

PHIL 240

MIND & BRAIN

A contemporary philosophical exploration of the mind,
informed by science

SPRING 2022 MODULE 2

DR. IREM KURTSAL

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OFFICE HOURS:

MON. 1:30-3:00; TUE. 3:10-4:40;

WED. 1:30-3:00; THU. 11:50-1:20

OFFICE: ODDFELLOWS 116



Jean Miró, Woman Dreaming of Escape, Fundació Jean Miró

Course Description

Using distinctively philosophical tools, we will seek to understand and unify what various disciplines, including psychology and neuroscience have to say about our bodies and our minds. We will explore whether a purely material basis can explain or ground consciousness, or whether consciousness is irreducible.

Distribution Requirements: HE (Human Experience), SP (Scientific Process and Knowledge)

Course Objectives

1. Understanding major issues in the philosophy of mind and major approaches to the relationship between mental and physical phenomena
2. Recognizing what seems to puzzling philosophers and scientists about the nature of conscious experience,
3. Gaining competence in distinctively philosophical techniques for understanding the world, such as intertheoretic reduction and emergence
4. Increased competence in reading philosophy research papers; identifying the argumentative and critical tools used in them, criticizing arguments or theories
5. Increased competence in thinking argumentatively and self-critically
6. Increased competence in formulating and defending a complex philosophical thesis after navigating a philosophical debate

Expectations

Each week you will

- Before each class you will read an article or a chapter (or sometimes listen to a podcast, or view a video) using a reading (listening) guide and then take a reading quiz on Canvas on that material before class time
- Attend class and participate in class conversation (via one of the ways listed below)
- Write a very brief summary of your thoughts on the week's content

Throughout the course you will write

- Two short response papers
- A midterm take home exam

- A final paper

Required Texts

You will be using the social e-reader Perusall to access the course readings (free of charge). In this course we don't have graded annotating requirements, but you may find it pleasant and helpful to annotate the material and read other students' notes. Activities on Perusall will count towards class participation.

Contacting Me

Designated office hours are for students to drop in unannounced. If during all of these designated times you have other classes or commitments, please make an appointment with me using this website.

Grade Components

Participation _____	15% (R)
Quizzes _____	15% (C)
Weekly notes _____	10% (C)
Discussion leading _____	5% (C)
Response Paper 1 (1500 words) _____	8% (R)
Take-home Midterm _____	15% (R)
Response Paper 2 (1500 words) _____	8% (R)
Draft of Final Paper (3000 words) _____	4% (C)
Final Paper (3000 words) _____	20% (R)

C: These assignments are evaluated primarily for completion, but if there is a consistent lack of quality, we'll need to follow up with a meeting regarding the reasons

R: These assignments have a rubric they will be evaluated on; you can find these on the instructions sheet for each assignment

Assignment Overview

Participation

Complete the reading on Perusall and [join the social annotating](#). Prepare written questions or comments you plan to raise during class. Attend class and contribute to discussions, including by asking clarification questions. If you haven't been able to speak up, then turn in your written question or comment. Contribute to [the shared glossary](#). Please see the [participation rubric](#).

Quizzes

The quiz happens before class, and helps me assess whether you've done the reading assignment before class. Each reading/viewing/listening assignment comes with a "Reading Guide" (sometimes a "Viewing Guide" or a "Listening Guide") posted on Canvas approximately one week in advance. Your quiz will have three questions randomly selected from the guide. Therefore, the best way to prepare for the quiz (and the class) is to keep an eye on these questions and think about their answers while you do the reading. (If you write all the answers and keep them in order, your life will be very easy not only when you take the quiz, but also when you need to review material for other assignments.) Each quiz is due 11:59 pm the night before class, and stays open till class time. (The time between midnight and class meeting is the 'grace period'--you may still turn in your quiz during the grace period with no penalty.) After class starts, no late quizzes are accepted. One completed quiz = 1 course point. Quizzes determine 15% of your course grade. This means that you want to complete 15 quizzes out of a possible 21 throughout the term. (You may not collect more than 15 points even if you complete more than 15 quizzes.)

