

**The Mind  
PHIL 2220  
University of Hong Kong  
Spring 2022**

Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.  
Central Podium (CPD), 216

Instructor: David Villena  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 09:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m., and by appointment

### **Course Description**

The human mind is the nexus of a number of great mysteries. What is the nature of self? Is the mind identical to the brain, or is it an immaterial substance? Can we explain all mental phenomena in computational terms? Is Artificial Intelligence possible, and can computers experience emotions and other feelings? Are our actions free, or are they determined by our genes and upbringing? We shall be exploring *some* of these issues and *other* related topics in this course.

### **Course Goals**

- Develop an appreciation for and understanding of some central problems, texts, and ideas in the philosophy of mind.
- Develop skills at critically reading and evaluating philosophical texts.
- Develop skills at both reconstructing others' arguments and forming one's own.

### **Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course, students will be able to

- discuss fundamental problems in the philosophy of mind,
- assess theories that have been put forward as solutions to these problems,
- see how certain problems are related,
- see how certain theories are related,
- analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments, and
- devise a philosophical argument

## Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- Students are required to write two short papers (1000 words not including references each), and one longer paper (2500 words not including references). The papers should reflect the students' ability to explain the nature of several theories as well as the ability to argue for and against them.
- Students' term papers will be assessed on their ability to write their paper based on an effective introduction, a central thesis, the manner in which that thesis is supported, the quality of research, and their overall writing skills.

## Tutorials

There will be three tutorial sessions scheduled throughout the semester.

## Disabilities

Let me know if you have a visible or invisible disability (e.g. mental health condition) that may have some impact on your work in this class so reasonable accommodations and assistance can be provided to you.

## Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Students who plagiarize might be referred to the University's disciplinary committee, and might be expelled from the University as a result. HKU has published a booklet on plagiarism setting out the official policy. Please read it. There is an online copy at <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism>. (Also, visit this: <http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism>) If you have any doubts as to whether the work you're handing in constitutes plagiarism, please don't hesitate to consult with me beforehand.

## Assessment

All assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course

- First Shorter Paper (25%): Due NOON, 12:00 p.m., March 7
- Second Shorter Paper (25%): Due NOON, 12:00 p.m., April 11
- Final Longer Paper (40%): Due NOON, 12:00 p.m., May 10
- Attendance and tutorial participation (10%)

Grade scale:

|         |    |         |
|---------|----|---------|
| ≥ 97.5% | A+ | ≤ 100%  |
| ≥ 92.5% | A  | < 97.5% |
| ≥ 90%   | A- | < 92.5% |
| ≥ 87.5% | B+ | < 90%   |
| ≥ 82.5% | B  | < 87.5% |

|         |    |         |
|---------|----|---------|
| ≥ 80%   | B- | < 82.5% |
| ≥ 77.5% | C+ | < 80%   |
| ≥ 72.5% | C  | < 77.5% |
| ≥ 70%   | C- | <72.5%  |
| ≥67.5%  | D+ | <70%    |
| ≥60%    | D  | <67.5%  |
| ≥ 0%    | F  | <60%    |

Here are the Arts Faculty grade descriptions:

[http://arts.hku.hk/file/upload/2485/grade\\_expectations.pdf](http://arts.hku.hk/file/upload/2485/grade_expectations.pdf)

## **Tentative schedule**

### Week 1: Introduction

Suggested reading:

- Kim, *Philosophy of mind*, I

### Week 2: Substance dualism

Suggested readings:

- Descartes, *Meditations on first philosophy*, II and VI
- Descartes, *Passions of the soul*, Excerpts

### Week 3: Logical behaviorism

Suggested readings:

- Ryle, *The concept of mind*, I
- Carnap, *Psychology in physical language*

### Week 4: Identity theory

Suggested readings:

- Place, *Is consciousness a brain process?*
- Smart, *Sensations and brain processes*

### Week 5: Functionalism

Suggested readings:

- Putnam, *The nature of mental states*
- Lewis, *Mad pain and Martian pain*

### Week 6: Qualia I. Inverted spectrum and absent qualia

Suggested readings:

- Block, *Troubles with functionalism*
- Dennett, *Quining qualia*

### Week 7: No Class: Reading Week

### Week 8: Qualia II: The explanatory gap and the knowledge argument

Suggested readings:

- Nagel, *What is it like to be a bat?*
- Jackson, *Epiphenomenal qualia*

Week 9: Computational theory of mind

Suggested readings:

- Fodor, Why there still has to be a language of thought
- Block, The mind as the software of the brain

Weeks 10 & 12: Massive modularity of mind

(Week 11: No Class: Ching Ming Festival)

Suggested readings:

- Carruthers, The mind is a system of modules shaped by natural selection
- Cowie & Woodward, The mind is not (just) a system of modules shaped (just) by natural selection
- Frankenhuys & Ploeger, Evolutionary psychology versus Fodor: Arguments for and against the massive modularity hypothesis.

Week 13: Imagination and the puzzle of imaginative resistance

Suggested readings:

- Kind, Exploring imagination
- Gendler, The puzzle of imaginative resistance

Week 14: Imagination, emotions and the paradox of fiction

Suggested readings:

- Friend, Fiction and emotion
- Radford, How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina?