

Philosophy of Mind: Dimensions of Mindedness

Description: This introductory course explores the concept of mindedness, as well as its dimensions, through an investigation of various kinds of minds and mental states found throughout the human and nonhuman world. After examining some classic questions in philosophy of mind, we extend our idea of what mindedness could look like by considering certain non-paradigmatic cases of consciousness and cognition in humans. We then turn to questions regarding nonhuman minds, including those of other animals, artificial intelligence, and plants.

Assignments:

- **First evaluative essay** (3-4 pgs.) – Choose between 3 prompts.
- **Are We Living in a Simulation exercise** (in-class) – In groups, determine and write up the best argument in favor of the view that we are living in a simulation, and the best argument against. Then write a short response arguing for whichever side you find the most convincing.
- **Second evaluative essay** (3-4 pgs.) – Choose between 3 prompts.
- **Observing Other Minds exercise** (3-4 pgs.) – closely observe an animal for at least 15 minutes. Describe their behavior first in terms of mindedness, and second purely behaviorally. What are similarities and differences between these two descriptions? Which to you seems more plausible, and why? Next, consider one of the AI programs that we have considered in class, and repeat the same exercise.
- **Final essay** (5-7 pgs.) – Choose between 5 prompts or decide on your own final topic (which must be approved by me!)

Week 1: Introduction

- Paul Thagard – “Why Cognitive Science Needs Philosophy and Vice Versa”
- Jim Pryor – “Guidelines on Reading Philosophy”

Week 2: Mind and Self

- John Locke – “Personal Identity” from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
- Mrinal Miri – “Memory and Personal Identity”
- David Hume – “The Self as Bundle” from *A Treatise of Human Nature*
- Peter Unger – “I do not exist”

Week 3: Mind and World

- René Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1, 2)
- Jen McWeeny – “Princess Elisabeth and the Mind-Body Problem”
- Jaegwon Kim – “Mind as Immaterial Substance: Descartes’ Dualism”
- John Greco – “Skepticism about the external world”

Week 4: Alternatives to Dualism

- Barbara Montero – “The Body Problem”
- Eric Schwitzgebel- “If Materialism is True, the United States is Probably Consciousness”
- Susan Schneider – “Spacetime Emergence, Panpsychism and the Nature of Consciousness”
- Miri Albahari – “Panpsychism and the Inner-Outer Gap Problem”

Week 5: Phenomenal Consciousness

- Thomas Nagel – “What is it like to be a bat?”
- Zoe Drayson – “The philosophy of phenomenal consciousness: an introduction”
- Daniel Dennett – selections from *Consciousness Explained*
- Eric Schwitzgebel – “Phenomenal Consciousness, Defined and Defended as Innocently as I can Manage”

Week 6: Altered States

- Jennifer Windt – “Consciousness in Sleep”
- Daniel Dennett – “Are Dreams Experiences?”
- Antoine Lutz, John Dunne, and Richard Davidson – “Meditation and the Neuroscience of Consciousness: An Introduction”
- Graham Jamieson – selections from *Hypnosis and Conscious States*

Week 10: Extended cognition

- Andy Clark and David Chalmers – “The Extended Mind”
- Zoe Drayson – “Extended Cognition and the Metaphysics of Mind”
- John Sutton, Celia Harris, Paul Keil, and Amanda Barnier – “The Psychology of Memory, Extended Cognition, and Socially Distributed Remembering”
- Karina Vold – “Can Consciousness Extend?”

Week 7: Animals Minds 1

- Kristin Andrews – “Getting to Know Other Minds” from *The Animal Mind*
- Kristin Andrews – “Consciousness” from *The Animal Mind*

Week 8: Animal Minds 2

- Peter Godfrey-Smith – “From White Noise to Consciousness” from *Other Minds*
- Michael Tye – selections from *Tense Bees and Shell-Shocked Crabs*
- Deborah Gordon – “The Emergent Genius of Ant Colonies” (TED Talk)

Week 9: Artificial Intelligence

- Susan Schneider – selections from *Artificial You: AI and the Future of your Mind*
- Elisabeth Hildt – “The Prospects of Artificial Consciousness: Ethical Dimensions and Concerns”

Week 11: Plant Minds?

- Chauncey Maher – selections from *Plant Minds: A Philosophical Defense*
- Fred Adams – “Cognition Wars”
- Miguel Segundo-Ortin and Paco Calvo – “Are Plants Cognitive? A Reply to Adams”

Week 12: Mindedness and Moral Status

- Marian Dawkins – selections from *Why Animals Matter: Animal Consciousness, Animal Welfare, and Human Well-being*
- Joshua Shepherd – “Non-human moral status: Problems with phenomenal consciousness”
- Jonathan Birch – “Should Animal Welfare be Defined in Terms of Consciousness?”