

Phil 317
The Philosophy of Mind

Fall 1996

Class meeting time: T R 9:55 - 11:10 AM
Class location: Bailey 211
E-mail: Liu@uno.cc.geneseo.edu

Instructor: JeeLoo Liu
Office hours: M W 2- 4 PM
or by appointment
Telephone: 245-5231 (O)

**Texts: *Matter and Consciousness*, [Revised edition], by Paul Churchland (MIT)
The Nature of Mind, (ed.) David Rosenthal (Oxford)**

Course Description: This course is designed to present contemporary philosophical approaches to the nature of mind. Modern science treats mind as a part of physical reality; the development of Artificial Intelligence explores the possibilities of other "mechanical minds." How can philosophers reconcile these perspectives with our commonsensical notion of our being unique, conscious minds? What is the nature of mind? How is the mind related to the brain? Do we have absolutely correct knowledge of our own thought? What is the connection between thought and language? What methodology should psychology adopt in order to be a science? These are just a few of the many issues we will be investigating. In the beginning two weeks, we will use Churchland's general and systematic introduction to these issues. Afterwards we will begin to look at some of the most important articles in the field. Reading assignments for each week are generally under 20 pages, but they require careful reading and hard thinking. The course will be conducted in the lecture/discussion format.

Grading:

Mid-term Exam	20 %
Final Exam	20 %
Weekly Homework (2 pages)	20 %
1 Paper (8-10 pages)	30 %
Class Participation	10 %

General Policies:

1. To succeed in this course, you should keep pace with the syllabus. Your regular attendance is strongly emphasized, and you are also expected to finish the reading assignments prior to each class.
2. All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced.
3. The paper is due on **December 3**. **A 1/2 grade deduction will be made for each day delayed.** You are free to choose your paper topics as long as they are related to the reading materials. You are also encouraged to discuss your paper topic with me. It is strongly recommended that you start working on your paper as early as possible.
4. Homework must be handed in **on the assigned date and in person**. (Typically homework is due on a **Tuesday** so that you may use the weekend to work on it. But if you happen to be occupied on a particular weekend, you may also write a piece on the article assigned for **the Thursday of the same week** and hand it in on that Thursday.) Each homework should

- comprise both an explanation and an evaluation of the author's view. **Do the best you can even when you find the article too difficult to summarize.** Homework will be graded. In the final calculation, I will dismiss the two pieces of homework with the lowest grades.
5. To receive a final grade for the course, all assignments must be completed.

Syllabus

<u>Date</u>	<u>Content of discussion</u>	<u>Assignments for this class</u>
T 8/27	Introduction	
R 8/29	The Ontological Problem (The Mind/Body Problem)	Read Churchland, chap. 2
T 9/3	The Semantical Problem	Read Churchland, chap. 3 Homework #1: Which theory, in your opinion, provides the best solution to the mind/body problem? Give your reasons.
R 9/5	The Epistemological Problem	Read Churchland, chap. 4
T 9/10	The Methodological Problem	Read Churchland, chap. 5
R 9/12	Descartes: <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i>	Read Rosenthal pp. 21-29 Homework #2
T 9/17	Ryle: Descartes' Myth	Read Rosenthal pp. 51-57 Homework #3
R 9/19	Strawson: Persons	Read Rosenthal pp. 104-115
T 9/24	Armstrong: Is Introspective Knowledge Incorrigible?	Read Rosenthal pp. 126-132 Homework #4
R 9/26	Putnam: Brains and Behavior	Read Rosenthal pp. 151-159
T 10/1	Putnam: The Nature of Mental States	Read Rosenthal pp. 197-203 Homework #5
R 10/3	Lewis: Mad Pain and Martian Pain	Read Rosenthal pp. 229-233
T 10/8	Review	Bring your questions
R 10/10	Mid-term Exam	
T 10/15	Fall Break	
R 10/17	Davidson: Mental Events	Read Rosenthal pp. 247-256 Homework #6

T 10/22	Kim: Epiphenomenal and Supervenient Causation	Read Rosenthal pp. 257-265 Homework #7
R 10/24	Davidson: Thought and Talk	Read Rosenthal pp. 363-371
T 10/29	Shoemaker: Functionalism and Qualia	Read Rosenthal pp. 395-405 Homework #8
R 10/31	Jackson: What Mary Didn't Know	Read Rosenthal pp. 392-394
T 11/5	Nagel: What Is It Like to Be a Bat?	Read Rosenthal pp. 422-427 Homework #9
R 11/7	Rosenthal: Two Concepts of Consciousness	Read Rosenthal pp. 462-475
T 11/12	Fodor: Methodological Solipsism Considered as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Psychology	Read Rosenthal pp. 485-498 Homework #10
R 11/14	cont'd	(same)
T 11/19	Dennett: Brain Writing and Mind Reading	Read Rosenthal pp. 502-507 Homework #11
R 11/21	Searle: Minds, Brains, and Programs	Read Rosenthal pp. 509-519
T 11/26	Stalnaker: On What's in the Head	Read Rosenthal pp. 576-588 Homework #12
R 11/28	Thanksgiving Vacation	
T 12/3	Churchland: Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes [Paper due]	Read Rosenthal pp. 601-612
R 12/5	Review; Conclusion	None

FINAL EXAM: December 16 (Monday) 12:00 - 3:00 PM