

## Philosophy of Mind

**Professor:** Bryce Huebner

**Office:** 234 New North

**Office hours:** T 13:00 - 14:30; by appointment

**Course meets:**

T & Th 11:00 - 12:15 pm

Location: ICC 214

In this course, we'll examine questions about what minds are, and about what kinds of things have them (individuals, groups, nonhuman animals, plants, and bacteria). Along the way, we'll investigate questions about mental imagery, dreams, and what it's like to be an octopus. Finally, we'll examine questions about what it means to be a "self", to have a "soul", and to be a "person"; and in this part of the course, we'll look at the ways that the philosophy of mind developed in a variety of different philosophical traditions, including Europe, North America, India, Mesoamerica, and Western Africa.

### Course Requirements:

Points	Due Dates	Assignment and Description
30	Before 11/22	<b>4-Sentence Papers:</b> You must write <b>six</b> 4-sentence papers over the course of the semester (prior to the Thanksgiving break). However, you will only be allowed to submit one paper per week, so be mindful of how you space them out.
10	Before 11/22	<b>Paper Workshops:</b> You must workshop <b>two</b> of these 4-page papers in the class <i>immediately following</i> the article that you are responding to. A sign-up sheet will be posted on Canvas, and no more than two presentations will be allowed during a single class period.
30	Between 11/30 & 12/8	<b>Short Paper:</b> You must write <b>one</b> short paper (750-1000 words), using the same structure as the 4-sentence papers; you can address any article, blog posts, or book that we read; other topics must be approved in advance.
20	12/14 12:30 PM	<b>Course Narrative:</b> You must write <b>one</b> course narrative that provides an overview and assessment of what you have learned in the class, and what questions you feel have been left unresolved (and why).
10	All Semester	<b>Engagement:</b> This is a discussion-oriented class, and you will be expected to engage with the readings, contribute to the discussion, and contribute during the paper workshops. If you don't feel comfortable speaking in class, please talk to me, as there are other ways to show that you are engaged!

**4 sentence papers:** These papers will help you to develop the skills that are required to write compelling argumentative papers. Each of these papers must be built around the following template: The author says that \_\_\_\_\_. I say that \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_. One might object that \_\_\_\_\_. But I would reply that \_\_\_\_\_. These papers will be assigned a grade of 5 (excellent), 4 (very good), or 3 (Needs more work); and you will receive a brief narrative response for each submitted paper.

**Short papers** will receive a 'B+' if they 1) clearly articulate the claim being defended, 2) are relatively well organized, 3) rely on fairly strong evidence and arguments, and 4) are stylistically clear—thereby presenting a competent philosophical argument. 'A' grades will be awarded when papers excel in every category, exhibiting a clear capacity for doing philosophy—and 'A-' grades will be awarded where papers excel in one of these areas. 'B' grades will be awarded to papers that are weaker in one area—but still

satisfactory. 'C' grades will be awarded to papers that are weak in two or more of these categories; and 'D' grades will only be awarded to papers that are weak all categories or that omit one category altogether (e.g., by lacking a thesis or lacking arguments for a thesis).

**Paper deadline:** If you need an extension on your paper, please ask *before* the due date. In general, I will be willing to give a 48-hour grace period (no questions asked). If you are still having trouble completing the assignment after that, you must set up an appointment to go over your ideas and set a schedule for finishing the paper. Unless an extension is granted in advance, assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (A- to a B+, B+ to a B, etc.) for each day they are late.

**Appealing a grade:** You can appeal any grade that you feel does not accurately represent the work you have done. All appeals for re-evaluation must be made in writing, no more than two weeks after your paper is returned, and no sooner than 48 hours after you receive your grade. Requests must provide a compelling argument for raising the grade, but an agreement to re-evaluate a paper is no guarantee of a better grade, and it can result in lower grades if there are more serious problems that were missed on the first reading.

**The honor code:** The Georgetown University Honor pledge requires you to be honest in your academic endeavors and to hold yourself to the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life. I expect you to be familiar with the letter and the spirit of this pledge; and, I will enforce the Honor Code by reporting any and all suspected cases of academic dishonesty.

**Accessibility and diversity:** One finds a great deal of diversity in teaching and learning styles in a modern university. These styles may not always mesh in ways that are conducive to the success and wellbeing of everyone in a course. But there are often ways of improving things. I am happy to discuss the structure of the course, and to try to make it more accessible to everyone in the class. So please talk to me if things could be better. I sincerely think that every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating classroom experience! Disabled students and students on record with the university as requiring particular accommodations, please let me know that this is the case, in confidence, during the first few weeks of the semester—and please take advantage of the services provided by the university. And if you find that additional accommodations are necessary, please let me know.

