

# PHIL7 – INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Summer Session A 2023

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<b>Lectures:</b>	MWF 10-11:20	<b>OH:</b>	TBD

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## Course Description:

Technological advancements of the past century have expanded the study of mind from its largely theoretical origins into rigorous experimental practice. Over the same period, we've developed a pervasive relationship with computers (in the broad sense) which is growing and deepening day-by-day. In this course we'll set up some of the significant contemporary problems we face in understanding our own minds, and examine a picture of what our science is able to tell us at present. We'll also consider the emerging questions and dilemmas that confront us from the realm of computers, machines, and artificial intelligence. These two domains intersect when we look to a future of technology being used to support and augment our biological minds and bodies, and this intersection presents its own issues as well.

## Lectures:

Lectures will be held online via Zoom. Slides and recordings will be uploaded after each lecture. Attendance is not required and will not be recorded—however, the lectures will be a chance for you to raise questions and engage in discussion, which is important to developing an understanding of the material. So attendance is *strongly encouraged*, and on average your performance will correlate with whether you attend the lectures when able.

## Zoom Policy:

During live lectures you're welcome to either participate via the text chat, or raise your hand if you'd like to say or ask anything. You aren't required to keep your cameras on, though you're welcome and encouraged to!

## Office Hours:

I'll be holding office hours through Zoom, and a unique link for each session will be posted to the course website. You can attend the office hours using voice or text chat as you prefer, and I'll respond likewise. Cameras are optional. If the scheduled office hours don't work for you, I'm happy to set up appointments at a different time.

## Assignments & Grading Scheme:

- Weekly short (250 word) reflections – 15% each, lowest dropped = 75% total

Each week you may choose one or multiple of the readings to write a short reflection about. These will be due by 11:59PM PST every Friday, to be submitted via CCLE. *Short papers will be graded on a simple A, B, C, F (no submission) scale, based on your comprehension of, and engagement with, the material you've chosen to discuss.* A good reflection will not merely summarize the readings, but raise relevant questions, suggest meaningful contributions, and/or pose thoughtful criticism.

- Final Paper (1500 words) submitted via Turnitin by 11:59PM August 7th – 25%

*Paper topics covering the range of the course will be provided, but you may also prepare a personalized topic for approval by the end of Week 5.*

**Late Assignments:**

Late assignments will incur a penalty of one letter grade for each day they are late – so if an assignment is submitted the afternoon after it's due, and it's nominally graded an A, the recorded grade will be a B. Note that the weekly reflections in particular can only be submitted during their respective weeks. In other words, unless there are extenuating circumstances, the reflection for one week can't be submitted once the next week has begun.

**Feedback:**

I can give feedback on *outlines* or *excerpts* for your final paper if you send these at least three days before it's due.

**Extensions:**

If you need an extension on any of the assignments for this course, please request them via email at least 24 hours in advance. I'm willing to grant extensions and I will not require that you share details about why the extension is needed. In case of emergencies, of course, the 24 hour policy is waived.

**Emails:**

Feel free to contact me via email, but keep in mind that it might be a day before I'm able to respond. To help me get to your emails more efficiently, please include the course code ("PHIL 7") in the subject header. If it's been much more than 24 hours, feel free to send me a follow-up reminder.

**Reading Schedule:**

1. There's something distinct and mysterious about our minds.

- M:** – *The Pink Guide to Philosophy*, at least to the end of "how to read"
- *The Floating Man* (Ibn Ali Sina)
- *Meditations on First Philosophy* (René Descartes) 2<sup>nd</sup> Meditation
- *Just the Arguments §86: Chalmers' Zombie Argument* (Amy Kind 2011)
- W:** – *What Is It Like To Be a Bat* (Thomas Nagel 1974)
- *Epiphenomenal Qualia* (Frank Jackson 1982)
- F:** – *Matter and Consciousness* (Paul M. Churchland 2013), Ch. 1 & 2 (pp. 1-35)

2. But the mystery of the mind comes in degrees.

- M:** – *Consciousness and its Place in Nature* (David Chalmers 2003), §5.2 - §5.3.4
- *The Hornswoggle Problem* (Patricia Churchland 1996)
- W:** – *The Biological Mind* Ch. 5 (Justin Garson 2015)
- F:** – *The Biological Mind* Ch. 7 (Justin Garson 2015)

3. What if we could make one?

- M:** – *If You Can't Make One* (Fred Dretske 1994)
- *The Imitation Game* (Alan Turing 1950) §1-3, §6-7
- W:** – *Minds, Brains, and Programs* (John R. Searle 1980) up to (not including) commentary
- F:** – (still) *Minds, Brains, and Programs* (John R. Searle 1980) up to (not including) commentary

4. But *can* we make one?

- M:** – *Can Machines Think?* (Daniel Dennett 2002) Ch. 3 in Foundations of Cog Sci
- W:** – *Rebooting AI* Ch. 1 (Ernest Davis, Gary Marcus 2019)  
 – *Rebooting AI* Ch. 2 (Ernest Davis, Gary Marcus 2019)
- F:** – *Rebooting AI* Ch. 3 (Ernest Davis, Gary Marcus 2019)  
 – *Climbing towards NLU* (Emily Bender & Alexander Koller 2020)  
 – **Optional:** 3Blue1Brown video on neural networks: [<https://youtu.be/aircAruvnKk>]  
 also available in text [[www.3blue1brown.com/lessons/neural-networks](http://www.3blue1brown.com/lessons/neural-networks)]

## 5. How about modifying our own minds?

- M:** – *Superintelligence: The Idea that Eats Smart People* (Maciej Cegłowski 2016)
- W:** – *On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots* (Emily Bender, Timnit Gebru, et al. 2021)  
 – *Where Am I?* (Daniel Dennett 1981) Ch. 2 in Foundations of Cog Sci
- F:** – *Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons* (Derek Parfit 1984)  
 – *The Extended Mind* (Andy Clark, David Chalmers 1998)

## 6. Wrapping Up

- M:** – *Uploading, a Philosophical Analysis* (David Chalmers 2014)  
 – *If You Upload, Will You Survive?* (Joseph Corabi, Susan Schneider 2014)  
 (the above are two chapters of the same book)

**W:** TBD

**F:** **No Readings** (review/office hours for final paper)

*Readings will be posted to the respective week of the class CCLE.*

**Academic Conduct:**

Everybody is expected to understand and adhere to the UCLA guidelines for academic honesty. Academic misconduct is often not so overt as cheating, and includes plagiarism and fabrication. If you're ever unsure whether something might be academic misconduct, it's better to be safe: contact me for advice. Instances of academic misconduct will **always** be reported.

**On Respect:**

I'm committed to promoting, respecting, and protecting diversity in this classroom. To that effect, I will be doing my best to keep our discussions free of discrimination. This is a philosophy class, so it's inevitable that contentious, controversial arguments will be made – this doesn't mean that anything is fair game. If at any point you feel that harassment or discrimination has occurred in the course of the class, please raise the issue either with me or the UCLA Discrimination Prevention Office.

**Resources:**

- UCLA's guidelines for academic integrity:  
<https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/portals/16/documents/studentguide.pdf>
- UCLA Writing Programs (great for getting help with writing):  
<http://www.wp.ucla.edu/>
- The Center for Accessible Education (please contact me if you need any accommodations):  
<http://www.cae.ucla.edu/>