaches to embodiment in detail. We will begin by briefly examining the Cartesian context of the terms of the mind-body problem, and the standard dualistic and monistic solutions which emerge from it. We will then turn to key texts from the phenomenological and Thomistic traditions, paired with investigations from embodied cognitive science, to explore alternative ways of thinking about both the mind and body, and to concretely explore pervasive aspects of embodied experience: perception, affectivity and
emotion, intersubjectivity, and self-identity. In the final weeks of the semester, we will turn to some particular embodied experiences: gender, disability and illness, and how we listen to music. This course, an advanced seminar for M.A. and Ph.D. students, will include a review of foundational phenomenological concepts, as well as key principles of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Thus, while a certain familiarity with the history of philosophy on the part of the student is presumed, no prior coursework in phenomenology or Thomistic philosophy is required.

By the end of the semester, students will have gained a deeper understanding of the ways in which our embodiment makes all aspects of human experience possible. Students will also have a grasp of the key features of phenomenological method, Aristotelian-Thomistic Hylomorphism, and embodied cognitive science, and be able to describe some of the important contributions that each of these approaches makes to the understanding of human embodiment in each of the following aspects of human experience: perception, emotion, cognition, self-identity, agency, intersubjectivity, and gender.

Course Requirements:

As an advanced seminar course, this class will focus primarily on the discussion of assigned texts, although the instructor will provide background material in lecture form from time to time. Students will be expected to carefully prepare assigned readings in order to actively participate in the conversation and raise thoughtful questions in class. Each week several students will be asked to lead the class discussion by introducing a particular text and raising several substantive questions for discussion. Because this class is structured as a seminar, attendance and participation in the discussion is essential. Absences will significantly affect a student’s final grade. Students with disabilities or whose first language is not English are encouraged to speak with the instructor about any special needs they might have.

Students will be evaluated according to the quality of their class participation and leadership of class discussions, and a final research paper of 15-20 pages. These assignments are designed to help students develop their own critical thinking regarding the philosophical accounts and contemporary issues of human embodiment, and articulate their understanding of these topics.
both orally and in writing. They also offer students the opportunity to show their growth in
the DSPT’s institutional goals of integrative thinking, self-direction, collaborative learning,
and leadership. All sources in the final research paper should be cited using proper “Turabian”
format (see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.*
avoid plagiarism, and are asked to consult the *DSPT Student Handbook* for the DSPT’s policies
regarding academic honesty. A **paper proposal** consisting of a short paragraph describing a
student’s chosen topic, along with a preliminary bibliography of a minimum of 10 sources,
should be submitted by **April 21**. The **final research paper** is due no later than **May 19, 2017**. Late papers will be accepted, but will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late
(e.g., an “A” paper turned in one day late will receive an “A-.”)

**Grading:**

- Weekly Class Participation: 25%
- Class Presentations and Discussion Leadership: 25%
- Final Research Paper: 50%

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**Assigned Texts:**

Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy.* Third Edition. Translated by Donald A.
Paperback. $10.

978-0415834339. Paperback. $29.95.

Paperback. $30.

978-0415610377. Paperback. $49.95.
Weekly reading assignments will be taken from these assigned texts, as well as from readings posted on Moodle (http://moodle.gtu.edu). The *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas can be found online (including, for example, at http://dhspriory.org/thomas/summa).

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**Course Schedule:**

1/31: Introduction to the Course

Enlightenment Approaches to the Body and the Mind-Body Problem

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

2/7: Alternative Approaches to Embodiment I: Phenomenology

An Introduction to Phenomenology

Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* 1-2, 6

John J. Drummond, “The Structure of Intentionality”

Optional: Robert Sokolowski, selections from *Introduction to Phenomenology*

2/14: Alternative Approaches to Embodiment II: Hylomorphism and Embodied Cognitive Science

Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book II, Chapters 1-4

Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, qqs. 75-78

Mark Rowlands, “The Mind Embodied, Embedded, Enacted, and Extended”

Alva Noë, *Action in Perception*, Chapter 1

Optional: William Jaworski, “Hylomorphism and Post-Cartesian Philosophy of Mind”

Optional: Gyula Klima, “Mind vs. Body and Other False Dilemmas of Post-Cartesian Philosophy of Mind”
2/21: Perception and Embodiment I

Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book II, Chapter 5—Book III, Chapter 2
Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* 5
Husserl, *Thing and Space*, §§44–57
Optional: John J. Drummond, “On Seeing a Material Thing in Space”

2/28: Perception and Embodiment II

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Introduction to Part Two, and Chapter III
Noë, *Action in Perception*, Chapter 3 (Optional: Chapter 2)

3/7: No Class (Fr. Justin Away)

3/14: Affectivity, Moods, and Emotions

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§28-30
Aquinas, ST I, q.78, and I-II, qq. 22-23, 25, 79-83
Optional: Anthony Hatzimoysis, “Emotions in Heidegger and Sartre”

3/21: Husserl and Merleau-Ponty on the Lived Body

Husserl, *Ideas II*, §§22-29, 35-42
Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Part One, Chapters II–III

3/28: No Class (Reading Week)

4/4: The Lived Body and Intersubjectivity I

Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, Chapter 9
Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, §§42-56
Dan Zahavi, “Phenomenology of Empathy”
4/11: The Lived Body and Intersubjectivity II

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part 3, Chapter 2
Dorothee Legrand, “Inter-Subjectively Meaningful Symptoms in Anorexia”

4/18: Embodied Cognition

Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q.q. 84-85, 87, 89
Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* 6
Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* 7
Dan Zahavi, “Empathy and Social Cognition”
Optional: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Intertwining—The Chiasm”
Optional: Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, Chapters 2-3

4/25: Body, Self-Identity, and Agency

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§15-24
Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* 8, 10
José Luis Bermúdez, “Bodily Awareness and Self-Consciousness”
Optional: Erik Rietveld, “Affordances and Unreflective Freedom”

5/2: Extensions and Applications I: Gender and Identity

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* Part I, Chapter V
Simon de Beauvoir, selections from *The Second Sex*
Iris Marion Young, “Throwing Like a Girl” and “Pregnant Embodiment”

5/9: Extensions and Applications II: Illness and Disability & Music

Arnie Cox, Selections from *Music and Embodied Cognition*
Oliver Sacks, Selections from *Musicophilia* and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*
Optional: Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music*, Chapters 2 and 8
Optional: Katherine J. Morris, “Chronic Pain in Phenomenological/Anthropological Perspective”
Optional: Stefano Micali, “The Alteration of Embodiment in Melancholia”

5/19: Final Research Paper Due by 5 PM

N.B.: The instructor reserves the right to revise the course syllabus as the need arises.