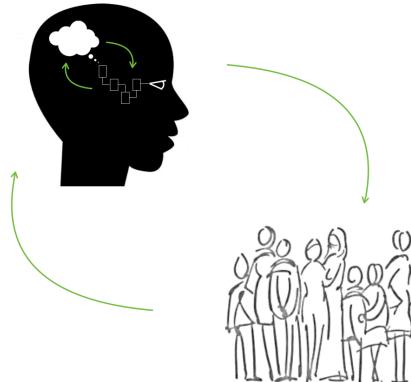


# PHIL 135: Philosophy of Mind

Professor Gabbrielle M Johnson



**Instructor:** Gabrielle Johnson [Gabby]  
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**Office:** Kravis 273

**Time:** MW 4:15-5:30  
**Place:** KRV 168  
**Office Hours:** Thurs 12-2pm

## Course Overview:

This course introduces students to the philosophy of mind. In it, students will explore critical philosophical views concerning the relationship between the mind and the physical world, the nature of consciousness, the mysteries of the unconscious mind, as well as the structure of cognitive architecture.

The course will be divided into three units. In the first unit, we'll start with the most basic questions concerning mental states, namely, **what is a mind and in virtue of what does a being have one?** After broadly surveying and contrasting various philosophical views attempting to answer these questions, we'll home in on two fundamental features of the mind: **consciousness** and **cognition**. The detailed investigation of these two so-called 'marks of the mental' will occupy our second unit. Regarding consciousness, we'll explore the mystery of how subjective experience arises from mental processes. Regarding cognition, we'll explore the information processing that allows us to reason about and navigate through the world around us. Finally, in unit three, we'll investigate the structure of **cognitive architecture** by taking on one of the most pressing questions in contemporary philosophy of psychology and cognitive science: How, if at all, do humans have objective, value-neutral access to information about the external world? This exploration will engage recent empirical work of cases of so-called **cognitive penetration**, **stereotype threat**, and **implicit bias**.

The course does not presuppose expertise in any particular field, and it introduces topics from a diverse point of view, pulling materials from philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychology, computer science, vision science, and cognitive science.

The course is divided into three units:

- UNIT ONE: MIND + BODY
- UNIT TWO: TWO MARKS OF THE MENTAL
- UNIT THREE: COGNITIVE ARCHITECTURE

### **Course Materials:**

All required and supplementary materials (including readings, quizzes, and writing assignments) will be available through the course website on Sakai. It is very important to check it regularly for updates.

There is no required textbook for the course. Those looking for an introductory guide to the topics covered in this class are encouraged to check out the following textbooks:

Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*, third edition. 2011.

Chalmers, David. *Philosophy of Mind: classical and contemporary readings*. 2002.

Crane, Tim. *Elements of mind: an introduction to the philosophy of mind*. 2001.

### **Course Policies:**

Regarding classroom etiquette, the most important policy to keep in mind is to always abide by the **Principle of Charity**. Formally, the principle requires that you interpret a speaker's statements in the most persuasive way possible, so as to render those statements rational and worthy of philosophical engagement. Intuitively, this requires that you give everyone you interact with the benefit of the doubt. A student following the Principle of Charity, for example, would not speak over their fellow student or be outright dismissive of the points they're intending to convey. This applies not only to your fellow students, but also those readings with which we'll be engaging. The primary aim of the principle is ensure a respectful, worthwhile, and collaborative intellectual environment. Thus, all students will be expected to always act in ways that further these aims.

### **COVID Policies:**

In class, students are expected to wear masks at all times, regardless of vaccination status. There will be no food or drink. If you need to step out of the classroom to drink water, use the bathroom, remove your mask, or for other reasons of personal comfort, you may do so without asking permission. If you receive notification from Hamilton Health Box that you are required to isolate/quarantine, please let me know as soon as possible via email that you are unable to attend class in person. If you are well enough to participate, I will have Zoom up and running in the classroom so that you can join us remotely, using the Zoom link for our course (found at the top of the landing page for the course website). If you are not well enough to participate, I will make class slides, handouts, and other materials available to you, and we will schedule a Zoom meeting when you are well to catch you up on discussion. All assignments for all students are submitted remotely through TurnItIn. If you are not well enough to submit assignments by the deadline, we will craft a plan together (and in communication with the DoS office, if necessary). These policies are subject to change as the situation, mandates, and best practices change.

### **Course Requirements:**

Final grades will be calculated on the basis of 5 assignment categories:

- |                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) daily comprehension quizzes | (10% of your final grade) |
| (2) first paper 1-2 pages       | (10% of your final grade) |
| (3) second paper 3-4 page       | (20% of your final grade) |
| (4) third paper, 4-6 pages      | (30% of your final grade) |
| (5) fourth paper, 4-6 pages     | (30% of your final grade) |

As you can see, this class requires a lot of writing. Philosophy is at its best when students are given the opportunity to engage deeply and critically with a topic—skills you will develop over time and with each assignment. The rising percentage distributions reward progress on these skills.

