

Philosophy 2250  
**Mind, Knowledge and Language**  
Fall 2010

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Instructor: Stefan Linquist  
Email: [linquist@uoguelph.ca](mailto:linquist@uoguelph.ca)  
Time: Tues. & Thurs. 4:00 – 5:20.  
Place: MACK, Room 115  
Office Hours: Thursday 10:00-12:00  
Course website: <http://biophilosophy.ca/Teaching/ML&K10.html>  
T.A.: Christian Stevens  
T.A. email:

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### **Course Outline**

This course will investigate various questions raised in the philosophy of mind and cognitive science. In particular, we will focus on the nature and constitution of mind in humans, animals and robots, approaching our subject matter from the perspectives of philosophy, evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, ethology, and artificial intelligence. We will examine the relation between mind and body and between consciousness and cognition. We will also talk about several related philosophical problems about the mind, such as: subjectivity, skepticism about other minds, the relation of language to mind, and the effects of brain disorders on mental life.

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### **Course Objectives**

Understand the basic tenets of prevailing theories mind including Cartesian Dualism, Behaviorism, Type identity theory, the Computational Theory of Mind and Evolutionary Psychology. Students should by the end of the course be able to critically evaluate each theory's position on the following:

- 1) What sorts of mental phenomena must a theory of mind explain?
  - 2) What is the relation between mind and body?
  - 3) How can one gain knowledge about the mind?
  - 4) What is the nature of the self?
  - 5) What is the relationship between human and animal minds?
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### **Grading**

Five short assignments (approximately 2 pages ea.) 25%  
Midterm: 25%  
Paper (about 8 pages) 25%  
Final Exam (cumulative) 25%

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### **Readings**

Neil Campbell, A Brief Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind, Broadview Press.  
Several journal articles available online and listed below.

## **Outline** (subject to minor modification)

Sept. 09 - Lecture: The five components of a theory of mind and how to analyze them.  
Read: Philosophy of Mind, Ch1. "What is the Philosophy of Mind?" (pg 1-14).

### **Part 1: Descartes' theory of Mind.**

Sept. 14 - Lecture: Cartesian Dualism and the 'commonsense' theory of mind.  
Read: Campbell Chapter 1: "Dualism" (p. 15-33).

16 - Lecture: Contemporary arguments for Dualism.  
Read: J.P. Moreland "A Contemporary defense of dualism" (online).

Sept. 21- Lecture: Thoughtless brutes? The Cartesian view of animal minds.  
Read: T.H. Huxley, "On the hypothesis that animals are automata" (online).  
**\*\*First assignment due in class\*\***

23 Lecture: Problems with the Cartesian theory.  
Read: First part of Campbell, Chapter 2 on Behaviourism (p. 35-50).

### **Part 2: Behaviourism and Mind/Brain Identity theory.**

Sept. 28 - Lecture: The behaviourist movement in psychology.  
Read: J.B. Watson, "Psychology as a behaviorist views it" (online).

30 -Lecture: Logical Behaviourism; Problems for Behaviourism.  
Read: Second part of Campbell, Chapter 2: "Problems w. Behaviourism" (51-54)

Oct. 5 - Lecture: The rise and (premature?) fall of Type Identity Theory.  
Read: Campbell, Ch. 3: Type Identity Theory (57-78).  
**\*\*Second assignment due in class\*\***

### **Part 3: The Computational Theory of Mind.**

Oct. 7- Lecture: From Behaviourism to Cognitivism – the emergence of CTM .  
Read: Denise Cummins, "A history of thinking" (online).

Oct. 12 -Lecture: Information and information processing.  
Read: A.M. Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (online)

14 -Lecture: Computational systems and Marr's three levels.  
Read: Dawson 1998 The classical view of information processing.

Oct. 19 - Lecture: Problems with the computational theory of mind.  
Read: Searle, "Minds, brains and programs" (online).

Oct. 21- Review and question period.  
**\*\*Third assignment due in class\*\***

Oct. 26 - **\*\*\*MIDTERM EXAM\*\*\***

28 - Lecture: Evolutionary Psychology.

Read: S. Mitchell, "Can evolution explain how the mind works" (online)

**\*Papers assigned\***

Nov. 02 Lecture: How to write a Philosophy paper.

### **Part 5: Mind and Belief in Animals**

Nov. 04 - Lecture: Do non human animals have beliefs?

Reading: G Graham, "Mind and belief in animals" (online).

Nov. 09 - Lecture: Do non human animals have conscious awareness?

M. Stamp-Dawkins "Animal minds and animal emotions" (online).

**\*\*fourth assignment due in class\*\***

11 - Lecture: The intentional stance.

Read: D Dennett, "Cognitive ethology: Bargains or Goose Chase?" (online)

### **Part 6: Is a Science of Consciousness possible?**

Nov. 16 - Lecture: The difference between elimination and reduction.

Read: Campbell, Ch. 6: Eliminative Materialism (123-143).

18 - Lecture: Can consciousness be reduced to the brain?

Read: T Nagel, What's it like to be a bat? (online).

Nov. 23 - Lecture: What does scientific reduction really look like?

Read: Campbell Chapter 9, The Problem of Qualia (189-208).

Churchland, "Reductions and coevolution in scientific domains" (online).

**\*\*Fifth assignment due in class\*\***

25 Lecture: Scientific optimism (or naivety?) Video of Dan Dennett debate.

Read: Churchland, ""Nine naysaying arguments" (online).

Nov. 30 – Lecture: Makeup period (general discussion)

Read: TBA

Dec. 02 - Review and question period (for final).

**\*\*Papers due in class\*\***

## Other important info

### Assignment due dates

All weekly assignments are due in class at the beginning of class. No late assignments will be accepted without a certified medical excuse.

### Class conduct

The classroom is an open environment where any topic is available for discussion. All participants agree to treat each other with respect and courtesy. As philosophers, we will distinguish our evaluation of the arguments that others are presenting from our evaluation of those individuals as a persons.

### E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students

### When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement...

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:  
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

### Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2010 courses, without academic penalty, is **Thursday November 4**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:  
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

### Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

### Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. See:  
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>