

Introduction to Philosophy of Mind (Phil. 190): Fall 2011

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10 am-11am, Wednesday 4pm-5pm and by appointment.

Lectures: MW 8:55am- 10:05am, Main St. Campus, Priscilla Payne Hurd Academic Complex, 338.

Course Description:

Philosophy of mind is a branch of Philosophy that in general studies the phenomenon of “mind” or “mentality”. In this course, we examine three classical topics in philosophy of mind: (i) Mind-Body Problem; (ii) The problem of Personal Identity; and (iii) The Free will problem.

Part I: Mind- Body Problem:

In the first part, we address the following questions: What is mind? What is it to be a creature with a mind? What is the relationship between mind and body? Is the mind the same as the brain? How does mind relate to a person’s brain? How can the mind affect the physical world? What is it to have a mental image or to experience a pain?, etc. To answer these questions, we discuss major philosophical approaches to these questions, such as: Substance Dualism, Behaviorism, The Psychoneural Identity Theory, Machine Functionalism, and Causal- Theoretical Functionalism.

Part II: The Problem of Personal Identity:

In the second part, we address the questions of personal identity: Who am I? What makes one the person one is? What is it to be a person? What is necessary and what suffices, for something to count as a person, as opposed to a non-person? What does it take for a person to persist from one time to another- that is, for the *same* person to exist at different times? As we will see, any attempt to answer these questions leads to a set of difficult questions known as the “Paradoxes of Personal Identity”. We discuss some major philosophical approaches to these questions; however our main focus would be on The Memory Theory.

Part III: Free Will Problem:

In the third part, we discuss questions about the existence and nature of free will. More specifically, we discuss the following questions: Why do we have a problem about the freedom of the will? Is free-will possible? Is compatibilism a solution to the problem of free will? Is Psychological Determinism true? Is Neurobiological Determinism true? What is the relation between free-will and moral responsibility?

Course Objectives:

- To develop a substantial understanding of major topics in philosophy of mind.
- To develop skills of analyzing and evaluating arguments for and against different views on mentality, personal identity, and free-will vigorously, fairly, and with sympathy.
- To exercise scholarly fairness, sympathy, and tolerance toward different conflicting views, and expand our intellectual horizon.

- To diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes our mind against speculation.
- To enrich our intellectual imagination.
- To learn how to think and write explicitly, clearly, and succinctly.
- To think creatively, and to be able to imagine alternatives to familiar view and situations.
- To improve our understanding of mind or mentality and the complexities of the related issues.

Required Texts:

- *Philosophy of Mind*, Jaegwon Kim, Westview Press; Third Edition, Third Edition, 2010.
- *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, John Perry, Hackett Publishing Company, 1978.
- *Four Views on Free will*, John Martin Fischer, Robert Kane, Derk Pereboom, Manuel Vargas, Wiley-Blackwell, 1st edition, 2007.

These books are available at Moravian College Book Store.

Note: You will find that you get the most out of the course if you read each assignment before lecture and then re-read the assignment after the lecture.

Lecture attendance:

It is not possible to perform well in the course without attending lectures regularly. We will cover substantial amounts of material in the lectures not necessarily included anywhere in the readings. It is highly unlikely that you will learn this material adequately by, e.g., borrowing your friend's lecture notes. You have two class sessions you can miss with no question asked. Beyond those two class sessions, any further missed classes without a really good excuse (involving a note from your doctor, psychiatrist, parole officer, etc.) will cost you 2% of your final grade.

Important Note: Please turn off your cell phones before walking into class! If you are having an emergency that requires you to have your cell phone on, please tell me at the beginning of class. No text messaging is allowed during the class, and the use of computers should be strictly confined to the things directly related to the class.

Academic honesty:

Students are required to honor academic integrity. The course imposes the application of Moravian College's Academic Honesty Policy. The policy is to be found at Moravian College's *Student Handbook*.

Course requirements:

- (1) A regular final exam, scheduled for **Friday, December 9, 2011, 8:30AM**, plus a midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, October 12, 2011**). You will receive a Study Guide for the Midterm and Final Exams prior to the exams to know what kind of questions you should expect on the Midterm and Final Exams. Make up final exam will be administered only under the most

extraordinary of circumstances, and only in light of appropriate supporting documents.

