PHIL250H1 – MINDS AND MACHINES

1. CONTACT

INSTRUCTOR
Name: Dr. Aaron Henry
Office: BUCH E275
Office Hours: Wed. 2:30-3:30pm

Email: aaron.henry@ubc.ca
> **E-mail policy**: E-mails must be sent from your UBC e-mail address and must include the course code (PHIL250) in the subject line. E-mails are for administrative purposes only – questions about course material will be addressed during office hours. I aim to reply to e-mails within one or two business days.

Lecture Location: BUCH D218
Note: we will be meeting in-person. But students who wish to attend from home will have the option of doing so without penalty via Lecture Capture.
Lecture Times: Tues & Thurs 15:30-17:00

2. COURSE

OVERVIEW
This course will be an introduction to philosophical issues concerning the nature of the mind. Our discussion will begin with the 'mind-body problem': the question of how your mind is related to your body. For example, is your mind an immaterial soul that can (at least in principle) survive the death of your body, as René Descartes believed? If not, is your mind nothing more than your *brain*, or perhaps something more like a *computer program* running on the hardware of the brain? If your mind is a computer, does it follow that we can not only *simulate* intelligence artificially but create *genuine* artificial intelligence (or better: *synthetic* intelligence)? In this course, we will ask these and other questions, focusing on both the promise and hurdles confronting the computational theory of mind, including the prospects of a computational theory of subjective consciousness, the relevance of embodiment and know how for intelligence, and the ethical and political significance on artificial intelligence.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
A primary objective of any philosophy course is skill development. Some of the skills you will be developing in this course include:
- grasp of the distinctive problems and controversies in the philosophy of mind;
- ability to read, analyze, and critically assess a philosophical text;
- ability to write a well-argued philosophy paper;
- ability to defend your views in conversation.

EXPECTATIONS
What I expect from you:
- to attend lectures;
- to come to lecture on time and prepared to discuss assigned readings;
- to complete assignments on time and according to the instructions;
- to treat your peers with respect;
- to ask questions and seek help when you don't understand something;
- to take responsibility for your own learning.

What you can expect from me:
- to come prepared for each lecture;
- to promote a positive and stimulating learning environment;
- to provide support throughout the term;

- to give constructive feedback on your written work;
- to treat you with respect;
- to think carefully about your questions and make a serious effort to answer them.

TEXTS
All other readings will be available through the course website (see §4 for details)

3. ASSESSMENT

Biweekly responses	(10% of final)	**Due: Thursdays in lect.**
Short paper (1,000 words)	(20% of final)	**Due: end of Week 6**
Long paper (2,000 words)	(30% of final)	**Due: last day of classes**
Final Exam	(30% of final)	**TBD**
Class Participation	(10% of final)	

4. POLICIES

COURSE WEBSITE
All announcements and course documents will be posted on Canvas. To access this site, go to https://canvas.ubc.ca/and login with your CWLid and password. PHL250H will appear under the "courses" portion of the welcome page, on the left hand side. Click on the link to access our site. You should check this site regularly for updates.

LATENESS
Assignments will be penalized 1/3 a letter grade for each day that they are late. Extensions may be granted if extraordinary circumstances are documented, but students should contact me to request an extension before the due date. Any assignment that is more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of British Columbia is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. Accordingly, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic Misconduct:
http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS
The University of British Columbia is committed to accessibility. If you have a disability that may interfere with your ability to successfully take this course, then please email me in the first few weeks. You must also register with Access and Diversity, so that they can help provide support (grant extra time on exam, note taker, etc.): https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/access-diversity Also, note that I only get the information that UBC provides me with. If you want me to address you using a different name or gender than the one indicated through UBC I am happy to do so. Please just let me know by sending me an email. I aim to make sure my

classroom is a positive and safe space for all students regardless of sexual orientation, gender, class, ethnicity, political or religious beliefs, and (dis)ability. While philosophical debate often involves exploring controversial arguments and getting into debates, we can do so in an atmosphere of mutual support and respect for all voices. Constructive criticism and debate of the arguments of other students is welcome and encouraged. Attacks on individuals are not appropriate. Please let me know if you feel uncomfortable in class discussions, or if there is anything I can do to help improve your involvement in the class.

