

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND



[Image description: Collage with faces of diverse philosophers]

Instructor: Saray Ayala-López
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Gender pronouns: they, them, theirs

Class meetings: MW 1:30-2:45pm
Mendocino Hall 3009
Office hours: MW 10-11:30am & by
appointment
Zoom meeting ID: 936 6789 9518
<https://csus.zoom.us/j/93667899518>
Please contact me in advance.

Course description

This course explores a variety of questions about the mind, that we can divide in four groups:

1. Getting to know your mind and its nature.
2. Consciousness and the self.
3. What things have minds?
4. The ethics of what is inside your mind.

Examples of questions in each group:

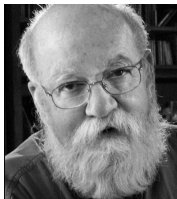
1. Is the mind physical? How do mind and body relate to each other? Are mental states brain states? Can neuroscience tell us everything we need to know about the mind? Can I be wrong about my own mental states?
2. Can science explain consciousness? What is it like to have a “what it is like” mental state? What type of thing is the self?
3. How many kinds of minds are there? Do non-human animals have minds? What about plants? How intelligent can artificial intelligence get? Do machines have minds? Can robots be conscious? How likely is it that extraterrestrial life has consciousness?
4. Are we responsible for the things we have in our own minds? Do we have control over our implicit attitudes? How bad it is to have false beliefs? Can brain-reading techniques developed by neuroscientists tell me more about my mind than myself?

This course has been designed to meet two goals: First, to invite students to experience the fascinating mental tickles that thinking about thinking causes; second, to give students the opportunity to know the work of philosophers who do not meet the stereotype of philosopher. If you are wondering what a stereotypical philosopher is, try this: picture in your head a philosopher. That's it. What you got is probably something like this:



[Image of philosopher Bertrand Russell]

Or this:



[Image of philosopher Daniel Dennett]

Existing anthologies and textbooks in the philosophy of mind give the impression that only White males in Western countries think about the mind. But there are many philosophers out there doing great work. As your instructor, it is my responsibility to provide you with more than one single story about the philosophy of mind and philosophy more generally. As a student, you deserve to know more than a single story. This course is a very small step in the direction of making the philosophy curriculum more diverse. It includes women, people of color, citizens from non-Anglophone countries, and LGBTQIA people. From Teresa of Ávila, a XVI century Spanish nun, to Susan Schneider, a US cognitive scientist and philosopher with a project with NASA on AI in space. From XVII century Elisabeth of Bohemia and her critique of René Descartes, to Frédérique de Vignemont, a philosopher at the Jean Nicod Institute in Paris who writes about how you perceive your own body.

Catalog description: Rival theories of the nature of the mind and mental activity, including dualism, materialism, functionalism. Difficulties in achieving a theoretical understanding of familiar psychological concepts such as belief, sensation, emotion, intention. Prerequisite: 3 units in philosophy or instructor permission. Units: 3.0

Course outcomes

You will

- Develop critical reading, listening, and writing skills.
- Learn about different approaches to the mind, and about a selection of questions related to the mental.
- Begin developing your own philosophically informed views about the mind and how it relates to other parts of the world.
- Develop an understanding of several philosophical theories.
- Learn to apply philosophical theories to everyday questions.

Evaluation: Your total number of points is calculated by adding the weighted points earned on the following assessment items:

Assessment	Details	Due date	Points (out of 100)
Discussion forum posts (x15)	200 words response to the prompt + a comment on someone else's response. 2 points	Due every Wednesday	30
Quizzes (x4)	Quiz #1: 9 points (covers block 1) Quiz #2: 7 points (block 2) Quiz #3: 7 points (block 3) Quiz #4: 7 (block 4 and all previous blocks)	Quiz # by Sept 30 Quiz #2 by Oct 31 Quiz #3 by Nov 21 Quiz #4 by Dec 9	30
Writing Assignments (x5)	200-400 words; 5 points each.	See schedule	25
Handout	Format: be creative. See instructions.	By Nov 28	5
Analysis Paper	See instructions on Canvas	By Dec 6	10

Description of assessment items:

Discussion forums: You are expected to contribute to discussion forums every week. There are 15 discussion prompts, one per week. You need to post a response to the prompt AND a comment on someone else's post. Your response to the prompt needs to address the prompt. In your comment to a classmate's post you need to engage with your classmate's response in a relevant way e.g. do not comment on a general or secondary observation made by your classmate, do not just write "I agree with you", do not just praise your classmate for their post (praising is welcome, but it needs to be accompanied by much more). The deadline for discussion forums is usually on Fridays (except for discussion #13). For more specific instructions on how to do well on discussions please check "How to do well in discussions and assignments" page under "Welcome" module. Please check "Community Norms" under "Welcome" for guidelines on how to conduct yourself in discussions.

