

Moravian College
Phil/Psych 251PM/Z: Philosophy of Psychology
Fall 2014

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Instructor: Dr. William Falla
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Office Hours: Comenius 205: MWF: 9:30-11:00, R: 2:00-3:00, ½ hour after class, by appt.

Course Description:

This course is designed to examine philosophical and empirical theories of the mind with special emphasis on psychology and its biological basis. Main questions will be: What is mind? How does the mind relate to brain and to behavior? How does the scientific study of the brain shape this discussion? How does this relate to concepts such as consciousness, self, emotions/feelings and memory?

Course Objectives:

- A. To come to understand the concept of mind and how it is related to brain and brain function from both a historical and contemporary perspective.
- B. To examine how contemporary theories impact our understanding of concepts that are key to the study of philosophy and psychology.
- C. To examine specifically how this relates to their ideas human decision making as individuals and a society.
- D. To be able to express ourselves cogently, clearly and coherently in both oral and written form with respect to this subject area.

Required Texts:

- Damasio, Antonio, *Self comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain*, Pantheon Books, NYC, 2010 (SCM)
- Damasio, Antonio, *Looking for Spinoza*, Harcourt, Orlando, 2003 (LS)
- Damasio, Antonio, *Descartes Error*. Penguin USA, (DE)

Supplemental Materials

Articles and movies will be on reserve either electronically or in Reeves Library. Handouts and other materials will be made available as required.

Evaluation:

Your final course grade will be determined in the following manner:

Research Paper (30%): You are to take one of Damasio's key ideas (will, memory, emotion, feeling, consciousness, self, etc.) and explore how another psychologist, psychiatrist or neurobiologist approaches/explains it. The paper should be 6-8 pages in length in addition to a bibliography. The paper will be graded on the quality of your research (40%), argumentation/content (40%) and writing style (20%). There will be a timeline and opportunities (voluntary) to meet outside of the regular class period to discuss the selection of your topic, gathering of your sources and rough draft.

Reflection Papers/Case Studies (50%): There will be five (5) Papers due on the dates indicated in the syllabus. These are to be 3-4 page papers in which you are to respond to a question that is based on material currently being discussed in class. Your papers will be evaluated on your understanding of the issues, your ability to apply the course materials to your answer as well as the quality of your argumentation and presentation. These papers will be used as a basis for our class discussion.

Class Participation (20%): This includes both class attendance and your active participation in class discussions. A class such as this is predicated on class discussion so your participation is an important component. As a consequence, active participation is defined as the **voluntary** asking of questions and involvement in class discussions. In addition, your participation in the research paper meetings will be factored into this grade.

Grading Scale

92.5 - 100 = A
89.5 - 92.4 = A-
87.5 - 89.4 = B+
82.5 - 87.4 = B
etc.

All final grades are rounded to the nearest integer.

Honor Code/Attendance:

Students are expected to regularly attend class. Attendance contributes to your class participation and therefore is important. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor and to insure that arrangements are made to make up all missed assignments or material. You are also expected to hand in all assignments on time. If you must be late with your work, you must make arrangements with the instructor prior to the due date. Failure to do so may result in the lowering of the grade on late submitted work.

Students have an obligation to exhibit honesty in all their work. You will be found to have violated this obligation if you plagiarize or cheat. Plagiarizing is presenting the work of others as one's own; cheating is taking, giving or accepting illicit advantage

for any course work inside or outside the classroom. Any violation will result in the lowering of your grade.

Additional Aid/Consideration

Traditional students with special situations that may need accommodations in this class should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Academic and Disability Support at Monocacy Hall, 1st floor, or by calling 610-861-1401. Comenius Center students should contact the Dean, Donna Smith, by calling 610-861-1400. Accommodations will be granted upon receipt of formal notification.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Aug: 28: Introduction to Brain/Mind

SCM: Chapt. 1 & Appendix

LS: pp. 3-24 (skim)

DE: Chapt. 1&2 (skim)

Sept. 4: Brain/ Mind I

SCM: Chapt. 2 & 3

DE: Chapt. 3

Sept. 11: Brain/Mind II

Paper #1 Due

SCM: Chapt. 4

LS: pp. 183-220

DE: Chapt. 10

Sept: 18: Emotions & Feelings I

LS: pp. 27-80

SCM: Chapt. 5

Sept. 25: Emotions & Feelings II

Paper #2 Due

DE: Chapt. 7

LS: pp. 83-101

Oct. 2: Emotions & Feelings III

LS: pp. 101-133

Oct. 9: Emotions, Feelings & Values

Paper #3 Due

LS: pp. 137-179

Library Instruction

Oct. 16: Memory I

SCM: Chapt. 6

Oct. 23: Memory II - **Paper #4 Due**
Movie: *The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

Oct. 30: Consciousness I
SCM: Chapt. 7

Nov. 6: Consciousness II **Paper #5 Due**
SCM: Chapt. 8

Nov. 13: Consciousness III
SCM: Chapt. 9 & 10

Nov. 20: Social Implications of Consciousness **Research Paper Due**
SCM: Chapt. 11
LS: pp. 267-89

Nov. 27: **Thanksgiving**

Dec. 4 Self & Psychosis
Movie: *A Beautiful Mind*