

Phil 009-305: Conceptions of Mind

Fall 2007

MW 5:00-6:30 DRL 3N6

Instructor: Matthew Katz

Office: Logan 430

Office Hours: Tu 1-2, and by appointment

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Course Description:

This course is a writing seminar with content taken from the philosophy of mind. Central issues include the relationship between mind and body, the nature of mental content, whether and how the mind is like a computer, and how much of our cognitive ability is innate. Readings include both historical and contemporary philosophical figures, as well as selections from literature.

Required Texts:

1. Ian Ravenscroft. *Philosophy of Mind*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
2. Philip K. Dick. *Blade Runner*. Del Rey, 1987.
3. Valerie Ross, ed. *The Practice of Writing*. Boston: Pearson, 2006.
4. Maimon, Peritz, Yancey. *A Writer's Resource*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2007.
5. Other readings on Blackboard. [<https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu>]

[All texts are available at the Penn Book Center, at the corner of 34th and Sansom.]

Requirements:

I. Writing Assignments:

Assigned writing will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

1. eight out-of-class writing assignments
2. various in-class writing assignments
3. journal entry – at least one paragraph per week
4. peer-review
5. two conferences with the instructor

II. Involvement:

1. Attendance – No more than two unexcused absences will be allowed. Each absence after the second will result in a lower final grade by one third.
2. Punctuality – You must come to class on time. No more than two late arrivals will be allowed. Each late arrival after the second will be considered an absence.
3. Preparation – Everyone is expected to come to class having finished the reading and/or assignment for the day.
4. Participation – Everyone is expected to participate in class discussions, group projects, in-class writing assignments, etc. Everyone is expected to participate fully, both in class and outside, in peer-review. Also note: you will be sharing your writing with the class.

III. Portfolios:

1. Midterm: Two essays (original and revised), one outline (original and revised), one peer review, one in-class writing assignment.
2. Final: The contents of the midterm portfolio (revised if you wish), two additional essays (original and revised), one additional outline (original and revised), one additional peer review, one additional in-class writing assignment, a cover letter that describes your writing process and the contents of your portfolio.

Grading:

If you fulfill all of the requirements outlined above, and your writing meets minimum competency requirements (that will be discussed in class) then you will receive at least a “B” for the semester. We will discuss as a class what will constitute “A” work for individual writing assignments and for the semester. Note that to fulfill the University Writing Requirement, you must earn at least a “C-” for the course.

The midterm portfolio is required. However, grades given in it will not be counted towards the final grade for the semester. They will serve as guides to let you know how your writing would be graded, were it turned in as part of the final portfolio.

Assuming all requirements are met, final grades will be determined solely by the content of the final portfolio. If some requirements are not met, final grades will be determined by the content of the final portfolio, and adjusted accordingly.

Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1: [Sep 5]

Topic: Introduction
Readings: Ross, pp. 15-59
Assignments: --

Week 2: [Sep 10, 12]

Topic: Androids
Readings: *Blade Runner*, Chs. 1-5
Assignments: --

Week 3: [Sep 17, 19]

Topic: Outlines, Peer Review, Propositions
Readings: Ross, pp. 85-96, 152-173
Assignments: Essay 1

9/17

Week 4: [Sep 24, 26]

Topic: Dualism, Audience

Readings: Ravenscroft, *Intro*, Ch.1
Smullyan, "An Unfortunate Dualist" (BB)
Ross, pp. 247-267

Assignments: Essay 2 9/24
Revised Essay 1 9/26

Week 5: [Oct 1, 3]

Topic: Behaviorism, Argument Type, One-Reason

Readings: Ravenscroft, Ch. 2
Miedaner, "The Soul of Mark III Beast" (BB)
Lem, "The Seventh Sally" (BB)

Assignments: Essay 3 10/1
Revised Essay 2 10/3

Week 6: [Oct 8, 10]

Topic: Summary, Citation, Evaluation

Readings: Article of your choosing

Assignments: Essay 4 10/8
Revised Essay 3 10/10

Week 7: [Oct 15, 17] -- **NO CLASS OCT 15 – FALL BREAK**

Topic: Identity Theory

Readings: Ravenscroft, Ch. 3
Dennett, "Where am I" (BB)

Assignments: **MID-TERM PORTFOLIOS** 10/17

Week 8: [Oct 22, 24]

Topic: Id. Theory (cont'd), The Straw Man, Grading

Readings: Zuboff, "The Story of a Brain" (BB)
Ross, pp. 65-69

Assignments: --

Week 9: [Oct 29, 31]

Topic: Functionalism, Unity and Coherence

Readings: Ravenscroft, Ch. 4
Ross, pp. 111-123

Assignments: Essay 5 10/29

Week 10: [Nov 5, 7]

Topic: Eliminativism, Transitions

Readings: Ravenscroft, Ch. 5
Ross, pp. 123-126

Assignments: Essay 6 11/5
Revised Essay 5 11/7

Week 11: [Nov 12, 14]

Topic: Computation, Tone, Rhythm, Flow
Readings: Ravenscroft, Ch. 6
Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (BB)
Searle, "Minds, Brains and Programs" (BB)
Ross, pp. 269-289
Assignments: Essay 7 11/12
Revised Essay 6 11/14

Week 12: [Nov 19, 21]

Topic: Consciousness
Readings: Ravenscroft, Chs. 11, 12
Nagel, "What is like to be a bat?" (BB)
Blade Runner, Chs. 6-22
Assignments: Essay 8 11/19
Revised Essay 7 11/21

Week 13: [Nov 26, 28]

Topic: Workshop
Readings: --
Assignments: Revised Essay 8 11/28

Week 14: [Dec 3, 5]

Topic: Workshop
Readings: --
Assignments: --

DEC. 10: FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE