**PHIL 4443, Section 001/H01**

**Philosophy of Mind**

**Fall 2020**

Class Location: Web-Assist Instructor: Michele Merritt, Ph.D.

Class Meeting Times: Variable (see schedule) Office Hours: By Appointment

CR#: 64200/63901 Email: mmerritt@astate.edu

**Course Description**

Foundational issues in the study of mind, includes the nature of mind, the relation of psychology to physical science, and theories of mental content. Prerequisite, PHIL 1103 or permission of instructor.

This is an upper-level survey course in which we will familiarize ourselves with the historical background and contemporary issues related to human and non-human thought. Although this is a *philosophy* course, we will examine questions pertaining to the mind from several different disciplines, including cognitive science, neuroscience, psychology, linguistics, and robotics. Some questions we will consider specifically are: What does the term ‘mind’ even mean? Are thoughts entirely physical? Are they entirely in the brain? Is consciousness ever going to be fully explained by science? How can we be sure that other beings have minds? Is it possible to engineer ‘artificial’ minds such that computers or robots might be said to possess a mind?

**Program Outcomes:**This course contributes to the following program-level outcomes:  
  
1) Students will understand central issues and theories in philosophy (from among the major areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and value theory).  
2) Students will be able to analyze and explain complicated ideas.  
3) Students will be able to analyze arguments.  
4) Students will be able to evaluate arguments.

**Course Outcomes:**

Successful Students in this course will:

1. Develop an understanding and mastery of the key concepts, problems, arguments, and theories pertaining to the philosophical discourse concerning the mind (This satisfies the general program goal for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences: Developing an appreciation of the Arts and Humanities)

2. Develop the critical skills necessary to coherently discuss and evaluate various philosophical figures and ideas, by improving their expository writing, critical reading, critical thinking, and communication skills; for example, they will become more adept at separating arguments from assertions, at finding objections and counterexamples to theories, at explaining complicated/abstract ideas, etc.

3. Be better prepared for graduate study in philosophy, should they choose, or a variety of other professions, such as the clergy, the legal profession, politics, and medicine.

**Assessment of Course/Program Outcomes**

Besides the assessment measures listed below, students will be assessed as to how well they have met the course and program goals via an embedded question in one of the essay assignments during the course.

**Required Materials**

Chalmers, D. (ed). *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings.* Oxford.

\*\*Other required articles, videos, lectures, etc. on Blackboard

**Grading Scale**

90-100 points = A

80-89 points = B

70-79 points = C

60-69 points = D

Below 60 points = F

**Grade Distribution:**

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| Assignment | Points Possible | % of Total Grade |
| Synchronous Class Participation | 100 | 10 |
| Discussion Boards | 100 | 10 |
| Response Papers | 300 (3 @ 100 each) | 30 |
| Debates | 100 (2 @ 50 each) | 10 |
| Long Papers | 400 (2 @ 200 each) | 40 |

**Honors Grade Distribution**:

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| Assignment | Points Possible | % of Total Grade |
| Synchronous Class Participation | 100 | 10 |
| Discussion Boards | 100 | 10 |
| Response Papers | 300 (3 @ 100 each) | 30 |
| Presentation | 100 | 10 |
| Debates | 100 (2 @ 50 each) | 10 |
| Long Papers | 300 (2 @ 150 each) | 30 |

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| **Synchronous Class Participation**  We will meet synchronously (in real time) during our scheduled class time once a week (except in a few cases – see schedule). Most of the time, this meeting will be on *Thursdays*, but there are a few Tuesday meetings. You should be present and participate in discussions during as many of these synchronous classes as possible. One or two absences will not impact your grade, but I will be monitoring for excessive lack of participation. I will always email you to remind you of an upcoming live meeting, along with the platform we will be utilizing. |

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| **Discussion Boards**  When we do not meet synchronously, there will be discussion boards posted on Blackboard. It is expected that you will participate in each of these discussions, by responding to the original post(s) at least once, and engaging with someone else’s response at least once. I will post the discussion boards and leave them active for several days, so you can revisit them. |