Quizzes: There are four multiple-choice quizzes. First three quizzes cover their correspondent block (e.g. quiz #1 covers block #1). The fourth and last quiz covers block #4 and all past material (that is, blocks #1-4).

Writing assignments: These are written exercises. In order to do well on these exercises, you need to understand the readings and the material discussed during the preceding sessions. Pay attention to the schedule and make sure you do not miss the deadlines. There will be no make-ups (see the late submission policy below). There are 5 written assignments, worth 5 points max. each.

Handout: You are expected to select a reading and develop a handout for it. The handout must summarize the argument of the reading. Your summary can emphasize a specific part you are most interested in. A useful way to think about a handout is the following: imagine a friend who has not read the reading you selected, but is interested in learning what it says. You give them your handout and they will get an idea of what the reading says. Format: it can be regular structured prose (up to one two-sided page), a mental map, a comic strip, a song (up to 2 mins), an animation (up to 2 mins), a collage ... be creative! (samples of handouts will be made available).

Analysis paper: Please follow the instructions you can find in the course site ("Analysis paper instructions" under "Welcome to Philosophy of Mind", in the "home" module).

Extra credit assignments: Extra credit assignments might be offered during the semester. Instructions for them will be provided at the time.

Grading policy

Your final grade is determined by how many points you earn out of 100.

General evaluation criteria for all assignments:

Knowledge: your work needs to demonstrate correct interpretations of class material, distinguish among the different perspectives we discuss, and identify relevant notions.

Critical thinking: your work needs to demonstrate an ability to articulate and evaluate ideas, whether or not you agree with them.

Communication: your work needs to demonstrate the ability to transmit ideas in a way that is sensitive to your expected audience.

Etiquette: Respectful and constructive discussion is a critical part to learning and becoming a good thinker.

Engagement according to academic parameters: your work needs to demonstrate that the subject matter has been adequately researched and correctly cited.

Creativity: your work needs to demonstrate innovative approaches to the subject matter being discussed or presented. This can be done by connecting the subject matter to domains and questions you are familiar with.

Grading Scale

Proficient (A)	Competent (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Poor (D)	Unacceptable (F)
A (95-100)	B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D+ (67-69)	F (59-0)
A- (90-94)	B (84-86)	C (74-76)	D (64-66)	
	B- (80-83)	C- (70-73)	D- (60-63)	

Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of different dimensions of identity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, national identity, immigration status, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

Other Important Information

I am here to help: Remember that I am here to help you learn as best as I can. Please contact me if you have problems understanding the material, or require feedback and guidance on course-related issues, or simply have questions. We can exchange emails and meet (online for now) as many times as necessary during the semester.

Classroom and online forums behavior: The (online) classroom should be a safe space to discuss any topic, no matter how controversial (and we'll be discussing controversial matters!). We all have to build and maintain that safety by discussing respectfully, avoiding personal attacks, offensive epithets, and

exclusive language. If you feel uncomfortable in class and/or online discussion forums please get in contact with me. Please check “community norms” under “Welcome” for guidelines on how to conduct yourself in discussions.

Writing: Writing is a critical part of your education, and it is especially important in philosophy. For free, one-on-one help with writing in any class, please visit the University Reading and Writing Center in Calaveras 128. The Writing Center can help you at any stage of your reading/writing processes: coming up with a topic, developing, or organizing a draft, understanding difficult texts, or developing strategies to become a better editor. To make an appointment visit the Reading and Writing Center in CLV 128. For current Writing Center hours and more information, visit the website at www.csus.edu/writingcenter

Gender neutral writing: In philosophy, gender-neutral writing is the accepted practice recommended by the American Philosophical Association. Example of gender neutral language: humankind (instead of mankind), they (instead of he or she, when gender is not relevant). See the American Philosophical Association guidelines www.apaonlinecsw.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language.

Plagiarism: Plagiarizing someone else’s work is a serious academic offence, and it is bad for many reasons. Always use quotation marks and a footnote citation to indicate sentences or passages you borrow from another author. Assignments in which plagiarism is found will at the least be graded at 0 (not just an F). All incidents of plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. You are responsible for reading and understanding the details of the University's plagiarism policy. All papers will be put through plagiarism software. See the current student handbook for further information on student rights and responsibilities. Here is a link to the university's honesty policy: <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-0100.htm> Come talk to me if you are not sure about what constitutes plagiarism.

Etiquette/Netiquette: All of us involved in this course should conduct ourselves in ways consistent with the [Hornet Honor Code](#).

Accessibility statement: Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class (including pregnancy-related disabilities), please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided. Please be advised that disability-related academic adjustments are not retroactive. SSWD is located on the first floor of Lassen Hall 1008. Phone is 916-278-6955 and e-mail is sswd@csus.edu. For a complete listing of services and current business hours visit <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/>

Email policy: I commit to respond to your emails within 2 business days. If you haven’t heard from me after two business days, please send me a follow-up email. Before emailing me with a question about the course, check the syllabus in case your question is already answered there. To facilitate communication, include your name and last name in the body of your email, and include the title of the course you are taking and the section in your email’s subject. Please follow the Philosophy Department’s guide on how to correspond with your professor:

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/guidance/how-to-correspond.html>

Feedback:

Discussion forums: I read discussion boards regularly and occasionally comment on your contributions.

Assignments: I usually return graded assignments within a week, depending on the volume of work from other courses, it might take me two weeks. Feel free to check with me if you think it is taking me too long and you are worried about a grade.

Late submissions:

No late assignments will be accepted.

Exception: If you anticipate you need more time to finish an assignment, get in contact with me at least 48 hours *before* the deadline and ask me for an extension. It is at the discretion of the instructor to grant an extension after receiving such a request. A maximum of two extensions can be approved for each individual student under these conditions. Requesting an extension 48 hours before the deadline does not guarantee that the extension will be granted.

If you miss a deadline for emergency reasons, get in contact with me as soon as you can.

Changes in policies:

If due to traveling or any other reason, I change any of the above conditions, I will inform of the change in both an announcement on the main page of the course, and an email to each participant. Please make sure the email address you provided for this course is the one you regularly check.

Tech Requirements

- Access to internet.
- Sac State-registered email.
- Canvas: Most versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari, support the use of Canvas. To view specific Operating System and Browser compatibility with Canvas, please refer to: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720>.
- Zoom: You can download Zoom and find more information about using Zoom here: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/zoom/student-resources.html>
- PowerPoint: If you do not have access to PowerPoint, you can download it for free here (scroll down to PowerPoint and click on “Access Online or Download from Office365”): <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/software-catalog/#business-productivity>

If you experience difficulties with your computer or connecting to the campus networks please contact the Information Resource Technology (IRT) Service Desk by e-mail: servicedesk@csus.edu or phone (916) 278-7337. For information about their complete services visit: <http://www.csus.edu/irt/ServiceDesk/>.

Tech Support

For technical assistance, including with devices or WiFi access, here:

<https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/remote-learning/>

Covid-19 Instructions and Support

If you are sick, stay home and do not attend class. Notify your instructor. If you are experiencing any COVID- like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, loss of smell or taste, nausea, diarrhea, or headache) or have had exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID contact **Student Health & Counseling Services (SHCS)** at **916-278-6461** to receive guidance and/or medical care. You are asked to report any possible COVID related illnesses/exposures to SHCS via this link [COVID-19 Illness/Exposure Report Form](#). Expect a call from SHCS within 24 hours.

Student Health & Counseling Services

Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peerled health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost. For helpful information and access to their services visit the Student Health and Counseling Services website at: <https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/>.

The University requires faculty and staff to report any personal disclosures of sexual misconduct including rape, dating/domestic violence and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator. Students who do not wish to report their experience to me or the Title IX Coordinator may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Student Health and Counseling Services.

Basic Needs Support

If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away! The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student. Email the CARES office at cares@csus.edu to speak with a case manager about the resources available to you. Check out the [CARES website](#).

