

PHIL 306: Philosophy of Mind

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.

Course commitments

This course is made up of two one-hour lectures and one conference each week.

Selected readings

- 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, 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.
- Malcolm N. 1968. The conceivability of mechanism. *Philosophical Review* 77:45-72.
- 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.