### **Daily Quizzes:**

Students will be expected to complete daily quizzes (starting with the second class). These quizzes are administered through the course website. There are two each week, and they must be completed before class begins. Each quiz will consist of two multiple choice questions. One question is about the material covered in the previous lecture; you won't be able to answer this question on the reading alone. The other question is about the content of the reading for that day. The purpose of the quiz questions is to test comprehension; they should be easy so long as you actually did the reading and attended class (provided you paid attention with each).

### **Written Assignments:**

Prompts and details for written assignments will be made available at least one and a half weeks before the assignment is due. All written assignments will be graded anonymously.

### **Schedule:**

**Tentative - This schedule is highly subject to change. Always check the course website for updates.**

\* = recommended

## **UNIT ONE: MIND + BODY**

### **Week One**

#### **Jan 19 (W): Introduction and Overview of the Philosophical Method**

- (1) Timothy Crane - *Elements of Mind*

### **Week Two**

#### **Jan 24 (M): Skepticism & Certainty of Mind**

- (1) Ibn Sina - Floating Man
- (2) Descartes - On the Distinction of Mind and Body

#### **Jan 26 (W): Interactionist Dualism**

- (1) Descartes - The Passions of the Soul
- (2) *Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth and Descartes*

### **Week Three**

#### **Jan 31 (M): Mental Causation (1st objection to interactionist dualism)**

- (1) Jaegwon Kim - "Princess Elisabeth Against Descartes"

#### **Feb 2 (W): Inconsistent Triad (2nd objection to interactionist dualism)**

- (1) Tim Crane - "Body"
- (2) Peter Carruthers - "The Case for Physicalism"

### **Week Four**

#### **Feb 7 (M): Behaviorism**

- (1) Carl Hempel - "The Logical Analysis of Psychology"

#### **Feb 9 (W): Identity Theory**

- (1) U.T. Place - "Is Consciousness a Brain Process"
- (2) \*J.J.C. Smart - "Sensations and Brain Processes"

#### **Feb 11 (F): PAPER ONE DUE**

### **Week Five**

#### **Feb 14 (M): Objections to Behaviorism and Identity Theory**

(1) Jerry Fodor - "Something on the State of the Art" (part one)

**Feb 16 (W): Functionalism**

(1) Jerry Fodor - "Something on the State of the Art" (part two)

(2) Ned Block - "What is Functionalism?"

**UNIT TWO: TWO MARKS OF THE MENTAL**

**Week Six**

**Feb 21 (M): What is Consciousness?**

(1) Papineau and Selina - "Introducing Consciousness"

(2) Daniel Dennet - "A visit to the Phenomenological Garden"

(2) David Chalmers - "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness"

**Feb 23 (W): The Puzzle of Conscious Experience**

(1) David Chalmers - "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness"

(2) Ned Block - "Troubles with Functionalism"

**Week Seven**

**Feb 28 (M): The Explanatory Gap**

(1) Thomas Nagel - "What is it like to be a bat?"

**March 2 (W): The Knowledge Argument**

(1) Frank Jackson - "Epiphenomenal Qualia"

(2) Torin Alter - "Knowledge Argument"

(3) \*David Stolkjar and Yujin Nagasawa - "Introduction to *There's Something About Mary*"

**Week Eight**

**March 7 (M): Cognition and Representation**

(1) Tim Crane - "The Puzzle of Representation"

(2) Gabriel Greenberg - "Notes on the Concept of Cognition"

**March 9 (W): The Computational Theory of Mind**

(1) Ian Ravenscroft - "Computational Theory of Mind"

(2) Kenneth Craik - "Hypothesis on the Nature of Thought"

(3) \*Paul Thagard - "Representation and Computation"

**March 11 (F): PAPER TWO DUE**

**March 14-16: Spring Break!**

**Week Nine**

**March 21 (M): Mental Symbols and Mental Algorithms**

(1) Shimon Edelman - "Computing Minds"

(2) Kevin Lande - "Your Brain Probably is a Computer, Whatever that Means"

**March 23 (W): The Problem of Meaning**

(1) John Searle - "Can Computers Think?"