Other resources

Student Health & Counseling Services: <https://shcssacstate.org>

Dreamer Resource Center: <http://www.csus.edu/saseep/drc/>

University Writing Center: <http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>

Pride Center: <http://www.csus.edu/pride/>

Academic Advising: <http://www.csus.edu/acad/>

Multi-Cultural Center: <http://www.csus.edu/mcc/>

Women's Resource Center: <http://www.csus.edu/wrc/>

Information Resources & Technology: <http://www.csus.edu/irt/>

ASI Food Pantry: <http://www.asi.csus.edu/programs/food-pantry/>

Basic Needs (Food, Housing, Financial Security): <http://csus.edu/basicneeds/index.html>

Schedule: Important note: The schedule is subject to change. If the schedule changes, I will alert students with an announcement on Canvas.

Bloc k	Week	Date	Topic	Materials for the week	Assignments due
1	1	Aug 29- Sept 2	Intro: Philosophy of mind in an inclusive key; The physical and The Mental	Course syllabus + Louise Antony I pp. 555-556 + Anne M. Edwards Ch. 1, 2 & 3.	Discussion #1 by Aug 31
	2	Sept 5 – 9 (Sept 5 is labor day – campus closed)	René Descartes, Teresa of Ávila and The Deceiving Demon	René Descartes (Meditation I) + Christia Mercer (both paper and OpEd)	Discussion #2 + Writing Assignment #1 by Sept 7
	3	Sept 12 – Sept 16	René Descartes, Elisabeth of Bohemia and The Mind-Body Problem	René Descartes (Meditation II) + Elisabeth of Bohemia (letter to Descartes)	Discussion #3 by Sept 14
	4	Sept 19 – Sept 23	Dualism, Behaviorism, Identity Theory & Functionalism	Paul Churchland + Jaegwon Kim + Suilin Lavelle + Louise Antony II	Discussion #4 by Sept 21 + Writing Assignment #2 by Sept 23
	5	Sept 26 – 30	Functionalism & Reductionism	Peggy Seriès & Mark Sprevak (excerpt – up to first paragraph of p. 6, before “the brain: a guessing machine?” + Patricia Churchland	Discussion #5 by Sept 28 + Quiz #1 by Oct 3
2	6	Oct 3 – Oct 7	Consciousness	Thomas Nagel + Louise Antony III + Amy Kind + Caspar Hare	Discussion #6 by Oct 5

	7	Oct 10 - Oct 14	Self I: Ego or Bundle?	Susan Blackmore Ch. 7 (excerpt) + Derek Parfit (excerpt)	Discussion #7 by Oct 12
	8	Oct 17 - Oct 21	Self II: Self or No Self?	Monima Chadha + Alison Gopnik + John Doris (excerpt)	Discussion #8 by Oct 19 + Writing assignment #3 by Oct 21
	9	Oct 24 - Oct 28	Evolution of The Mind	Suilin Lavelle & Kenny Smith + Bertran Malle + Laurie Santos	Discussion #9 by Oct 26 + Quiz #2 by Oct 31
3	10	Oct 31 - Nov 4	What things have minds? I: Non-Human Animal Minds + Plant Minds	Alison Gopnik + Kristin Andrews + Stefano Mancuso (video) + Saray Ayala-López (blog post)	Discussion #10 by Nov 2 + Writing assignment #4 by Nov 4
	11	Nov 7 - 11 (Nov 11 Vetera ns day- campu s closed)	What things have minds? II: Machine minds	David Chalmers (excerpt) + Susan Schneider (Ch. 5 & 6) + Susan Schneider (talk) + Stanislas Dehaene, Hakwan Lau & Sid Kouider	Discussion #11 by Nov 19
	12	Nov 14- Nov 18	What things have minds? III: Consciousness, AI and Aliens	Michael Graziano + Susan Schneider + Eric Schwitzgebel	Discussion #12 by Nov 16 + Quiz #3 by Nov 21
	13	Nov 21- Nov 25 (Nov 24-25 is Thanks giving)	The ethics of what is inside the mind I: The ethics of belief	Tommy Shelby + William Clifford + Francisco Mejía Uribe + Rima Basu (blog post)	Discussion #13 by Nov 23 + Handout by Nov 28

4	14	Nov 28 - Dec 2	The ethics of what is inside the mind II: Implicit bias and the privacy of my own mind	Jules Holroyd + Frédérique De Vignemont	Discussion #14 by Nov 30 + Writing assignment #5 by Dec 2
	15	Dec 5 - Dec 9	The ethics of what is inside the mind III: Delusions	Lisa Bortolotti & Kengo Miyazono + John Campbell (podcast)	Analysis paper due on Dec 6 + Discussion #15 by Dec 7 + Quiz #4 + Extra credit opportunity by Dec 9