**Sexual misconduct:** As a faculty member and an educator, it is my responsibility to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault. And university policy requires all faculty members to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. But Georgetown also has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include: [Jen Schweer](#) (202.687.0323) Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention; [Erica Shirley](#) (202.687.6985) Trauma Specialist (CAPS). More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at <http://sexualassault.georgetown.edu>.

**Mind your manners:** Philosophy is best done collectively and collaboratively; however, some of the questions we will be discussing in this class are likely to generate contentious claims, spirited discussions, vehement disagreements, and trenchant criticisms. This is at least part of what doing philosophy is all about. In discussing, disagreeing, criticizing, and arguing with one another, we must make an effort to remain courteous and respectful. I promise to do my best to raise philosophical issues and to start philosophical discussions in ways that are as sensitive as possible to the variety of viewpoints and opinions that we are sure to find among the members of this class. But I will only be able to do this if each of you helps to create an atmosphere where we can develop ideas in a friendly and welcoming environment where we all learn from one another. Perhaps more importantly, if you want to disagree with someone, or if you want to offer a criticism of their viewpoint, be sure to offer reasons for the approach that you are suggesting. If we reason through things together, we are sure to have a great semester!

## Tentative reading schedule

8/31	Classes begin
9/5-7	<b>Rene Descartes</b> claiming that animals are machines (4pp); <b>Jen McWeeny</b> , “Princess Elisabeth and the Mind–Body Problem” (4pp); Watch: <a href="#">They’re Made Out of Meat</a> (6:15)
9/12-14	<b>William Lycan</b> , The Mind-Body Problem (17pp); <b>Amir Horowitz</b> , “Jackson’s knowledge argument” (3pp); <b>Amy Kind</b> , “Nagel’s ‘What Is It Like to Be a Bat’ Argument against Physicalism” (2pp) <b>Amy Kind</b> , “Chalmers’s Zombie Argument” (2pp)
9/19-21	<b>Karen Bennett</b> , “Mental Causation” (17pp); <b>Patricia Churchland</b> , “The Hornswoggle problem” (7pp)
9/26-28	<b>Pamela Lyon</b> , “The Cognitive Cell: Bacterial Behavior Reconsidered” (14pp) (optional) <b>Chauncey Maher</b> blogging on <i>Plant Minds</i> at <a href="#">Brains</a> (~6pp)
10/3-5	<b>Peter Godfrey Smith</b> , Other Minds, Ch 1-3 (76 pages)
10/10-12	<b>Peter Godfrey Smith</b> , Other Minds, Ch 4-6 (82 pages)
10/17-19	<b>Peter Godfrey Smith</b> , Other Minds, Ch 7-8 (26 pages); <b>Colin Klein &amp; Andrew Barron</b> , “Insects have the capacity for subjective experience” (12pp)
10/24-26	<b>Eric Schwitzgebel</b> , “If Materialism Is True, the US Is Probably Conscious” (20pp)
10/31-11/2	<b>Blake Ross</b> , “How it feels to be blind in your mind” (14pp); <b>Jennifer Windt</b> blogging on <i>Dreaming</i> at <a href="#">Brains</a> (~6pp)
11/7 11/9	<b>Susan Schneider &amp; Joe Corabi</b> , “The metaphysics of uploading” (18pp) Watch: <b>Daniel Dennett’s</b> , “ <a href="#">Where am I</a> ” (27:07)
11/14-16	Three cardinal discourses of the Buddha, <b>Ñanamoli Thera</b> translator (17pp) Listen to: <a href="#">Monima Chadha on Indian Philosophy of Mind</a> (29:42)
11/21	<b>Anne Waters</b> , Ontology of identity and interstitial being
11/28-30	<b>Pedro Pitarch</b> , “The Two Maya Bodies: An Elementary Model of Tzeltal Personhood” (19pp); (optional) <b>Kevin Groark</b> “Discourses of the Soul: The negotiation of personal agency in Tzotzil Maya dream narrative” (14pp)
12/5-7	<b>Elvis Imafidon</b> , “The concept of a person in an African culture and its implication for social order” (17pp); (optional) <b>Didier Njirayamanda Kaphagawani</b> , “African conceptions of a person: A critical Survey” (10pp)