PHILOSOPHY 658: Philosophy of Mind

Course Syllabus -- Spring 2014

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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
April 1 Introduction
April 3 Behaviorism and Identity Theory
   Skinner, from *About Behaviorism* and from *Science and Human Behavior*
   Ryle, from *The Concept of Mind*
   Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes”

Wk 2
April 8 Functionalism
   Putnam, “The Nature of Mental States”
   Fodor, “The Mind-Body Problem”
April 10 Wm. James, *Principles of Psychology*, Ch. 9 (“The Stream of Thought”)
Wk 3
April 15 James, *Principles of Psychology*, Ch. 10 (“The Consciousness of Self”)
April 17 Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, Ch. 6 (“Nature, Mind, and Subject”)

Wk 4

Wk 5
April 29 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 1,2,3
May 1 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 4,5,6

Wk 6
May 6 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 7,8
May 8 Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind*, Chs. 9,10

Wk 7
May 15 Edelman, *Wider Than the Sky*, Chs. 9-12

Wk 8
May 20 Bechtel, *Mental Mechanisms*, Ch. 1 (“Naturalism and Mechanism”)

Wk 9
May 27 Bechtel, *Mental Mechanisms*, Ch. 5 (“Representations & Mental Mechanisms”)
May 29 Bechtel, *Mental Mechanisms*, Ch. 6 (“From Responsive to Active Mechanisms”)

Wk 10
June 3 Barsalou, “Perceptual Symbol Systems”
June 5 Barsalou, “Perceptual Symbol Systems”

Wk 11
June 9-13 Final Exam Week