

# PHIL 306: Philosophy of Mind

Syllabus for Winter Semester, 2019

## Course description

Over the last fifty years or so, (mostly) philosophical debate has led to a picture of the mind that now constitutes the conceptual framework for the sciences of mental life. Our aim in this course is to trace the history of the development of this framework, to understand its commitments, and to review its limitations.

## Objectives

On successful completion of this unit, students will (a) understand the contemporary scientific framework for the theory of the mind; (b) have a grasp of the primary philosophical objections that have been made to this framework; (c) have a better understanding of the methods of analytic philosophy; and (d) have developed skills in philosophical reading and writing.

## Times and venues

*Lecture:* MWF 12:35 pm - 1:25 pm, Stewart Bio S3-3

*Conferences:* TBA

## Contact details

*Lecturer:* Ian Gold

ian.gold@mcgill.ca

Leacock 908

x-8939

Office hours: by appointment

## Assessment

The work for the course includes (a) an electronic journal (30% of the final grade); (b) a short paper (35% of the final grade); and (c) a final exam (35% of the final grade).

## Readings (all available on myCourses)

Block N. 1980. Troubles with functionalism. In Block N (ed.) *Readings in Philosophy of Psychology*, v.1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 268-305.

Block N, Fodor J. 1972. What psychological states are not. *Philosophical Review* 81:159-181.

Chomsky N. 1959. Review of B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*. *Language* 35:26-58.

Clark A. 2008. *Supersizing the Mind*. New York : Oxford University Press.

Clark A, Chalmers D. 1998. The extended mind. *Analysis* 58:10-23.

Davidson D. 2002. Mental events. In Davidson D, *Essays on Actions and Events* (2nd ed). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Descartes R. 1641. *Meditations* (second and sixth; various editions).

- Fodor J. 1974. Special sciences, or the disunity of science as a working hypothesis. *Synthese* 28:97-115.
- Jackson F. 1982. Epiphenomenal qualia. *Philosophical Quarterly* 32:127-36.
- Kim J. 1989. Mechanism, purpose, and explanatory exclusion. *Philosophical Perspectives* 3:77-108.
- Lewis D. 1980. Mad pain and Martian pain. In Block N (ed.) *Readings in Philosophy of Psychology*, v.1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 216-222.
- Lucas JR. 1961. Minds, machines, and Gödel. *Philosophy* 36:112-127.
- Malcolm N. 1968. The conceivability of mechanism. *Philosophical Review* 77:45-72.
- Marr D. 1982. *Vision*. San Francisco: Freeman.
- Nagel T. 1974. What is it like to be a bat? *Philosophical Review* 82:435-450.
- Putnam H. 1980. The nature of mental states. In Block N (ed.) *Readings in Philosophy of Psychology*, v.1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 223-231.
- Searle JR. 1980. Minds, brains, and programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3:417-24.
- Skinner BF. 1993. *About Behaviorism*. London: Penguin.
- Smart JJC. 1959. Sensations and brain processes. *Philosophical Review* 68:141-156.
- van Gelder T. 1995. What might cognition be, if not computation? *Journal of Philosophy* 91:345-381.

### **Handicaps**

If you have a visible or invisible handicap (e.g. mental disorder), I encourage you to let me know about it so that I can accommodate and assist you.

### **The fine print**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/)).

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.