

Philosophy of Mind

PHILOSOPHY 3230

Fall Semester, 2009

Instructor: Ray Peace

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Office Hours: 4:45-5:10, Mon. and Wed.; or by appointment

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Welcome to the class. Please keep this page and be aware of the information on it, using it as the semester progresses.

Course Objectives and Outcomes: During the semester, we will plan to:

1. Examine carefully and critically some of the major issues, themes, and concepts in the philosophy of mind, including dualism, behaviorism, identity theory, functionalism, eliminativism, mind as machine, consciousness, etc..
2. Become acquainted with the work of some of the great thinkers in the philosophy of mind, through reading, discussion, projects, and film.
3. Gain insight into the development of thought regarding the philosophy of mind, becoming conversant with its history, particularly in regard to major figures such as Descartes, Hume, Kant, etc. and contemporary figures such as Searle, Dennett, Fodor, Kim, Nagel, Davidson, etc.
4. Apply distinctions in metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, and other subfields of philosophy, as they apply to the philosophy of mind.
5. Recognize how inquiry in the philosophy of mind applies to 'real-world' circumstances and to individual reflection on the meaning of life.
6. Demonstrate the ability to discuss, in both oral and written discourse, classic issues in the philosophy of mind and their relevance to contemporary concerns.
7. Develop your own philosophical viewpoints, in view of insights gained through the examination and assessment of issues pertaining to the philosophy of mind.

Grading:

Your overall grade will be based primarily on the average of the graded papers, projects, notebooks, journals, and/or exercises (tests) we will plan to have. There are no "makeup" papers or tests, in case you happen to miss one. Instead, one major grade will be "dropped", when the averages are figured. For example, if we have 6 major grades (papers, tests, journal, etc.), you would add the total points together and divide that total by 5, to

figure your average. Your letter grade would be based on a “straight scale” (90 or above is an A, 80-89 is a B, etc.)

You are encouraged to take advantage of each opportunity that is assigned, and to complete all of the assignments, thereby giving yourself a better opportunity on your grade. There is a penalty for work that is late. Your attendance is a factor in your grade (see below). Also, you are encouraged to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion.

Attendance:

Two points will be added to your average for perfect attendance; one point for missing one or two days. After three days, one point for each day missed will be taken off your total average. Be punctual, attentive, and courteous, and try to contribute to class discussion. Make sure cell phones or similar items are turned off prior to classtime. Also, make yourself familiar with the VSU attendance policy, and apply it.

Regarding excuses for absences: for official absences, retain your documented excuses until the announced day near the end of the semester, when you can turn them into the instructor; accordingly, there is no need for e-mails or phone calls from students concerning these prior to that day.

Roll:

Sign your name legibly (do not print). It is your duty to sign the roll each day before you leave the class room. If initially the roll gets by you, remember to sign it before you leave. If you arrive late or leave early, indicate which and the time on the roll sheet.

Assignments:

Check the assignment sheet listing in Web CT Vista. Recommended approach to assigned readings: Read the selection prior to class and be ready to discuss it; after class check back through the selection in conjunction with notes taken in class. It is best to keep up on a daily basis, and to review the notes you take in class the same day they are given, making corrections and adding clarifications. Do not “cram”: it is best to review the notes regularly prior to the exams.

Students with Special Needs:

If you are a student with a documented disability that might require classroom accommodations or modifications, you should contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities (here’s a link: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>). The Access Office office is currently in Farber Hall (former Student Health building). The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty). Also, inform your instructors about this need at the beginning of the semester. .

Links: You can access many philosophy-related websites, including those pertaining to Philosophy of Mind, by using this [link to the homepage of the Department of Philosophy at Valdosta State University](#)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of the semester,

1. You will be able to understand the distinctions among the various sub-fields of philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics as comprising basic branches of the discipline, as they relate particularly to Philosophy of Mind.
2. You will be able to recognize how philosophical inquiry from standpoint of Philosophy of Mind applies to 'real-world' circumstances and to individual reflection on the meaning of life.
3. You will become conversant with aspects of the development of Philosophy of Mind. The course emphasizes Western philosophy in particular, including such significant topics as dualism, materialism, the mind/body problem, functionalism, consciousness, behaviorism, eliminative materialism, and physicalism.
4. You will be able to recognize and define different perspectives on the philosophy of mind, and to examine their justifications in a philosophically informed way that emphasizes critical reasoning and argument.
5. You will be able to demonstrate the ability to discuss, in both oral and written discourse, the philosophical issues explored in the course.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Major by enabling students better to

- A. Incorporate philosophical positions in oral and written communications.
- B. Critically outline and analyze a philosophical question.

[And here is a link to the Valdosta State University General Education Outcomes;](#)

In this course we will emphasize #'s 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.