- (2) One paper (1500-2000 words). On Wednesday, November 2, 2011, you will receive the paper topic. The paper due is **Wednesday, November 16, 2011**. Paper should be typed, double spaced, and spell-checked. You are responsible to submit a hard copy of your paper. In some exceptional cases, you may be allowed to submit your paper through email. If so, you must receive a confirmation email from me, otherwise, you must assume that I have not received your paper. If the paper is turned in late without prior permission, the grade will be adjusted downwards by a third of a grade for each day the paper is late (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). It is always helpful to discuss the draft of your paper with your friends, roommates, or classmates so as to solicit feedback.
- (3) You will be required to write weekly short paragraphs (not more than two pages) consist of your critical evaluation of the material to be discussed in the class. In the paragraphs, you should concentrate on a specific concept, theme or question. You are required to complete 10 assignments of this sort by the end of the semester, that is, you have the option of choosing 10 out of roughly 13 assignments I am to assign throughout the semester. Every week, by the end of our Wednesday class, the assignments should be submitted.
- (4) During last two weeks, you would be divided into four groups, and each group is required to present one of the views presented in your textbook, *Four Views on Free Will*. The details would be announced in the class and on the Blackboard.

Important note: *By the end of the semester, all five above-mentioned requirements (midterm exam, final exam, weekly assignments, paper, and class presentation) must be completed in order to pass the course. In order words, if you miss at least one of the above requirements, we will fail the course automatically.*

Grading:

Final Exam: 30% - Midterm Exam: 20%- Paper: 20% - Weekly Paragraphs: 20%- Class Presentation: 10%.

The grading scale is as follows:

Points	Grade	4-point conversion
95-100	A	4
90-95	A-	3.7
87-90	B+	3.3
84-87	B	3
80-84	B-	2.7
77-80	C+	2.3
74-77	C	2
70-74	C-	1.7
67-70	D+	1.3
64-67	D	1

60-64	D-	0.7
0-60	F	0

Tentative Lecture Schedule:

I. Preliminary Remarks:

- (1) **General Remarks on Philosophy of Mind and Mental Phenomena:** August 29, 31.
Reading: Philosophy of Mind, Ch.1.
- (2) **General Remarks on Argument and Philosophical Reasoning:** September 7.

II. Mind- Body Problem:

- (1) **Substance Dualism:** September 12, 14.
Reading: Philosophy of Mind, Ch. 2.
- (2) **Behaviorism:** September 19, 21.
Reading: Philosophy of Mind, Ch.3.
- (3) **The Psychoneural Identity Theory:** September 26, 28.
Reading: Philosophy of Mind, Ch.4.
- (4) **Machine Functionalism:** October 3, 5.
Reading: Philosophy of Mind, Ch. 5.

Study Guide for the Midterm: October 5.

Midterm Exam: October 12.

III. The Problem of Personal Identity:

- (1) **Life After Death?** October 17.
Reading: A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality, “The First Night”.
- (2) **Physical Continuity:** October 19, 24.
Reading: A Dialogue, “The Second Night”.
- (3) **Psychological Continuity:** October 26, 31, November 2, 7.
Reading: A Dialogue, “The Third Night”.

Paper Assignment: November 2.

IV. Free- Will Problem:

- (1) **Compatibilism and Incompatibilism:** November 9, 14.
Reading:
- J.J.C. Smart, “Free will, Praise, and Blame”, (in Gary Watson, ed., *Free Will*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2003) [Will be posted on Blackboard]
 - Peter Van Inwagen, “An Argument for Incompatibilism”, (in Gary Watson, ed., *Free Will*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2003) [Will be posted on Blackboard].
- (2) **Free Will and Moral Responsibility:** November 16, 21, 28.
Reading:

- Harry G. Frankfurt, “Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”, (in Gary Watson, ed., *Free Will*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2003) [Will be posted on Blackboard].

Paper Due: November 16

(3) Four Views on Free Will (Students’ Presentations): November 30, December 5.

First Day of Presentations (Nov. 30):

- On Robert Kane, “Libertarianism”, in *Four Views on Free Will*, pp. 5-43.
- On John Martin Fischer, “Compatibilism”, in *Four Views on Free Will*, pp. 44- 84.

Second Day of Presentations (Dec. 5):

- On Derk Pereboom, “Hard Incompatibilism”, in *Four Views on Free Will*, pp. 85- 125.
- On Manuel Vargas, “Revisionism”, in *Four Views on Free Will*, pp. 126- 165.

Study Guide for the Final: December 5.

(4) Discussion and Review: December 7.

The Final Exam will be held on Friday, December 9, 2011, 8:30AM, Main St. Campus, Priscilla Payne Hurd Academic Complex, 338.

Important Note:

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510).
- The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392. The Writing Center tutors will make arrangements with the student who needs tutoring services to meet in an accessible location, such as the library or a study/conference room in PPHAC.