For the purposes of this class, for your quiz to be considered complete

- Each of the three questions is answered. If a question is left blank, the quiz gets zero points.
- The answers must be in your own words. If you choose to include a quote, you must also explain what you think the author meant.
- As per the Honor Code, your work, including your paraphrases should be free from plagiarism, and your paraphrase should not be identical to that written by another student.

- It should be clear that you've read all or almost all of the assigned material. You may have misunderstood some things here and there, as long as these are mistakes a student can be expected to make on a first reading.

Discussion Leading

At the start of the class you kick-start class discussion. You make a 10-min presentation (with or without visual aids) on a part or parts of the material you found especially interesting, or significant. [Here](#) is the signup sheet and [here](#) is the grading rubric.

Weekly Notes

Keep a running document where you write a few sentences for each of the 11 content weeks, summarizing content highlights from the week and noting any outstanding questions or thoughts you have. These needn't be anything fancy, but I do ask that you take them seriously.

I recommend doing this in Google Docs and sharing the link with me at the beginning of term in the Canvas assignment called "Weekly Notes." You should update your googledoc each week by Friday at 11:59pm.

Response Papers

A thoughtfully built argument, usually (but not necessarily) in the form of a negative criticism of one of the chapters/articles in the course. Written after the chapter/article has been covered and discussed in class. Often response papers develop naturally as a result of your class participation or your discussion leading. Sometimes I raise specific questions and mention that they can fruitfully be explored in a response paper. Response papers are your greatest venue to practice argumentation skills and self-criticism. It is expected that you consider an objection to your argument and respond to it. The first response paper should address a piece covered before the midterm, and the second response paper should address a piece covered after the midterm. 1500 words. Please see the [Response Papers rubric](#) here.

Take-home Midterm

Mixture of short-answer and long-answer questions that will test your understanding of the positions, theses, arguments, and methods covered in the first half of the course. Open book. The questions on the midterm will have standard objective answers; they will not be about your positions (or mine.) During our classes I will pose sample questions so you can practice answering them.

Final Paper

3000-word argumentative research-based philosophy paper. You will have a selection of topics to choose from. On Canvas you will find resources on writing excellent philosophical papers. During our classes, you will witness the uses of get to practice using philosophical tools such as mapping and undermining an argument, raising objections to a principle, finding counterexamples to a definition, building a new argument and defending its premises, all with a view to understanding the world by understanding arguments. ~~In your paper you will use these skills to tackle some aspect of free choice, agency, social stigma and addiction on your own terms.~~ In your paper you will use these skills to tackle some aspect of the mind-body problem on your own terms.

Accommodations

I am committed to adopting Universally Designed curricular and instructional practices to make learning accessible for all students. If you have a documented disability, please discuss appropriate accommodations with [John Mangine](#) in the Learning Commons, as well as meeting with me to help me understand additional supports that may allow you to learn most effectively.

If you need to miss a class or make an accommodation due to a religious observance, please let me know so we can make arrangements to cover material from that day. Don't be shy about asking!

Grade Scale

At the end of the course letter grades will be assigned approximately according to the following scale: A= 94 or higher; A-=90 or higher; B+=88 or higher; B=83 or higher; B-=80 or higher; C+=78 or higher; C=73 or higher; C-=70 or higher; D+=68 or higher; D=63 or higher

Academic Honesty Policy

At Allegheny, we take the Honor Code seriously and so should you. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the code, which you can find on the Allegheny College Bulletin at [http:// catalog.allegheny.edu](http://catalog.allegheny.edu). Note, in particular, the description of plagiarism, which

is perhaps the most often violated stricture, sometimes because students do not know what it is. You can find the description of plagiarism by typing the word 'plagiarism' in the Search Bulletin field and following the Honor Code link that comes up. You will find a complete description of the judicial process under College Policies in the student handbook, The Compass <<http://catalog.allegheny.edu/index.php?catoid=26>>.

Email Expectations

Please address your emails personally and professionally. ("Hello" / "Hi" / "Dear" followed by "Dr. Kurtzal"/Prof. Kurtzal") On the weekdays, please wait at least 24 hours for a response before emailing again, unless it is an actual emergency. (I get a lot of emails!) But don't hesitate to email again after 24 hours. I may take 48 hours to respond if you email me between 5pm on Friday and noon on Sunday.

(Tentative) Course Schedule