Course Information
>PHIL 250 001: Minds and Machines (3 credits)
>Summer Term 1
>Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00pm-4:00pm
>Instructor: Chase Dority, ccd325@mail.ubc.ca

Office Hours
>Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00am-11:00am (otherwise by appointment), Zoom

Course Description
>This course will examine the nature of consciousness, mind, and the self, especially in relation to recent advances in science and technology. In the first part of the course, we will look at a combination of philosophical arguments and empirical evidence for general frameworks that have traditionally been proposed for understanding the relationship between consciousness, the mind, and the physical body and brain. In the second part of the course, we will turn our attention to developments in science and technology, especially in neuroscience, computational/digital technologies, and artificial intelligence. We will ask about some of the theoretical, social, and ethical implications these developments carry—can (and should) a machine be programmed to be conscious, and how would we know if we succeeded? Can (and should) our consciousness be uploaded to a computer, and what does this mean for our relationship with our bodies? Can (and should) we have intimate relationships and/or engage in sexual activity with humanoid robots? The course will proceed through a combination of lecture and class discussion.

Assessment
>3 weekly reflections (500-750 words, 10 points each, 30 points total)
>Short paper (1000-1500 words, 30 points) due June 6
>Final Project (2000-2500 words, or other option, 40 points) due June 24

Attendance and Participation
>Course attendance is expected, and participation in class discussion is highly encouraged. It is also expected that you will read/watch the assigned material by the beginning of class.

Course Readings and Material
This is a tentative list of course content, and as such, the readings and other material are subject to change before the syllabus is finalized.

>There is no assigned textbook for this course. All the course materials will be provided through Canvas via the library online course reserves, or links to external sources.

>**Monday, 5/16**: The nature of consciousness, mind, and self
>Read: Meditation 1 (Descartes)
>Watch: "An Introduction to Advaita Vedanta"
>Watch: "Neurophilosophy," Patricia Churchland
>Watch: "The Self Doesn't Exist"

Wednesday, 5/18: The problem of "qualia"
Watch: "The Hard Problem of Consciousness" (David Chalmers)
Read: "What's it like to be a bat?" (Thomas Nagel)
Read: from "Epiphenomenal Qualia" and "What Mary Didn't Know" (Frank Jackson)
Recommended: watch David Chalmers interview on the Lex Fridman podcast

Monday, 5/23: No class

Wednesday, 5/25: Consciousness and the nature of reality: or, are we living in the matrix?
Read: "The Experience Machine" (Robert Nozick)
Read: "Are you living in a computer simulation?" (Nick Bostrom)
Watch: "Why you're probably not a simulation" (Cool Worlds)
Recommended: watch *The Matrix*

Monday, 5/30: Neurophenomenology
Watch: "The Transparent Avatar in Your Brain" (Thomas Metzinger TED talk)
Read: *Mindmelding* chapter 1 (William Hirstein)
Recommended: watch Inseparable documentary

Wednesday, 6/1: Challenges to the materialist account of the mind
Read: "Proof of Heaven: A Doctor's Experience with the Afterlife" (Eben Alexander)
Read: "Science on the Brink of Death" (Sam Harris)
Watch: "Children's Memories of Previous Lives" (Jim Tucker)

Monday, 6/6: Advaita Vedanta and non-dual spirituality
Paper 1 Due
Read: selection from *I Am That* (Nisgardatta Maharaj)
Read: selection from *Be As You Are* (Ramana Maharshi)
Recommended: watch *Jnani*

Wednesday, 6/8: Review/Brains, minds, and machines
Material TBD

Monday, 6/13: Brains, minds, and machines
Read: "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (Alan Turing)
Read: "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (John Searle)

Wednesday, 6/15: Brains, minds, and machines cont'd
Read: "Philosophers on GPT-3" blogpost (at Daily Nous)
Watch: *Alphago*

Monday, 6/20: Applied ethical and social issues
Read: "Could you merge with AI? Reflections on the Singularity and Radical Brain Enhancement" (Cody Turner and Susan Schneider)

Read: "Troubleshooting AI and Consent" (Meg Leta Jones and Elizabeth Edenberg)

Wednesday, 6/22: Applied ethical and social issues cont'd
Read: "On the Very Idea of Sex with Robots" (Mark Migotti and Nicole Wyatt)
Read: "From Sex Robots to Love Robots: Is Mutual Love with a Robot Possible?" (Sven Nyholm and Lily Eva Frank)
Recommended: watch *Her*

Final Project Due Friday, 6/24

Late Work Policy
There will be a late penalty assessed to work submitted after the assignment deadline. Extensions due to personal circumstances or emergency situations can be arranged with me directly.

Academic Concession
Issues of concession can be discussed with me directly and will usually result in an extension for the assignment(s) in question. For the university policy regarding academic concession, see: https://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0

Covid-19 Policy
*The following statement reflects the UBC policy on face coverings that remains in effect through the end of the 2021/22 Winter session. This policy is therefore subject to change for the 2022 Summer session, in which case it will be amended on the finalized syllabus.
You are required to wear a non-medical mask during our class meetings, for your own protection and for the safety and comfort of everyone else in the class. For our in-person meetings in this class, it is important that all of us feel as comfortable as possible engaging in class activities while sharing an indoor space. Non-medical masks that cover our noses and mouths are a primary tool for combating the spread of Covid-19. Further, according to the provincial mandate, masks are required in all indoor public spaces including lobbies, hallways, stairwells, elevators, classrooms and labs. There may be students who have medical accommodations for not wearing a mask. Please maintain a respectful environment.

Accessibility
You may contact me if you have any concerns over issues of accessibility in this course. Students with disabilities may contact UBC's Centre for Accessibility, located in Brock Hall, room 1203, telephone number: (604) 822-5844. They can help arrange appropriate accommodations if required. You can also find more resources regarding accessibility at: http://www.students.ubc.ca/about/access

Plagiarism
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.

UBC Resources

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available at https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success

Copyright

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