5. SUPPORT

ADVICE
The term goes *very* quickly! It's therefore important to keep up with the readings and to attend lectures. If you feel you need additional help with any of the course material, please don't wait to contact me.

INTERNET RESOURCES
Here is a link to information about the University of British Columbia's writing resources:
https://writing.library.ubc.ca/
Here are links to information about how to write a good philosophy paper:
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html
http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf
http://catpages.nwmissouri.edu/m/rfield/guide.html
Here is a link to information about the 'Cornell' note taking system:
http://lifehacker.com/202418/geek-to-live--take-study+worthy-lecture-notes

6. SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule may change at the instructor's discretion to suit the pace of the course and the interests of the students. Please also note that all readings are to be read *before the class* that will take place on the date listed.

DATE	TOPIC	READING
Week 1	Introduction to the course and the Mind-Body Problem	**Optional:** Louise Antony (2009). The mental and the physical (esp. pp. 555-559). Barbara Montero (1999). The body of the mind-body problem (esp. pp.183-188)
Week 2	Substance Dualism and the problem of mental causation	René Descartes, excerpt from *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Med. VI); Jen McWeeny "Princess Elisabeth and the Mind-Body Problem" **Optional:** Karen Bennett, "Mental causation" (esp. §1);
Week 3	The rise of Materialism (*a.k.a.* 'Physicalism'): the 'Identity Theory' and 'Logical Behaviourism'	Gilbert Ryle, excerpt from *Concept of Mind*; J.J.C. Smart "Sensations and Brain Processes" (Note: this paper is difficult. Focus on pp. 141-142) **Optional:** Julia Tanner, "Gilbert Ryle" §6 & §8 (though you are welcome to read the entire entry) David Lewis "An argument for Identity Theory"
Week 4	Machine intelligence. 'Computational' or 'Machine Functionalism'	Alan Turing, "Computing machinery and intelligence" Janet Levin, "Functionalism" (§§1-3) **Optional:** Hilary Putnam, "The nature of mental states"
Week 5	Some troubles for the computational theory of mind: the 'Chinese Room'	John Searle, "Minds, Brains and Programs"; David Cole "The Chinese Room" (focus on §4, but you are welcome to read the entire entry)
Week 6	The naturalizing intentionality project	Karen Neander, "Teleological Theories of Mental Content: Can Darwin Solve the Problem of Intentionality?" **Optional:** Kathleen Akins, "Of Sensory Systems and the "Aboutness" of Mental States" **FIRST PAPER DUE**
Week 7	Reading Week	
Week 8	Can the objectivity of scientific explanation be reconciled with the subjectivity of consciousness?	Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a Bat?" **Optional:** Kathleen Akins, "What is it like to be Boring and Myopic?"
Week 9	The frame problem for general AI, and Dreyfus's critique from embodied phenomenology	Daniel Dennett, "Cognitive Wheels: The Frame Problem for AI" Hubert Dreyfus, excerpt from *What Computers Can't Do*
Week 10	4E Cognitive Science: Embodied, Embedded, Extended, and Enactive	Evan Thompson, excerpt from *Mind in Life* Michael Wheeler, "Cognition in Context: Phenomenology, Situated Robotics and the Frame Problem"
Week 11	The ethics of AI	Amanda Sharkey and Noel Sharkey, "Granny and The Robots - Ethical Issues in Robot Care for the Elderly" Meredith Whittaker et al., "Disability, Bias, and AI"
Week 12	Reasons for caution?	Excerpt from Brian Cantwell Smith, *The Promise of Artificial Intelligence*
Week 13	Review and exam prep	No readings **SECOND PAPER DUE**