**Week Ten**

**March 28 (M): The Problem of Meaning II**

(1) John Searle - "The Systems Reply and the Robot Reply"

(2) John Searle - Excerpts from *The Rediscovery of the Mind*

**March 30 (W): Class Canceled!**

## **UNIT THREE: COGNITIVE ARCHITECTURE**

### **Week Eleven**

**April 4 (M): What is Philosophy of Psychology?**

(1) José Luis Bermúdez - "Morgan's Canon and Psychological Explanations" (2007)

**April 6 (W): What is Perception?**

(1) Tyler Burge - "Perception: Where the Mind Begins"

### **Week Twelve**

**April 11 (M): The Puzzle of Objective Experience**

(1) Russell Hanson - Excerpts from *Patterns of Discovery* pp. 4-20 (1958)

(2) Thomas Kuhn - Excerpts from "Revolutions as Changes of World View", *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962)

(3) Peter Godfrey-Smith - Excerpts from "The Theory-Ladenness of Observation", *Theory and Reality* (2003)

**April 13 (W): Class Canceled!**

**April 15 (F): PAPER THREE DUE**

### **Week Thirteen**

**April 18 (M): Modularity and Encapsulation (1st solution to the puzzle)**

(1) Peter Godfrey-Smith - "The Theory Ladenness of Observation", pp. 158-162 (2003)

(2) Jerry Fodor - "Observation Reconsidered" (1948)

(3) \* Philip Robbins - "Modularity of Mind" SEP (2017)

(4) \* Paul Churchland - "Perceptual Plasticity and Theoretical Neutrality: Reply to Jerry Fodor" (1988)

(5) \* Jerry Fodor - "A Reply to Churchland's 'Perceptual Plasticity and Theoretical Neutrality'" (1988)

**April 20 (W): Cognitive Penetration (aka, revenge of theory-leadeness)**

(1) Nico Silins - "Cognitive Penetration and the Epistemology of Perception" (2016)

(2) Daniel Levin and Mahzarin Banaji- "Distortions in the Perceived Lightness of Faces: The Role of Race Categories" (2006)

(3) \* Fiona Macpherson - "Cognitive Penetration of Color Experience (2012)

### **Week Fourteen**

**April 25 (M): The El-Greco Fallacy (aka, revenge of neutrality)**

(1) Chaz Firestone and Brian Scholl - "'Top-Down' Effects Where None Should be Found: the El Greco fallacy in perception research" (2014)

(2) Chaz Firestone and Brian Scholl - "Cognition does not affect perception: Evaluating the evidence for 'top-down' effects" (2016), pp. 1-19

(3) \* Chaz Firestone and Brian Scholl - "Can you experience 'top-down' effects on perception? The case of race categories and perceived lightness" (2015)

**April 27 (W): Recent Issues in the Philosophy of Mind**

- (1) Students' choice! (possibilities include: social bias, machine learning and AI, identity, free will, panpsychism, simulationism)

## **Week Fifteen**

### **May 2 (M): Recent Issues in the Philosophy of Mind**

- (1) Students' choice! (possibilities include: social bias, machine learning and AI, identity, free will, panpsychism, simulationism)

### **May 4 (W): Wrapping Up**

- (1) No Reading

### **May 13 (F): PAPER FOUR DUE**

#### **Academic Misconduct:**

Students are expected to know and to follow the college's guidelines for academic honesty. Academic misconduct can occur in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. When in doubt about whether some academic practice is acceptable, ask the instructor for assistance. Always err on the side of avoiding misconduct. **Any suspected violation of university policy regarding academic conduct will be reported directly to the Academic Standards Committee. There are no exceptions.**

#### **Academic Accommodation:**

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Student Disability Resources Center (SDRC) at (909) 607-7419 or in person at the Tranquada Student Service Center, 757 College Way, 1st floor. When possible, students should contact the SDRC within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations.

#### **College Resources:**

For more information, check out the following resources:

- Office of the Dean of Students:  
<https://www.cmc.edu/dean-of-students/academic-integrity>
- Student Conduct Code:  
<https://www.cmc.edu/dean-of-students/policies-and-procedures>
- Claremont Colleges Library Tutorial on Academic Integrity:  
<https://library.claremont.edu/exploring-academic-integrity>
- Claremont Center for Writing and Public Discourse:  
<https://www.cmc.edu/writing>
- Claremont Student Disability Resource Center:  
<https://services.claremont.edu/sdrc/>
- Monsour Counseling and Psychological Services (MCAPS):  
<https://services.claremont.edu/mcaps/>
- CARE Center (Civility, Access, Resources, and Expression):  
<https://www.cmc.edu/care-center>
- Chaplains:  
<https://services.claremont.edu/chaplains/>
- EmPOWER Center  
<https://www.7csupportandprevention.com/empower-center>
- Student Health Services  
<https://services.claremont.edu/student-health-services/>
- Queer Resource Center:  
<https://colleges.claremont.edu/qrc/>