

Course: Philosophy of Mind
PHIL 43901-01
Instructor: Daniel Immerman
MW 9:30-10:45 in 220 Malloy

Contact Info

Email: dimmerma@nd.edu
Office: 109 Malloy
Office hours: 1-3 on Monday or by appointment
Course website: <http://www3.nd.edu/~dimmerma/teaching/43901-01.html>

Readings

You do not need to purchase any texts for this class; all readings will be available on the website.

Course Description

In this course, we will discuss various questions in the philosophy of mind. The course is divided into three sections:

- In the first third, we will look at various answers to a question that has long been central to the philosophy of mind, namely: "What is a mind?" We will look at some historical texts, but focus mostly on articles from the past 50 years.
- In the second third, we will look at some other important debates (with some input from you all as to topic), such as: Can machines have minds? To what extent, and how, do our thoughts depend on the environment?
- In the final third, we will look at some contemporary debates (of your choosing) in the philosophy of mind.

Course Goals

In this course you will:

- Become familiar with positions and arguments in core areas of analytic philosophy of mind, along with several more recent debates.

- Improve your ability, both orally and in written form, to identify an author's claims, arguments, and objections in a text, to restate them in your own words clearly and precisely, and to state and evaluate responses to them.
- Practice identifying a philosophical topic you are interested in, identifying a research question related to it, and writing a paper on it.
- Work out for yourself your own position on several of the debates we discuss.

Expectations

In order to ensure that these goals are achieved, you will need to do your part. In particular, many of the course goals require you to develop your philosophical skills, which in turn requires practice.

With each reading assignment, there will be some questions for you to think about as you do the reading. Answering these questions will help you hone your philosophical skills.

In addition to practicing these skills at home, you will also be practicing them in class. To accommodate this, the classes will not have much lecturing in them. Because most of the time spent in class will be time when you are talking, it is integral that you come to class prepared and participate in class discussions.

Evaluation

Here is the breakdown of grades in the class:

- Reading response papers:
 - During each of the three sections of the course, you will write a short paper (under 700 words) responding to a particular day's reading. (You will have some choice regarding which days you write these papers. The first will be due sometime between January 18 and February 15, the second between February 22 and March 30, and the third between April 4 and April 25) Each will be worth 6 percent of your grade, so together they are worth 18 percent of your grade.

- Final paper and accompanying steps:
 - In addition, throughout the course, you will be working on a longer paper, which will ultimately be at least 2500 words. I will not assign a topic, instead, you will be responsible for selecting it. In the third week of the semester, (January 27), you will turn in an abstract in which you describe what you plan to argue in your paper. This abstract will be graded pass/fail/didn't turn in and worth 2 percent of your grade.
 - About a third of the way through the semester, either on February 17 or March 2 you will have a “poster session” in which you will create a poster of what you plan to be arguing in your final paper and present it to your fellow classmates. This will be worth 5 percent of your grade.
 - About two thirds of the way through the semester, you will film a presentation of your talking through your paper, which I will post on the course website. (You will have some choice regarding when this is due, it will be due sometime between March 30 and April 18). In class, we will do a question and answer session about your paper. This will be worth 10 percent of your grade.
 - The final draft of the paper will be due near the end of the semester (April 26) and worth 35 percent of your grade.

- Quizzes:
 - On at least six days in the semester we will have pop quizzes. There won't be any before the third week of the semester. The material on these will come from that day's readings plus material from previous classes. They will be worth 15 percent of your grade in total. They can't be made up, but if you miss one because of an excused absence, I'll drop that one from your grade. I will drop your lowest pop quiz grade.

- Participation:
 - I will also be grading you based on participation. I will pass out a rubric on the first day that indicates what you need to do to

get a good participation grade. Participation is worth 15 percent of your grade. I'll check in with you regarding how you're doing on participation at some point in the middle of the semester, but you should also feel free to contact me at any point if you want to know how you're doing on participation.

I will be using a 15 point scale:

15 = A
14 = A-
13 = B+
12 = B
11 = B-
10 = C+
9 = C
8 = C-
6 = D
3 = F
0 = Didn't turn in

I may on occasion give assignments a 16, which would correspond to an A+, or a 17, which would correspond to an A++. (The highest final grade I can give is an A).

On rounding: when calculating your final grade, if the first decimal of a grade is 5 or higher, I will round up, and if it is 4 or lower, I will round down. So e.g. an average of a 9.499 is a C, while an average of a 9.500 is a C+.

Academic Honesty

Notre Dame students are expected to abide by Academic Code of Honor Pledge. "As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty." The university academic code of honor is available at <http://honorcode.nd.edu/>. The philosophy department also has a document on plagiarism, which is available at <http://philosophy.nd.edu/assets/77703/plagiarism.pdf>. I take issues of plagiarism very

seriously. If you're ever in doubt about an issue in this area, please come talk to me.

ADA statement

If you think you might need an accommodation because of a disability, you can contact me privately. Please also contact the Office of Disability Services. Their contact information is available at <http://disabilityservices.nd.edu/about/contact>

Attendance

I don't take off points for attendance, but missing class without having a valid excuse will keep you from being able to complete certain in-class assignments, e.g. pop-quizzes, that may affect your grade.

Late Assignments

The assignments vary with regards to late policies; I will include the late policies on the assignment sheets.

Reading drafts of papers

I will look at as many drafts of assignments as you care to send me, with the following exceptions. I will not read a draft turned in less than 48 hours (2 days) before the paper is due. Also, if I send a draft with comments back to you, you should wait at least 48 hours (2 days) before sending me a new draft to look at.