

**PHILOSOPHY 333**  
**PHILOSOPHY OF MIND: THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM**  
University of Chicago, Fall 2001

Course Instructor: Jason Bridges  
Office hours: Thursday 3-5pm, Harper Memorial E589

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**DESCRIPTION**

A survey of contemporary answers to the constellation of questions in the philosophy of mind that constitute 'the mind-body problem'. What is the relation between the mind and the brain? What is the relation between the mind and behavior? Can talk about mental phenomena be reduced to talk about purely physical happenings? To what extent does the computer provide a useful analogy for thinking about mental processes? Are the contents of our thoughts and experiences determined just by what is going on inside us or by the physical and social environment as well? Are there reasons for doubting the commonsense belief that our thoughts and intentions can causally influence events in the physical world? What is the role of the concept of rationality in shaping our understanding of mental life? Readings will draw on an array of contemporary sources including: Burge, Davidson, Dennett, Evans, Kripke, Kim, McDowell, Nagel and Putnam.

*Prerequisites:* at least one previous course in philosophy. If you do not meet this requirement and still wish to take the course, you must get permission from the course instructor.

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**READINGS**

There is one required text for the course, available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore (in the basement of 5757 University Ave.):

Rosenthal (ed.), *The Nature of Mind* (Oxford University Press)

The remaining course readings are collected in a reading packet, available for purchase at the Humanities Copy Center (on the first floor of Classics).

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

First paper:	5 pages	due October 23 <sup>rd</sup> in class	worth 30% of course grade
Second paper:	5 pages	due November 20 <sup>th</sup> in class	worth 30%
Final paper:	7-10 pages	due December 5 <sup>th</sup> , location TBA	worth 40%

There is no final exam.

Paper topics will be distributed roughly two weeks before the due dates.  
Late papers will be docked a grade per day (e.g., B+ to B) unless you have received approval ahead of time from one of the course instructors. No papers will be accepted after December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS**  
(Dates are tentative.)

All readings in the Rosenthal volume are indicated by the abbreviation “ROS”. All readings not so indicated are in the reading packet.

**Week 1**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Tu 9/25	Course overview	
Th 9/27	Setting the stage: the ‘mind-body problem’	McGinn, from <i>The Mysterious Flame</i>

**Part I: Dualism**

**Week 2**

Tu 10/2	Descartes on the self	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> II and VI and fourth replies (ROS pp. 21-29)
Th 10/4	Introspection and the self, part one	Wittgenstein, from <i>The Blue Book</i> Strawson, from <i>The Bounds of Sense</i> Nagel, from <i>The View from Nowhere</i>

**Week 3**

Tu 10/9	Introspection and the self, part two	
Th 10/11	Introspection and the self, part three	Evans, from <i>The Varieties of Reference</i>

**Part II: Materialism**

**Week 4:**

Tu 10/16	Naturalism	
Th 10/18	Behaviorism	Putnam, “Brains and Behavior” (ROS chap. 16)

**Week 5:**

Tu 10/23	The identity theory	Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes” (ROS chap. 17)
Th 10/25	Functionalism	Putnam, “The Nature of Mental States” (ROS chap. 21)

**Week 6:**

Tu 10/30	Functionalism and normativity	Kripke, from <i>Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language</i> Horwich, from <i>Meaning</i>
Th: 11/1	The anomalousness of the mental	Davidson, “Philosophy as Psychology”

**Week 7:**

Tu 11/6	Explanation and causation, part one	Kim, "Mechanism, Purpose and Explanatory Exclusion"
Th 11/8	Explanation and causation, part two	

**Week 8:**

Tu 11/13	Cognitive science and mental life, part one	Dennett, "Towards a Cognitive Theory of Consciousness"
Th 11/15	Cognitive science and mental life, part two	McDowell, "The Content of Perceptual Experience"

**Part III: Externalism****Week 9:**

Tu 11/20	Arguments for externalism	Putnam, from "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" Burge, "Individualism and the Mental" (ROS chap. 57, pp. 536-559 only)
Th 11/22	THANKSGIVING	

**Week 10:**

Tu 11/27	Externalism and mental causation	Loar, "Social Content and Psychological Content" (ROS chap. 58)
Th 11/29	Externalism and the mind-body problem	McDowell, "Putnam on Mind and Meaning"