

**PHIL 451: Philosophy of Mind. 3 Credits**  
**Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-11:00am. LASR-102**  
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Office hours TBA (Buch E-377).  
TA: TBA

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This course is an advanced introduction to the philosophy of mind. Its objective is to introduce you to a variety of philosophical issues about the nature of the mind, especially issues that arise in connection with scientific research on the brain. The course will focus on the nature of consciousness and the self. What is consciousness and how is it related to the brain, the rest of the body, and the physical world? Can consciousness be explained in physical terms? Can there be a scientific understanding of consciousness or will consciousness remain forever mysterious? Is there a self or is the self an illusion? Guided by these questions, we will examine consciousness and the sense of self across a wide variety of states, including awake perception, dreaming, lucid dreaming, deep sleep, out-of-body experiences, dying and near-death experiences, as well as meditative states. We will draw from a wide variety of sources, including contemporary philosophy of mind, Indian philosophy, and Buddhist philosophy, as well as cognitive science, especially the neuroscience of consciousness, sleep science, and the neuroscience of meditation. Upon successful completion of the course, you will have a broad comprehensive knowledge of both scientific findings and philosophical positions about the nature of consciousness and the self, along with philosophical tools for analyzing scientific research on the mind and body.



## Required Readings

Evan Thompson, *Waking, Dreaming, Being: Self and Consciousness in Neuroscience, Meditation, and Philosophy*. Electronic and hard copy editions available at the UBC Bookstore, amazon.com, amazon.ca, chapters.indigo.ca, iTunes, barnesandnoble.com. Additional readings will be available online, through the UBC library, or at Canvas, as indicated below on the course schedule.

## Requirements

**3 papers**, each 1/3 of your final grade. Length 1500 words maximum. Instructions for writing these papers will be posted separately at Canvas.

**Statement on Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is intellectual theft and occurs when an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as their own. Scholarship rests on examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. 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. **Using ChatGPT or other AI content generators to generate any portion of your written work counts as plagiarism in this course.** 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. For further information, please review the UBC Calendar Academic regulations for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty (See the UBC Calendar, under "Academic Regulations," and "Student Conduct and Discipline": <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,0,0>.) <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

**PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT** as well as possible further disciplinary action by the University.

## Email Policy

The following guidelines apply to email communication during this course:

- ☐ I will make every effort to reply to legitimate email inquiries with 24 hours during weekdays but will likely take longer to respond to email during the weekend.
- ☐ Each email message should include in the Subject line the course identifier and a clear statement of purpose (e.g., PHIL 451: Question about Paper).



## SCHEDULE

**Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) are the ones you should do each week.** The others inside the boxes are supplementary readings that I will use in the lectures and that you can consult when you write your papers. WDB = Evan Thompson, *Waking, Dreaming, Being*.

### Week 1: Jan. 9 & 11. Introduction

\*WDB, Prologue, Introduction, Chapter 1.

### Week 2: Jan. 16 & 18. Looking for Awareness

\*Brentyn J. Ramm, “How to Recognise Pure Awareness,” <https://daily-philosophy.com/brentyn-ramm-pure-awareness/#fn:1>

Brentyn J. Ramm, “Pure awareness experience,” <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/doi/full/10.1080/0020174X.2019.1592704>  
Alex Gamma and Thomas Metzinger, “The Minimal Phenomenal Experience Questionnaire (MPE-92M): Towards a Phenomenological Profiles of “Pure Awareness” Experiences in Meditators,” <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0253694>

### Week 3: Jan 23 & 25. The Hard Problem of Consciousness

\*David Chalmers, “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness,” <http://consc.net/papers/facing.html>

Frank Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know,” [https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/2026143?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/2026143?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)  
Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” [https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/2183914?origin=JSTOR-pdf&seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/2183914?origin=JSTOR-pdf&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

### Week 4: Jan 30 & Feb. 1. Illusionism: Could Consciousness Be an Illusion?

\*Keith Frankish, “The Consciousness Illusion,” at <https://aeon.co/essays/what-if-your-consciousness-is-an-illusion-created-by-your-brain>

\*Jay Garfield, “Illusionism and Givenness,” <https://www-ingentaconnect-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/contentone/imp/jcs/2016/00000023/f0020011/art00006?crawler=true>

Susan Blackmore, “Delusions of Consciousness,” <https://www.susanblackmore.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2016jcs.pdf>  
Daniel C. Dennett, “Facing Up to the Hard Question of Consciousness,” <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6074080/>  
Keith Frankish, “Illusionism as a Theory of Consciousness,” [https://nbviewer.jupyter.org/github/k0711/kf\\_articles/blob/master/Frankish\\_Illusionism%20as%20a%20theory%20of%20consciousness\\_eprint.pdf](https://nbviewer.jupyter.org/github/k0711/kf_articles/blob/master/Frankish_Illusionism%20as%20a%20theory%20of%20consciousness_eprint.pdf)  
Galen Strawson, “The Consciousness Deniers,” at <https://www-nybooks-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/daily/2018/03/13/the-consciousness-deniers/>  
Daniel C. Dennett, reply by Galen Strawson, “‘Magic, Illusion, and Zombies’: An Exchange,” at <https://www-nybooks-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/daily/2018/04/03/magic-illusions-and-zombies-an-exchange/>  
Massimo Pigliucci, “Consciousness is Real,” [https://aeon.co/essays/consciousness-is-neither-a-spooky-mystery-nor-an-illusory-belief?utm\\_source=Aeon+Newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=december\\_drive\\_2019](https://aeon.co/essays/consciousness-is-neither-a-spooky-mystery-nor-an-illusory-belief?utm_source=Aeon+Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=december_drive_2019)



## **Week 5: Feb 6 & 8. Is the Stream of Consciousness an Illusion?**

\*WDB, Chapter 2

\*Kalina Christoff et al., “Mind-Wandering as Spontaneous Thought: A Dynamic Framework,” at <http://www.christofflab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Christoff2016-NRN.pdf>

### **Is Perceptual Consciousness Continuous or Discrete?**

Evan Thompson, “Is Consciousness a Stream?” at <http://philosophyofbrains.com/2015/07/29/is-consciousness-a-stream.aspx>

Evan Thompson, “Is Consciousness a Stream? An Update,” at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/waking-dreaming-being/201509/is-consciousness-stream-update>

Ruffin VanRullen and Christof Koch, “Is Perception Discrete or Continuous?” <https://www.sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/science/article/pii/S1364661303000950?via%3Dihub>

Ruffin VanRullen, “Perceptual Cycles,” <https://www.sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/science/article/pii/S1364661316301048?via%3Dihub>

Peter A. White, “Is Conscious Perception a Series of Discrete Temporal Frames?” <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/science/article/pii/S1053810018300047?via%3Dihub>

### **Mind Wandering**

Zachary Irving and Evan Thompson, “The Philosophy of Mind-Wandering,” at <https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190464745.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190464745-e-19>

## **Week 6: Feb 13 & 15. Pure Awareness and the Primacy of Consciousness**

\*WDB, Chapter 3.

\*Adam Frank, Marcelo Gleiser, and Evan Thompson, “Consciousness” (at Canvas)

\*Thomas Metzinger, “Minimal Phenomenal Experience: Meditation, Tonic Alertness, and the Phenomenology of ‘Pure’ Consciousness,” <https://philosophymindscience.org/index.php/phimisci/article/view/8960/8538>

Michel Bitbol, “Is Consciousness Primary?” <http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/4007/1/ConsciousnessPrimaryArt2.pdf>

Adam Frank, Marcelo Gleiser, and Evan Thompson, “The Blind Spot,” <https://aeon.co/essays/the-blind-spot-of-science-is-the-neglect-of-lived-experience>

Piet Hut and Roger Shepard, “Turning the Hard Problem Upside Down and Sideways,” <https://www-ingentaconnect-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/content/imp/jcs/1996/00000003/00000004/717>

## **Week 7: Feb 20 & 22: Reading Week**

## **Week 8: Feb. 27 & 29. Neuroscience Theories of Consciousness**

\*Anil K. Seth and Tim Bayne, “Theories of Consciousness,” <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41583-022-00587-4>

\*Albert Gidon, Jaan Aru, and Matthew Evan Larkum, “Does Brain Activity Cause Consciousness? A Thought Experiment,” <https://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.3001651>

## **Week 9: March 5 & 7. Neurophenomenology and the Cognitive Science of Meditation**

\*Sina Fazelpour and Evan Thompson, “The Kantian Brain: Brain Dynamics from a Neurophenomenological Perspective,” at



<https://evanthompsondotme.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/1-s2-0-s0959438814002426-main.pdf>

\*Antoine Lutz et al., “Investigating the Phenomenological Matrix of Mindfulness-Related Practices from a Neurocognitive Perspective,”

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26436313>

Melissa Ellamil et al., “Dynamics of Neural Recruitment Surrounding the Spontaneous Arising of Thoughts in Experienced Mindfulness Practitioners,” at <http://www.christofflab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Ellamil2016-STdynamics.pdf>

