

Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science

Professor: Bryce Huebner

Office: 234 New North

Office hours: T 12:00 - 15:00; by appointment

Course meets:

M & W 11:00- 12:15 pm

Location: ICC 212

In this course, we will examine some of the key issues that trouble people in the philosophy of mind, psychology, and cognitive science. We will be focusing on the following questions: Is the mind best understood in computational terms? What impact does culture have on our cognitive capacities? What impact does embodiment have on our cognitive capacities? Can we study the self empirically? And how should we think about freedom and agency? Throughout this course, we will be trying to figure out how empirical research in cognitive sciences can help us to address these kinds of questions, and we'll be trying to figure out where we need to use tools from philosophy to address these kinds of questions.

Course Requirements:

10%	Ongoing	This is a small, discussion-oriented class, and you will be expected to take part in the class discussion. If that worries you, let me know, and we'll work something out
20%	Ongoing	You must submit one question about each reading by midnight, the night before we meet. Each day in class, we will work through these questions together, as we attempt to build a better understanding of the issues that we are covering in class
30%	3/1	You must submit a short paper responding to one argument that we address in the first half of the class (max: 2000 words). Your paper should follow Anatol Rapoport's rules for composing a successful critical commentary (borrowed from Dennett 2013): first, you should attempt to state the author's position so 'clearly, vividly, and fairly' that they would say 'Thanks, I like that way of putting things'. Second, you should specify any points where you agree the author (especially where the points of agreement are not likely to be widespread, or where they are potentially contentious). Third, you should articulate the things that you have learned from the author. And with this background in place, you should articulate your argument against the author, your criticism of their position, or your suggestion for how to expand upon their position.
30%	4/26	Submit a second short paper, on an issue that we have addressed in the second half of the course (max: 2000 words); or substantially revise your first paper, to yield a longer and stronger paper (max: 3000 words)
10%	5/8	At the end of the semester, you must write a brief narrative detailing what you have learned in the class, as well as what questions you feel have been left unresolved, and what it would take to address them adequately.

Paper deadlines: If you need an extension on a paper, please ask *before* the due date. I will 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.

Mind your manners: Philosophy is best done collectively and collaboratively; however, some of the questions we will be discussing in this class may 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!

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. More information about campus resources and reporting can be found at <http://sexualassault.georgetown.edu>.

Course schedule:

1/9 No reading - Intro to the course	
1/14 Carrie Figdor , " The Rise of Cognitive Science in the 20th Century " (15)	1/16 (optional) Philip Agre , " The soul gained and lost: artificial intelligence as a philosophical project " (19)
1/23 Mohammed Abouelleil Rashed , " More things in heaven and earth: Spirit possession, mental disorder, and intentionality "; (optional) Philip Corlett et al, " Hallucinations and strong priors "	
1/28 Laurie Paul , " The subjectively enduring self " (11)	1/30 Georges Dreyfus & Evan Thompson , " Indian Theories of Mind " (26)
2/4 William Bechtel , " Constructing a Philosophy of Science of Cognitive Science " (11)	2/6 Anil Seth & Manos Tsakiris , " Being a beast machine: The somatic basis of selfhood " (12)
2/11 Maxine Sheets-Johnstone , " The Corporeal turn " (24)	2/13 Barbara Gail Montero , " Practice makes perfect: the effect of dance training on the aesthetic judge " (11)
*2/19 Shir Atzil et al , " Growing a social brain " (12) (Alternative link)	2/20 Cecilia Heyes & Chris Frith , " The cultural evolution of mindreading " (7)
2/25 Hazel Rose Markus & Shinobu Kitayama , " Cultures and Selves: A Cycle of Mutual Constitution " (11)	2/27 Qi Wang et al , " Culture, Memory, and Narrative Self-Making " (25)
Spring Break	
3/11 Robert Rupert , " The Self in the Age of Cognitive Science: Decoupling the Self from the Personal Level " (36)	3/13 Zoe Drayson , " The Personal/Subpersonal Distinction " (9)
3/18 Paul Bello & Will Bridewell , " There Is No Agency Without Attention " (7)	3/20 Grace Truong & Rebecca Todd , " SOAP Opera: Self as an object and agent in prioritizing attention " (15)
3/25 Evan Thompson , " Dreamless Sleep, the Embodied Mind, and Consciousness " (19)	3/27 Jennifer Windt , " Just in Time—Dreamless Sleep Experience as Pure Subjective Temporality " (34)
4/1 Myriam Kyselo , " The body social: an enactive approach to the self " (16)	4/3 Monima Chadha , " Reconstructing memories, deconstructing the self " (18)
4/8 Georges Dreyfus , " Is no-self a pathology? "	4/10 Philip Gerrans , " All the self we need " (19)
4/15 Julia Haas , " An Empirical Solution to the Puzzle of Weakness of Will " (28)	4/17 (optional) Karin Meyers , " Free Persons, Empty Selves: freedom and agency in light of the two truths "
Easter Break	4/24 Anthony Burrow et al , " Derailment: Conceptualization, measurement, & adjustment correlates of perceived change in self & direction. "
4/29 No reading - Summary discussion	