

COURSE OUTLINE

(1) GENERAL

UNIVERSITY / Department	NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS / Department of History and Philosophy of Science		
STUDY LEVEL	Postgraduate		
COURSE CODE		SEMESTER OF STUDY	SPRING
COURSE TITLE	Philosophy of Mind & Language		
INSTRUCTOR(S)	Eleni Manolakaki (HPS/Athens) and Orly Shenker (HUJ/Jerusalem)		
TEACHING ACTIVITIES	TEACHING HOURS PER WEEK	ECTS	
Lectures	3	10	
COURSE TYPE	specialization, skills development		
PREREQUISITE COURSES	–		
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION and EXAMINATIONS	English		
COURSE OFFERED TO ERASMUS STUDENTS	YES		
COURSE WEBSITE (URL)	https://eclass.uoa.gr/courses/PHS588/		

(2) LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will have good knowledge of important concepts, arguments and theories in contemporary philosophy of Language and Mind• Will be in a position to continue with independent research in those fields.
General Skills
Critical Thinking Independent work Team work Work in an international environment Work in an interdisciplinary environment Generating new research ideas

(3) COURSE CONTENT

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND AND LANGUAGE General Description: The course introduces students to the core topics of Philosophy of Language and Mind within the

tradition of Analytic Philosophy. Philosophy of Language and Mind are two central fields in Analytic Philosophy with interconnections to other fields of Philosophy like Epistemology, Ethics, Philosophy of Science etc. The course introduces students to the most intriguing questions in those fields and familiarizes them with concepts, arguments, theses and theories that have been in play in the 20th Century and Contemporary Philosophy of Language and Mind: How is it that certain noises or marks that people make -mere physical entities in the world- can be *about* something else? How does language "hook onto" the world? What is the nature of meaning? Is it possible to have a theory of meaning? How is thought connected to reality? What is thinking and what makes a state of some entity specifically a *mental* state, as opposed to a physical one? What is the relation between the mental and the physical? How is it that a mental state can be about something else and what is the nature of mental content? What is the nature of a conscious state? The course will introduce students to the most prominent conceptual tools and theories that aim to answer the above questions.

Course Requirements:

- Two-page outlines of the basic structure of the content of each meeting that will be due every week following each class session.
- A 15-page final paper is due by the end of the semester.

Weekly Schedule:

WEEK 1: Introduction

In the first meeting we will introduce the general questions with which we will be engaged in the course. These are: what is it for linguistic items to have meaning? What is the nature of meaning? How does language is about the world? How do linguistic expressions refer? What are the problems and difficulties in an attempt to build a general theory of meaning? We will also discuss the main questions from the Philosophy of Mind focusing on the relation between mind and body, the nature of mental content and the nature of conscious experience: How can the mental be characterized? How does the mental relate to the physical?

Reading:

Michael Devitt and Richard Hanley (eds). *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language*. Blackwell 2006, Part 1: Foundational Issues
Jaegwon Kim, Philosophy of Mind

WEEK 2: Frege's Philosophy of Language

We present Frege's distinction between complete and incomplete symbols, Frege's puzzle, the distinction between sense and reference of names and sentences, issues for the possibility of semantics for oblique contexts.

Reading:

Gottlob Frege: "Sense and Reference"
Richard G. Heck and Robert May: "Frege's Contribution to Philosophy of Language"

WEEK 3: Definite Descriptions and Proper Names

Russell's theory of definite descriptions and Strawson's and Donnellan's critique. The descriptive theory of names and Kripke's critique. Causal theories of names and their extension to other kind of terms. Semantic internalism and semantic externalism.

Reading:

Bertrand Russell: 'On Denoting'
Saul Kripke: Naming and Necessity
Hilary Putnam: 'Meaning and Reference'

Gregory McCulloch: The Game of the Name

WEEK 4: Truth-conditional semantics

The idea that the meaning of the expressions of a certain Language could be specified via a theory that in a systematic way delivers the truth-conditions of all sentences of that Language is central in truth-conditional semantics. We will discuss the details of the theory and the difficulties it faces.

Reading

Donald Davidson: "Truth and Meaning"

Ernie Lepore and Kirk Ludwig: "Truth-theoretic Semantics"

WEEK 5: Possible-world semantics

We will discuss the inadequacies of extensional theories of meaning and the analysis of meaning (intension) on the basis of possible worlds. We will explain how modal operators (necessarily and possibly) can be treated at the semantic level as quantifiers. And we will present General Semantics as introduced by David Lewis.

Reading:

David Lewis, "General Semantics"

WEEK 6: Current issues in Philosophy of Language

In the last meeting on Philosophy of Language we will discuss the criticism that has recently been raised to the classical theories of propositions [as intensions or as sets of possible worlds]. We will present some contemporary accounts of propositions that attempt to answer the question of what propositions are: act-theoretic accounts of propositions, the view that propositions are certain sorts of facts and the view that propositions are properties.