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| **Response Papers**  Three short (2-3 pages) papers will be required throughout the semester (see schedule – readings highlighted in this color are potential response paper readings). These papers are intended to gauge how well you are comprehending and analyzing the material. Each paper will be devoted to one specific reading we are covering and you will turn in the paper *before* we are scheduled to discuss that reading. This means that for three scheduled readings, you will be highly prepared for class discussion, and will have grappled with the material before I have helped clarify it. In turn, this will better prepare you for the longer papers. |

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| **Debates**  On two occasions, during our synchronous class meetings, we will have a debate about some topic we are discussing. You will be divided into two groups and assigned a ‘pro’ or ‘con’ position, and will have ample time to prepare your arguments. I will moderate and you will be graded based on how well you present your case, group participation and dynamics, and incorporation of course materials. More information will be given as these debates draw closer. |

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| **Long Papers**  Two longer papers (6-8 pages) will be required. Topics will be announced at least 2 weeks prior to the due date. These papers will incorporate required readings from the course, as well as any supplemental readings (listed as “Further reading” on the schedule) that might be useful. Unlike the response papers, however, these longer papers will require you to develop and sustain an argument pertaining to some aspect of the course. |

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| **Presentation**  For Honors students, the additional assignment for this course involves essentially completing an extra reading response paper, but it must be on one of the supplemental readings (listed as “Further reading” on the schedule). Not only will you write a brief exegetical account of the reading, but you will present your work to the class during one of our scheduled synchronous class meetings. The presentation should be around 10-15 minutes, and should include opportunities for your classmates to participate in discussion. The idea here is that you will bring additional ideas or arguments for us to consider during one of our regularly scheduled classes, tying your supplemental reading into the rest of the readings we are discussing that week. |

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| **Week 1 – Introductions and Background**  August 25: Synchronous class meeting (Zoom), introductions, syllabus overview, etc.  August 27: Introductory Lecture (On Yuja); Read: Descartes’ “Meditations” (Chalmers, 10-16) |

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| **Week 2 – Historical Problems**  September 1: Read: Descartes’ “Passions” (Chalmers, 16-23); Discussion board #1  September 3: Read: Huxley (Chalmers 24-30) AND Smullyan, (Chalmers, 31); Synchronous class meeting |

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| **Week 3 – Behaviorism and Logical Positivism**  September 8: Read: Ryle, “Descartes’ Myth” (Chalmers, 32-38), Discussion Board #2  September 10: Read: Carnap (Chalmers, 39-45); Synchronous class meeting  \*\*Further reading: Skinner, “Baby in a Box” (Blackboard) |

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| **Week 4 – Physicalism**  September 15: Read: Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes” (Chalmers, 60-67) Discussion Board #3  September 17: Read: Montero, “The Body Problem” (on Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\* Further Reading: Paul M. Churchland, “Eliminative materialism and the propositional attitudes” (Chalmers, 568-80) |

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| **Week 5 – Functionalism**  September 22: Read: Putnam, “The Nature of Mental States” (Chalmers, 73-79) Discussion Board #4  September 24: Read: Block, “Troubles with Functionalism” (Chalmers, 94-98) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\*Further Reading: Antony, “The Mental and the Physical” (Blackboard)  Last Day for Response Paper #1 |

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| **Week 6 – Machine Thinking**  September 29: Read: Turing (Blackboard) Discussion Board #6  October 1: Read: Haugeland (Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\* Further Reading: Floridi (Blackboard); Breazeal (Blackboard) |

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| **Week 7 – Consciousness**  October 6: Read: Nagel (Chalmers, 219-225) Discussion Board #7  October 8: Read: Dennett (Chalmers, 226-246) Synchronous Class Meeting Debate #1  \*\*Further reading: Jackson (Chalmers, 273-280) |

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| **Week 8 – Intentionality**  October 13: Read: Millikan (Chalmers, 500-508) Discussion Board #8  October 15: Read: Horgan & Tienson (Chalmers, 520-533) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\*Further Reading: Dretske (Chalmers, 491-499) |

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| **Week 9 – Content**  October 20: Read: Fodor (Chalmers, 542-55) Discussion Board #9  October 22: Read: Putnam (Chalmers, 581-96) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\*Further Reading: Burge (Chalmers, 597-607)  First Long Paper Due, Sunday, October 25 at 11:59pm |

