

# Introduction to Philosophy of Mind

Instructor: Catherine Hochman  
Email: [chochman@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:chochman@humnet.ucla.edu)  
Office: Dodd 343

Time: TBD  
Place: TBD  
Office Hours: TBD

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

---

Will AI ever be conscious (or is it now)? Can computers think? What accounts for implicit bias? How it is that people can experience their body in another person's body? We will tackle these questions and more in this introductory course on the philosophy of mind.

Our inquiry into the mind will proceed in three units. In our first unit, we will ask about the **nature of the mind**. What kind of thing is the mind? Is it immaterial like souls or physical like the body? We will survey a range of accounts of the nature of the mind and analyze the problems encountered by each. Our second unit will investigate a feature of the mind: **computation**. As we will discuss, minds seem to be in the business of computing or problem solving. This marks a point of similarity between them and computers. But just how far does this similarity go? We will consider whether computers can think and whether minds are computers. In our third and final unit, we will examine another feature of the mind: **consciousness**. After trying to get a basic understanding of what consciousness is, we will ask whether science can explain the fact that consciousness arises in some things (like minds) but not other things (like rocks). We will then ask whether consciousness is limited to creatures like us or whether it extends to fish and AI. Finally, we will probe how our *selves* fit into the picture of minds, bodies, and consciousness developed over the course of the term.

## COURSE MATERIALS

---

There is no required textbook for the course. All required materials (including readings and writing assignments) will be available through the course website.

Those looking for an introductory guide to the topics covered in this class are encouraged to check out the following textbooks:

- Chalmers, D. (2002). *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*.
- Kim, J. (2011). *Philosophy of Mind*, third edition.

## ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMODATIONS

---

Any students seeking disability services should register with the [University's Center for Accessible Education \(CAE\)](#) as soon as possible. If you are already registered and require assistance for the quarter, please release your accommodation letters by the end of week one.

More generally, if you are experiencing difficulty (health-related, financial, other), please reach out to me. We will try to figure out how to best navigate the course under the circumstances.

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

---

**Participation:** Participation will take many forms in this class, including the following: asking questions, answering questions, participating in discussions and in-class activities, coming to office hours, posting on the course discussion board, and responding to feedback on written assignments.

**Assignments:** This class features two kinds of assignments: papers and exams.

- Papers: There will be four 2-page papers. Each will focus on the clear explication of a philosophical idea/argument. Paper prompts and instructions will be released at least one week in advance of the deadline. Papers will be graded anonymously.
- Exams: There will be two exams. The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the course; the final exam will cover material from the second half of the course. More details will be given closer to the exams. Exams will be graded anonymously.

**Grade Breakdown:** Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Papers: 60% (15% each)
- Exams: 30% (15% each)

**Late Policy:** All requests for 24-hour extensions on papers will be automatically granted (if received before the deadline). Papers that are turned in late will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for each 48-hour period late. For example, a B will be lowered to a B- if the assignment is within 48 hours late.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

---

Students are expected to know and to follow the University's guidelines for academic honesty, available [here](#). Academic misconduct can occur in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. Any suspected violation of university policy regarding academic conduct will be reported directly to the Office of the Dean of Students.

When in doubt about whether some academic practice is acceptable, ask the instructor for assistance. Always err on the side of avoiding academic misconduct.

## SCHEDULE

---

This schedule is subject to change. Please regularly consult the course website for updates.

### Unit One: Mind and Body

#### *Week One*

Lecture One: Mind and Body

- Rene Descartes: "Second meditation", *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641)
- Ibn Sinna: "Floating man" (excerpts from *al-Nafs*, 1027)

### Lecture Two: Interactionist Dualism

- Descartes: “The Passions of the Soul”
- Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and Descartes

### *Week Two*

#### Lecture One: Causal Closure of Physics

- David Papineau and Howard Selina: “Arguments against dualism”, *Introducing Consciousness* (2000) (pp. 64-83)
- Jaegwon Kim: “An argument from mental causation”, *Philosophy of Mind* (2011) (pp. 110-114)

#### Lecture Two: Behaviorism

- Jaegwon Kim: “Mind and behavior”, *Philosophy of Mind* (2011) (pp. 61-87)
- Carl Hempel: “The logical analysis of psychology” (1980)