Reading:

Jeffrey King, Scott Soames, Jeff Speaks: New Thinking about Propositions

WEEK 7: What is the Mind-Body Problem? Data and Explanation

What is the Mind-Body problem? What are the facts that a theory of mind is expected to explain? What kind of facts are they, and in particular, are they empirical? What kind of explanation is to be expected for these facts, and what are the main kinds of explanations offered in the philosophical tradition, in contemporary philosophy, and in contemporary science?

Some headlines:

Experiments with animals: Life vs. Mind.

Experiments with people in coma: Behaviour vs. Mind. ~~Behaviourism~~. Other minds, the argument by analogy, and "theory of mind" in psychology.

Introspection: from Descartes Cogito to contemporary psychology.

Reading for Week 7:

B. Russell (1948) Analogy

P. Churchland (1988) Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitude (elective)

D. Dennett (1988§) Quining Qualia (elective)

D. Dennett Time and the Observer (part)

R. Descartes Meditations 1 and 2

J. Kim: Philosophy of Mind (part)

K. Farkas (2008) The Subject's Point of View (part)

WEEK 8: Materialism as an identity theory

What is the materialist theory of mind? What is the relation of “identity” between mind and body according to materialism? What is the theory of matter in materialism, in particular: which physics is it (Hempel’s Dilemma)? Does the empirical evidence support materialism?

Reading for Week 8:

- A. Ney (2008) Physicalism as an Attitude
- D. Papineau (2000) The Rise of Physicalism
- H. Putnam (1967) The Nature of Mental States (part)
- U. Place (1956) Is Consciousness a Brain State? (elective)
- J. Smart (1959) Sensations and Brain Processes (part)
- M. Hemmo and O. Shenker (2022) Flat Physicalism (elective)
- S. Kripke (1980) Naming and Necessity (already read in Week 4)

WEEK 9+10: Computationalism

Part 1: Can computers think?

Part 2: Is our cognition a computation implemented by the hardware of our brain? The research program of Cognitive Science and of Computational Neuroscience. Functionalism – computational and causal. The central assumption of Functionalism: Multiple Realisations and Supervenience. Are the special sciences independent?

Part 3: If our brain is the hardware, what determines the software it implements? The Many Minds problem: the indeterminacy of computations and the triviality of computations.

Reading for Weeks 9+10:

- A. Turing (1950) Computing Machinery and Intelligence
- O. Shagrir (2012) Can a Brain Possess Two Minds?
- O. Shagrir (2022) The Nature of Physical Computation (part)
- N. Chomsky (1959) A Review of B. F. Skinner’s Verbal Behaviour (elective)
- H. Putnam (1967) Psychological Predicates
- H. Putnam (1988) Representation and Reality, appendix
- J. Fodor (1974) Special Sciences or the Disunity of Science as a Working Hypothesis
- D. Davidson (1970) Mental Events
- A. Maimon and M. Hemmo (2022) Does Neuroplasticity Support the Hypothesis of Multiple Realizability?
- T. Polger and L. Shapiro (2016) The Multiple Realization Book (part)
- D. Lewis (1966) An Argument for the Identity Theory
- J. Kim (2012) The Very Idea of Token Physicalism

WEEK 11+12: Contemporary “Naturalistic” (non-mystical, non-theological) Arguments for Dualism

Can consciousness be understood, described, predicted by science? Is mind without brain conceivable? Is brain without a mind (a Philosophical Zombie) conceivable? Are they possible? What is The Hard Problem of consciousness?

Reading for weeks 11+12:

- R. Descartes Meditations 1 and 2 (again)
- S. Kripke (1980) Naming and Necessity (part, the argument for dualism)
- D. Chalmers (1995) Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness

J. Levine (1983) The Explanatory Gap
 T. Nagel (1974) What is it like to be a Bat?
 C. McGinn The Problem of Consciousness
 F. Jackson (1986) What Mary didn't know

Week 13: Mind, Language, and freedom

How can physics account for intention and for intentionality? Why do we ascribe them to others?
 How can a brain have mental content? Can computers have mental content? Can we be living in the Matrix? Are we free to act? Are we free to decide? Are we free to want?

Reading for Week 13:

D. Papineau (2021) The Metaphysics of Sensory Conscious Experience (part)
 H. Putnam (1981) Brains in a Vat
 J. Searle (1980) Minds, Brains and Science (part)
 D. Dennett (1971) Intentional Systems
 B. Libet (1999) Do We Have Free Will?
 D. Davidson (1970) Mental States (part, again)

Final Paper due: max. 15 pages

(4) TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS – ASSESSMENT

TEACHING FORMAT	Class discussion.	
USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES	Use of E-class online platform.	
TEACHING STRUCTURE	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Semester Workload</i>
	Lectures, Seminars	39
	Presentation preparation	21
	Independent study	120
	Project (paper preparation and submission)	120
	Total (30 hours of work per credit unit)	300
STUDENT EVALUATION	1. Class participation (20%) 2. Weekly outlines (20%) 3. Final Paper (50%) 4. Oral participation to the class (10%)	

(5) RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

See e-class for details