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| **Week 10 – “4E” Cognition**  October 27: Read: Clark and Chalmers (Chalmers, 643-52) Discussion Board #10  October 29: Read: Rupert (Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\*Further Reading: Wilson (Blackboard); Adams & Aizawa (Blackboard) |

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| **Week 11 – “4E” Cognition, cont’d**  November 3: Read: Stapleton & Ward (Blackboard) Discussion Board #11  November 5: Read: Hutto, et al. (Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\*Further Reading: Noe & O’Reagan (Blackboard, note: only first 32 pages are original article)  Last Day for Response Paper #2 |

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| **Week 12 – Non-Human Animal Minds**  November 10: Read: Dennett (Blackboard) Discussion Board #12  November 12: Read: Andrews & Huss (Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\*Further Reading: Allen & Bekoff (Blackboad); Burghardt (Blackboard) |

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| **Week 13 – Non-Human Animal Minds, cont’d**  November 17: Read: Pilley & Reid (Blackboard) Discussion Board #13  November 19: Read: Brown (Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting  \*\*Further Reading: Horowitz (Blackboard); Merritt (Blackboard); Marzluff (Blackboard) |

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| **Week 14**  Thanksgiving Break – No Class |

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| **Week 15 – The Affective Mind**  December 1: Read: LaDoux (Blackboard) Discussion Board #14  December 3: Read: Krueger (Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting  Last Day for Response Paper #3 |

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| **Week 16 – The Gendered Mind**  December 8: Read: Fine (Blackboard) Discussion Board #15  December 10: Read: Andrada (Blackboard) Synchronous Class Meeting Debate #2 |

Second Long Paper Due During Final Exam Window (Date TBD)

**The “Fine Print”**

Students are expected to adhere to all guidelines in the Student Bulletin and Student Handbook (found online at astate.edu). In addition to all the guidelines therein, students in this class are expected to comply with the following:

* + Arrive to class on time and stay for the entirety of the class. If not, I reserve the right to mark you as absent for the day
  + Attendance Policy: Missing more than 8 classes results in automatic failure from the course. Participation is weighted heavily, so I suggest missing no more than 3 classes to maintain good standing in this regard. The only excused absences will be documented and will pertain to university sanctioned events, illness, family emergency, or inclement weather. (Attending a routine dental appointment during my class is NOT an excused absence, e.g.).
  + Inclement Weather Policy: Information on campus closure can be found on the ASU web page, KASU, and local radio and television stations. If inclement weather prevents you from being able to attend a class meeting, let me know.
  + Cheating: Just Don't Do It! I reserve the right to maximally penalize you if I catch you cheating in any way (including failing you from the course). If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, just ask. Better to be safe than sorry. Here is the official statement from the Handbook:

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**

Plagiarism (the act of taking and/or using the ideas, work, and/or writings of another person as one’s own) is a serious offense against academic integrity which could result in failure for the paper or assignment, failure for the course, and/or expulsion from Arkansas State University. Cheating is an act of dishonesty with the intention of obtaining and/or using information in a fraudulent manner. For further information, including specifics about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, see ASU’s Academic Integrity Policy at: <http://studentconduct.astate.edu/AcademicIntegrity.html>.

* + If you have a disability which makes it difficult for you to succeed in this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Your privacy will be respected and every effort will be made to meet your needs. All students requesting accommodations for disabilities should be registered through ASU’s Disability Services (870 972 3964). If Disabilities Services determines you should be able to take tests in their office, it is your responsibility to schedule the test for the same time and date as the exam is administered to other students.
  + Policy on Missed Assignments/Make up work: The only reasons I will accept late or missed assignments are documented emergencies, illnesses, deaths in the family, or weather related issues.
  + Email Policy: You must email me with essential information, such as who you are, what class of mine you are in, and what your question or concern is. I try to adhere to the 24 hour response rule of thumb – if I have not responded to you within 24 hours, feel free to send a followup, but be aware that if you have not addressed me properly, told me who you are and what exactly you need, I reserve the right not to respond.