**⇒ Paper One Due**

### *Week Three*

#### Lecture One: Problems with Behaviorism

- Hilary Putnam: “Brains and behavior” (1963)
- Raymond Smullyan: “An unfortunate dualist”, *This Book Needs No Title* (1980)

#### Lecture Two: Physicalism

- J.J.C. Smart: “Sensations and brain processes” (1959)
- Jaegwon Kim: “Mind as the brain: The psychoneural identity theory”, *Philosophy of Mind* (2011) (pp. 91-125)

## **Unit Two: Computing Minds**

### *Week Four*

#### Lecture One: Computation

- Jason Goldman: “Desert ants are better than most high school students at trigonometry”, *Scientific American* (2012)
- Keven Lande: “Do you compute?”, *Aeon* (2019)

#### Lecture Two: Can Machines Think?

- Alan Turing: “Computing machinery and intelligence” (1950)
- Douglas Hofstadter: “The Turing test: A coffeehouse conversation” *The Mind’s I* (2007)

**⇒ Paper Two Due**

### *Week Five*

#### Lecture One: Can AI Think?

- Celeste Biever: “Chat GPT broke the Turing test – the race is on for new ways to assess AI” *Nature* (2023)

#### Lecture Two: Computing Minds

- Ned Block: “The mind as the software of the brain” (1993) (pp. 377-392)

### ⇒ Midterm Exam

#### *Week Six*

##### Lecture One: The Problem of Meaning

- John Searle: “Minds, brains, and programs” (1980)
- José Luis Bermúdez: “Responding to the Chinese Room Argument”, *Cognitive Science* (2013)

##### Lecture Two: Unconscious Cognition

- Beatrice de Gelder: “Uncanny sight in the blind”, *Scientific American* (2010)
- Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald, “Into the blindspot”, *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People* (2013)

### Unit Three: Conscious Minds

#### *Week Seven*

##### Lecture One: What is Consciousness?

- David Papineau and Howard Selina: “What is consciousness?”, *Introducing Consciousness* (2000) (pp. 3-22)
- David Chalmers: “Facing up to the problem of consciousness” (2010) (sections 1-3)

##### Lecture Two: The Explanatory Gap

- Susan Blackmore and Emily Troscianko: “What is it like to be...?”, *Consciousness: An Introduction* (2018) (pp. 32-37)
- Thomas Nagel: “What is it like to be a bat?” (1974)

#### *Week Eight*

##### Lecture One: The Knowledge Argument

- Frank Jackson: “What Mary didn’t know” (1986)

##### Lecture Two: No Hard Problem?

- Patricia Churchland: “The hornswoggle problem” (1996)

### ⇒ Paper Three Due

#### *Week Nine*

##### Lecture One: Do Fish Feel Pain?

- Lynne Sneddon: “Can Fish Experience Pain?” (2020)

- Brian Key: “Why fish do not feel pain” (2016)
- Victoria Braithwaite and Paula Droege: “Why human pain can’t tell us whether fish feel pain” (2016)

#### Lecture Two: Artificial Consciousness

- Blake Lemoine: “Is LaMDA sentient? – an interview”, *Medium* (2022)
- Robert Long: “Key questions about artificial intelligence: An opinionated guide”, *Experience Machines* (2022)

#### *Week Ten*

##### Lecture One: Theories of (No-) Self

- Susan Blackmore and Emily Troscianko: “Egos, bundles, and theories of self”, *Consciousness: An Introduction* (2018) (pp. 435-449)
- Hume: “Of personal identity”
- “The Questions of King Milinda”, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (Mark Siderits, trans.) (2021)

##### Lecture Two: Selves and Bodies

- Valeria Petkova and Henrik Ehrsson: “If I were you: Perceptual illusion of body swapping” (2008)
- Watch: “[The rubber hand illusion - Horizon: Is seeing believing?](#)”, *BBC* (2010)
- Watch: Anil Seth: “[Your brain hallucinates your conscious reality](#)”, *TedTalk* (2017)

⇒ **Final Exam**

⇒ **Paper Four Due**

#### **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

---

- Campus Assault Resources and Education (CARE): <https://careprogram.ucla.edu/>
- Center for Accessible Education (CAE): <https://cae.ucla.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <https://counseling.ucla.edu/>
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office: <https://equity.ucla.edu/>
- Student Conduct Code: <https://deanofstudents.ucla.edu/student-conduct-code>
- Writing Center: <https://uwc.ucla.edu/>