

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

PHIL 2400F (Section 550), Huron University College, Fall of 2018

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## Class Information:

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan P. Marsh  
Email: [jmarsh26@uwo.ca](mailto:jmarsh26@uwo.ca) (preferred contact)  
Meetings: Wed: 6:30 PM-9:30 PM in HC-W103

Office hour: Wed: 5:30 PM -6:30 PM  
Office: A18  
Course website: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

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## Description:

Controversies about the moral status of animals, human embryos and PVS patients, not to mention the possibility of life beyond the grave, very often trace back to a more fundamental controversy in the philosophy of mind: What are minds? This course is about this latter controversy.

Unit 1 begins by discussing two strikingly different pictures of the human mind – one that is Platonic; the other, Aristotelean. It then explores how these pictures were modified and contested in early modern Europe. Unit 2 examines some more recent, i.e. 20th century, theories of mind, namely, Behaviourism, Mind-Brain Identity Theory and Functionalism, and some challenges they have faced. Unit 3 surveys a variety of contemporary topics, including, consciousness, artificial intelligence, propositional attitudes and mental causation.

**N.B.** No background knowledge of these topics, or of the philosophy of mind, more generally, is expected or presupposed.

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## Outcomes and Methods:

By the end of the semester, students will

1. be acquainted with some of the major traditional and contemporary problems, figures and controversies in the philosophy of mind (KNOWLEDGE);
2. have presented and defended their own thoughts on a core issue in this domain (PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT);
3. have cultivated intellectual virtues pertaining to argumentation, dialogue, interpretation, research and clear writing (to help with outcomes 1 and 2) (SKILLS).

Teaching methods include lectures, tutorials, occasional videos and dialogues.

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## Text:

- **Morton, P.** (ed.) (2010). *A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind: Readings with Commentary*. Second Edition: Broadview Press.

Available for purchase in the university bookstore. Supplementary readings will be made available on OWL.

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## Academic Calendar:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/Courses.cfm?CourseAcadCalendarID=HURON\\_028459\\_1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/Courses.cfm?CourseAcadCalendarID=HURON_028459_1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=)

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## Requirements and Values:

- Attendance/Participation: 20%
- Group Dialogue 15 % (Dialogue Schedule TBA. Grade will be returned to students on, or before, **Nov 5, 2018** )
- Paper 35% (Due **Dec 1, 2018**. Thesis due on **Nov 21/2018**. See OWL for details.)
- Exam 30%

**N.B.** A successful participation grade encompasses more, though no less, than reliable class attendance. It also requires joining the conversation. Whether this occurs during ordinary lectures, workshops, or tutorials, where I may distribute questions/small assignments unannounced, doing this well requires knowing and thoughtfully engaging the assigned readings.

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## Grading Information and Explanation of Grades:

Each assignment will be accompanied with clear instructions. Students will be evaluated in accordance with how well they follow them. For university-wide undergraduate grade descriptors, go here <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/Archive/2017/2017/pg104.html>

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|-------|--|-----------------------------|
| 9/12  | Course Introduction. No readings.  |                             |
|       | <b>Unit 1: HISTORICAL DEBATES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND</b>  |                             |
| 9/19  | <p><b>1 Plato: The Soul and the Forms</b><br/><i>Plato: Selections from The Phaedo</i></p> <p><b>2 Aristotle: Naturalizing the Soul</b><br/><i>Aristotle: Selections from On the Soul and Sense and Sensibilia</i></p>   |                             |
| 9/26  | <p><b>3 The Scientific Revolution</b><br/><i>Galileo Galilei: Selections from The Assayer</i><br/><i>René Descartes: Selections from The World or Treatise on Light</i><br/><i>René Descartes: Selections from Principles of Philosophy</i></p> <p><b>4. Descartes: Knowledge of Mind and Matter</b><br/><i>René Descartes: Selections from Meditations on First Philosophy</i></p>  | Workshop on how to dialogue |
| 10/3  | <p><b>5. Descartes' Dualism</b><br/><i>René Descartes: Selections from Discourse on the Method of rightly conducting one's reason and seeking the truth in the sciences</i><br/><i>Antoine Arnauld: Objections to Descartes' Meditations</i><br/><i>René Descartes: Reply to Antoine Arnauld</i><br/><i>René Descartes: Selections from Principles of Philosophy</i><br/><i>John Locke: Selections from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i><br/><i>A supplementary reading by Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia will be made available on OWL.</i></p> <p><b>6. Materialism and Idealism</b><br/><i>Thomas Hobbes: Selections from Leviathan</i><br/><i>George Berkeley: Selections from A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i></p> |                             |
|       | <b>Unit 2: RECENT THEORIES OF MIND</b>   |                             |
| 10/17 | <p><b>7. Behaviourism and Linguistic Philosophy</b><br/><i>B.F. Skinner: Selections from Science and Human Behaviour</i><br/><i>Noam Chomsky: A Review of B.F. Skinner's Verbal Behaviour</i><br/><i>Gilbert Ryle: Selections from The Concept of Mind</i><br/><i>Ludwig Wittgenstein: Selections from Philosophical Investigations</i></p>  |                             |
| 10/24 | <p><b>8. The Mind-Brain Identity Theory</b><br/><i>U.T. Place: "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?"</i><br/><i>J.J.C. Smart: "Sensations and Brain Processes"</i><br/><i>Saul Kripke: Selections from "Identity and Necessity"</i></p>  |                             |

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| 10/31 | <b>9. Functionalism</b><br><i>David M. Armstrong: "The Nature of Mind"</i><br><i>Jerry A. Fodor: "The Mind-Body Problem"</i><br><i>Ned Block: Selections from "Troubles with Functionalism"</i>   |  |
|       | <b>Unit 3: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES</b>  |  |
| 11/7  | <b>10. Artificial Intelligence</b><br><i>Alan Turing: "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"</i><br><i>John R. Searle: "Minds, Brains and Programs"</i><br><i>Margaret A. Boden: "Escaping from the Chinese Room"</i>   | Workshop on how to write a philosophy paper.                                       |
| 11/14 | <b>11. Consciousness</b><br><i>Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"</i><br><i>Frank Jackson: "Epiphenomenal Qualia"</i><br><i>Daniel C. Dennett: "Quining Qualia"</i><br><i>David J. Chalmers: "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness"</i><br><i>Valerie Gray Hardcastle: "The Why of Consciousness: A Non-Issue for Materialists"</i>  |  |
| 11/21 | <b>12. Propositional Attitudes</b><br><i>Jerry A. Fodor: "Propositional Attitudes"</i><br><i>Paul Churchland: "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes"</i><br><i>Daniel C. Dennett: "True Believers: The Intentional Strategy and Why It Works"</i>  | <b>Paper thesis</b> , 1-2 sentences, due in class.                                 |
| 11/28 | <b>13 Mental Content: Natural Semantics</b><br><i>Fred I. Dretske: Précis of Knowledge and the Flow of Information</i><br><i>Ruth Millikan: "Biosemantics"</i><br><br><b>14 Mental Content: Individuation</b><br><i>Jerry A. Fodor: Selections from "Methodological Solipsism Considered as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Psychology"</i><br><i>Hilary Putnam: Selections from Reason, Truth and History</i> | Term Papers are due on 12/1, and must be submitted via the assignment tab via OWL. |
| 12/5  | <b>15 Mental Causation</b><br><i>Donald Davidson: "Mental Events" and a Selection from "Psychology as Philosophy"</i><br><i>Jaegwon Kim: Selection from "The Many Problems of Mental Causation"</i>   |  |



The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.