Philosophy of Mind & Cognitive Science

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 217B

In this course, we will examine some of the key issues that trouble people in the philosophy of mind, psychology, and cognitive science. Specifically, we'll be focusing on questions about the psychological capacities that allow us to understanding the world, our capacity to maintain ongoing control over our actions, the nature of conscious experience, and the impact of cultural variation on cognition. At each point, we'll be trying to figure out when and how research in cognitive sciences can help to address such issues, and when and where we need tools from philosophy to address these issues.

Course Requirements:

10%	Ongoing	This is a small, discussion-oriented class, and you will be expected to make consistent contributions to the class discussion
30%	Ongoing	You must submit a brief (500-750-word) reading response **every friday,** based on the reading for that week, as well as in-class discussion. One of our primary goals will be to *work through* these questions together, and to collectively get a better handle on the issues that have been raised (or have been ignored) in each of the readings.
You must write two short papers that move beyond your weekly reflections. You can expand upon any of your responses, and move in any direction that suits your own interests.		
20%	2/27	At the midpoint of the semester, you must submit a short paper (ca. 1500 words) that is based on one of your weekly writing assignments.
20%	4/24	At the end of the semester, you must submit a short paper (ca. 1500 words) that is based on one of your weekly writing assignments.
20%	5/5	At the end of the semester, you must re-submit your weekly writing assignments, along with a brief narrative assessment of what you have learned in the class, and what questions you feel have been left unresolved (and why). Details will be provided in due course

Grading Criteria:

Weekly writing assignments: You will be given full credit for these so long as you show evidence of engagement with the philosophical issues. This means that you should not just summarize the arguments in the text; you should explain why you think an argument is interesting, wrong, worth pursuing, or relevant to another issue that you are concerned with.

Short papers: Papers will receive a 'B+' if they 1) clearly articulate the claim that is being defended, 2) are relatively well organized, 3) rely on fairly strong evidence and arguments, and 4) are stylistically clear—thereby presenting a competent 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 deadlines: If you need an extension on a 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 this course, and to work with the learning styles people have to the best of my abilities. So please feel free to talk to me in office hours. 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 services provided by the university. Finally, please let me know if you learn during the semester that something would make the classroom accessible.

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 (** recommended, but optional readings; † available at open-mind.net/papers)

1/12	**Introduction**: No reading
1/17 1/19	(ICOSS lecture on the cognitive science of prejudice: 10:00-12:00) Tamar Gendler, "Alief and belief" **Mahzarin Banaji, "The dark dark side of the mind."
1/24 1/26	Neil Levy, "Have I Turned the Stove? Explaining Everyday Anxiety" Rebecca Todd et al., "Affect-biased attention as emotion regulation"
1/31 2/2	Judson Brewer, Hani M. Elwafi, & Jake Davis, "Craving to quit" Peter Gollwitzer, "Weakness of the will: Is a quick fix possible?"
2/7 2/9	† Elisabeth Pacherie, "Conscious Intentions" † ** Andrea R. Dreßing, "Conscious Intentions: Do We Need a Creation Myth?" † ** Elisabeth Pacherie, "The Causal Role(s) of Intentions"
2/14 2/16	† Tim Bayne, "Introspective insecurity" † Maximilian H. Engel, "I just knew that!"; † ** Tim Bayne, "Introspection and Intuition"
2/21 2/23	† Joëlle Proust, "The Representational Structure of Feelings" † Iuliia Pliushch, "The Extension of the Indicator-Function of Feelings" † ** Joëlle Proust, "Feelings as Evaluative Indicators"
2/28 3/2	† Daniel Dennett, "Why and how does consciousness seem the way it seems?" Andy Clark, "Strange Inversions: Prediction and the Explanation of Conscious Experience" **Daniel Dennett, "Reflections on Andy Clark"
3/14 3/16	Lisa Bortolotti & Kengo Miyazono, "Recent Work on the Nature & Development of Delusions" Watch Elyn Saks, "A tale of mental illness from the inside" **Lisa Bortolotti, "The epistemic innocence of motivated delusions"
3/21 3/23	† Philip Gerrans, "All the Self We Need" † Ying-Tung Lin, "Memory for Prediction Error Minimization" † **Philip Gerrans, "Metamisery and Bodily Inexistence"
3/28 3/30	† Evan Thompson, "Dreamless sleep, the embodied mind, and consciousness"; † Jennifer Windt, "Just in time" † ** Evan Thompson, "Steps toward a neurophenomenology of conscious sleep"

4/4 4/6	† Richard Menary, "Mathematical Cognition: A Case of Enculturation" † Regina E. Fabry, "Enriching the Notion of Enculturation" † ** Richard Menary, "What? Now. Predictive Coding and Enculturation"
4/11	Hazel Markus & Shinobu Kitayama, "Cultures and Selves: A Cycle of Mutual Constitution"
4/18-20	Ara Norenzayan, et al. "The Cultural Evolution of Prosocial Religions"
4/25 4/27	† Kathinka Evers, "Can We Be Epigenetically Proactive?" † Stephan Schleim, "Should we be Epigenetically Proactive?" † ** Kathinka Evers, "Understanding Epigenetic Proaction"