

PHILOSOPHY 658: Philosophy of Mind

Course Syllabus – Fall 2016

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Mon./Wed. 10:00-11:50
SCH 250C
Office Hours MW 8-10

Seminar Description

After a brief look at Behaviorism and Functionalism, we will focus primarily on naturalistic views of mind that draw support from scientific research on mind, thought, and language coming especially from the cognitive sciences and neuroscience.

Assignments and Grading

Grades will be based on your in-class presentation (one-third of your grade) and a term paper (two-thirds of your grade). For the class presentation, you will be responsible for running the class on the topic and readings for the date you select. I expect a serious presentation of the context and arguments of the material for which you are responsible, plus some attempt to give some critical perspectives on the reading. Note well that this should not be simply a summary of the text, but rather a philosophical engagement with the issues it raises, perhaps bringing in other relevant work. The term paper (maximum 20 pp.) is on a topic selected by you, but subject to my approval. You need to provide a one-paragraph or more summary of the proposed topic by the end of week 8 for my comments and approval.

Readings

Damasio, Antonio. *Self Comes to Mind*
Edelman, Gerald. *Wider Than the Sky*
Reserve Readings Packet, available at The Copy Shop

Wk 1

Sept. 26 Introduction
Sept. 28 Behaviorism
 Skinner, from *Science and Human Behavior*
 Ryle, from *The Concept of Mind*

Wk 2

Oct. 3 Functionalism
 Fodor, "The Mind-Body Problem"
Oct. 5 Wm. James, *Principles of Psychology*, Ch. 9 ("The Stream of Thought")

Wk 3

Oct. 10 James, *Principles of Psychology*, Ch. 10 ("The Consciousness of Self")
Oct. 12 Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, Ch. 6 ("Nature, Mind, and Subject")

Wk 4

Oct. 17 Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, Ch. 7 (“Nature, Life, and Body-Mind”)

Oct. 19 Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, Ch. 7 (“Nature, Life, and Body-Mind”)

Wk 5

Oct. 24, Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, Ch. 8 (“Existence, Ideas, and Consciousness”)

Oct. 26 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 1,2,3

Wk 6

Oct. 31 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 4,5,6

Nov. 2 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 7,8

Wk 7

Nov. 7 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 9,10

Nov. 9 Edelman, *Wider Than the Sky*, Chs. 1-6

Wk 8

Nov. 14 Edelman, *Wider Than the Sky*, Chs. 7-12

Nov. 16 Bechtel, *Mental Mechanisms*, Ch. 1 (“Naturalism and Mechanism”)

Wk 9

Nov. 21 Bechtel, *Mental Mechanisms*, Ch. 4 (“Reduction & Independence of Higher-level Sciences”)

Nov. 23 Bechtel, *Mental Mechanisms*, Ch. 5 (“Representations & Mental Mechanisms”)

Wk 10

Nov. 28 Bechtel, *Mental Mechanisms*, Ch. 6 (“From Responsive to Active Mechanisms”)

Nov. 30 – no class (Johnson at conferences)

Wk 11

Dec. 6 (Term paper due by 5 p.m.)