Christopher Timmerman et al., “A Neurophenomenological Approach to Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness: Hypnosis, Meditation, and Psychedelics,” at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1364661322002911?dgcid=author#bb0840>

## **Week 10: March 12 & 14. Dreaming and Lucid Dreaming**

\*WDB, Chapters 4, 5 & 6

### **Lucid Dreaming**

Daniel C. Dennett, “Are Dreams Experiences?” <https://dl.tufts.edu/concern/pdfs/tm70n6786>

Kathleen Emmett, “Oneiric Experiences,” [https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/4319268?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/stable/4319268?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

Daniel C. Dennett, “The Onus Re Experiences: A Reply to Emmett,”

<https://dl.tufts.edu/concern/pdfs/Or967g49t>

Benjamin Baird, Sergio A. Mota-Rolim, and Martin Dresler, “The Cognitive Neuroscience of Lucid Dreaming,” <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/science/article/pii/S0149763418303361>

Karen R. Konkoly et al. “Real-Time Dialogue Between Experimenters and Dreamers During REM Sleep,” [https://www.cell.com/current-biology/pdfExtended/S0960-9822\(21\)00059-2](https://www.cell.com/current-biology/pdfExtended/S0960-9822(21)00059-2)

### **Dreaming: Hallucination or Imagination?**

Jonathan Ichikawa, “Dreaming and Imagination,” <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2008.01355.x>

Jennifer M. Windt, “The Immersive Spatiotemporal Hallucination Model of Dreaming,” <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/article/10.1007/s11097-010-9163-1>

## **Week 11: March 19 & 21. Out-of-Body Experiences**

\*WDB, Chapter 7.

## **Week 12: March 26 & 28. Dreamless Sleep**

\*WDB, Chapter 8.

Jennifer Windt, Tore Nielsen, and Evan Thompson, “Does Consciousness Disappear in Dreamless Sleep?” <https://evanthompsondotme.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/1-s2-0-s1364661316301528-main.pdf>

Evan Thompson, “Dreamless Sleep, the Embodied Mind, and Consciousness: The Relevance of a Classical Indian Debate to Cognitive Science,” <https://open-mind.net/papers/dreamless-sleep-the-embodied-mind-and-consciousness-the-relevance-of-a-classical-indian-debate-to-cognitive-science>

Jennifer Windt, “Just in Time – Dreamless Sleep Experience as Pure Subjective Temporality: A Commentary on Evan Thompson,” <https://open-mind.net/papers/just-in-time-dreamless-sleep-experience-as-pure-subjective-temporality-a-commentary-on-evan-thompson>

Evan Thompson, “Steps Toward a Neurophenomenology of Conscious Sleep: A Reply to Jennifer M. Windt,” <https://open-mind.net/papers/steps-toward-a-neurophenomenology-of-consciousness-in-sleep-a-reply-to-jennifer-m-windt>



Adriana Alcaraz-Sánchez, "Awareness in the Void: A Micro-Phenomenological Exploration of Conscious Dreamless Sleep," <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11097-021-09743-0>  
Adriana Alcaraz-Sánchez et al., "Nothingness Is All There Is: An Exploration of Objectless Awareness During Sleep," <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.901031/full>  
Adriana Alcaraz-Sánchez, "Is Lucid Dreamless Sleep Really Lucid?"  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13164-022-00663-9>

### **Week 13: April 2 & 4. Death**

\*WDB, Chapter 9

Evan Thompson, "Death: The Ultimate Transformative Experience,"  
<https://evanthompsondotme.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/thompson-revised-death-the-ultimate-transformative-experience.pdf>  
Benjamin Mitchell-Yellin and John Martin Fischer, "The Near-Death Experience Argument Against Physicalism," <https://www-ingentaconnect-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/contentone/imp/jcs/2014/00000021/F0020007/art00008>  
David DeGrazia, "The Definition of Death," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/death-definition/>  
Steven Laureys, "Death, Unconsciousness, and the Brain," <https://www-nature-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/articles/nrn1789>  
Steven Luper, "Death," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/death/>  
Thomas Nagel, "Death," <http://dbanach.com/death.htm> or  
[http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/maydede/mind/Nagel\\_Death.pdf](http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/maydede/mind/Nagel_Death.pdf)

### **Week 14: April 9 & 11. The Self**

\*WDB, Chapter 10.

Thomas Metzinger, "The No-Self Alternative,"  
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/592b5bbfd482e9898c67fd98/t/5d17b3c432c2550001db9a7d/1561834437216/no-Self\\_metzinger.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/592b5bbfd482e9898c67fd98/t/5d17b3c432c2550001db9a7d/1561834437216/no-Self_metzinger.pdf)