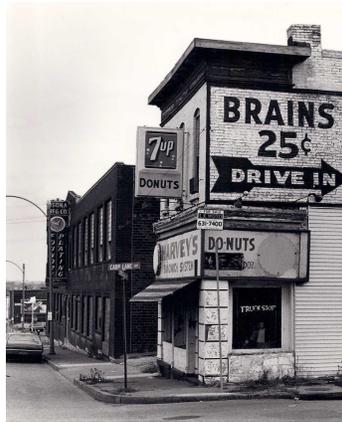


PHIL 352: Philosophy of Psychology

RICE UNIVERSITY, FALL 2015 — COURSE SYLLABUS



Time & Location:	Tue & Thu, 2:30-3:45pm, SEW 307
Instructor:	Alex Morgan
Contact:	alex.morgan@rice.edu
Office Hours:	Tue & Thu, 4:30-5:30pm, or by appt.
Office Location:	Humanities 214

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We have an intuitive picture of ourselves “from the inside”, as conscious, rational beings, capable of acting freely on the basis of our reasons. However, the natural sciences seem to provide a picture of a mechanistic world devoid of value, freedom or meaning. The broad goal of this course is to reconcile these two pictures. A prominent strategy for reconciling these pictures in philosophy is to hold that there is a psychological ‘level of explanation’ that is independent of underlying details about how the brain works. However, this view is becoming increasingly unstable as we learn more and more about the specific neural mechanisms underlying various psychological processes. Our specific goal in this course will thus be to investigate whether neuroscience can *explain* psychological processes without thereby ‘reducing’ or ‘eliminating’ them. In pursuing this goal, we will address questions such as: Can the mind be understood from a scientific perspective? If so, are psychological explanations similar to, or different from, explanations in the physical sciences? In particular, are there any *laws* of psychology? Are mental states nothing ‘over and above’ the chemical or electrical activity of the brain? In addressing these questions, we will draw from classic literature in 20th century philosophy of mind, some contemporary literature in the philosophy of science, as well as a smattering of empirical literature in cognitive neuroscience.

PREREQUISITES

There are no formal prerequisites for this course, but the course will be quite challenging if you've never taken any philosophy before. If you have any concerns about your preparation for the course, please speak with me.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be made available electronically via the OWL-Space site for the course. Assigned readings for each week are listed under the schedule at the end of this syllabus. The OWL-Space site contains a variety of important resources, such as a discussion board, lecture slides, and an up-to-date schedule of readings, and will function as a central hub for information about the course. It is thus important that you familiarize yourself with the site as soon as possible, and ensure that the email account associated with your OWL-Space account is one that you check regularly.

ADVICE & EXPECTATIONS

Discussion

The best way to learn philosophy is to *do* philosophy, and a central aspect of doing philosophy is engaging in reasoned discussion. Discussion is thus a central focus of this course, and a significant portion of your grade for the course will depend on your active participation in discussions, both in class and on the OWL-Space discussion board (see the section on grading below for details). I will assume that when you come to class you will have read the assigned material, and will be prepared to discuss it — don't be surprised if I call on you for your thoughts about the material. If you are uncomfortable about speaking up in class, please keep in mind that you *can* contribute to discussions online. However, I do encourage you to push yourself and speak up; getting used to public speaking will help you in almost all of your future endeavors. I will strive to ensure that the classroom is a relaxed, friendly environment conducive to free, exploratory discussion, but I will need you to do your part, too: Please be respectful of others; raise your hand and wait your turn to speak; don't monopolize discussions; and (this should go without saying) *never* be rude or insulting.

Reading

Many of the readings for this course are challenging, but don't feel that you have to understand every nuance of every reading. It is more important that you have a basic grasp of the overall point of a reading than to understand any particular detail. Accordingly, I suggest that you first quickly skim each reading with the following questions in mind: What is the main problem or topic under

consideration? What solutions or positions is the author advocating? When you have a clearer sense of what the reading is all about, read it again more carefully to fill in any gaps in your understanding. If you're still puzzled or uncertain about anything, write down your questions and either bring them to class or raise them on the discussion board.

GRADING

Term Paper ($40\% + 10\% + 20\% = 70\%$)

The main component of your grade will be a ~10 page argumentative paper. This will go through a process of peer review and revision. The first step is for you to write a ~8 page draft of your paper, which will be due on **October 30th**. You will then write two 1-page reviews of your classmates' papers, and will receive two peer reviews of your own paper. You will use the reviews that you receive to develop your paper further, and submit your final ~10 page paper on the last day of class, **December 4th**. Paper topics and further instructions will be made available in a separate handout.

Reading Responses ($2\% \times 10 = 20\%$)

For ten of the fifteen weeks of the term, you will be required to submit a short response to *one* of the assigned readings for that week. This response should be roughly one paragraph to half-a-page in length, and should address the following questions: What is one of the central claims the author is making in this text? What are the central reasons the author provides in support of this claim? What did you find puzzling or questionable about this claim or the reasons given in support of it? To receive credit for your response, you must submit it at least two hours before the session in which we will discuss the reading you are responding to. Please submit your response via the 'Assignments' section on OWL-Space. Note that you may also receive up to 5% extra credit by writing a response to a reading from one of the other five weeks (these will be graded at 1% each, and may be submitted any time before the end of semester).

Attendance and Participation (10%)

As mentioned, you will be graded on your active participation in discussion, both in class and on the discussion board. Active participation is hard to quantify. It's not about the *quantity* of your contributions to discussion; rambling on in class or posting nonsense to the discussion board will not gain you any credit. But it's not exactly about *quality* either; if participants only spoke up when they were sure they had something profound to say, neither they nor the rest of the class would benefit much from discussion. In fact, one of the best ways you can contribute to discussion is to express your confusion or puzzlement about the ideas we're discussing. Those ideas *are* genuinely puzzling. Basically, discussion in this class is about engaging in a communal activity of trying to clarify,

understand and critically evaluate those ideas. You will be evaluated on the extent to which you contribute to that activity. That will require intellectual honesty, humility and respect; but it can also be extremely rewarding.

Your total % grade will be assigned a letter grade on the basis of the following scale (the number indicates the upper threshold for the corresponding letter grade; e.g. 90.5% would yield an A):

A+	A	A–	B+	B	B–	C+	C	C–	D+	D	D–	F
100	95	90	86	82	78	74	70	66	62	58	54	50

COURSE POLICIES & PENALTIES

Attendance

Because of the importance of discussion in this class, attendance is mandatory, and roll will be called. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Every unexcused absence thereafter will result in a deduction of 5% from your grade. You will count as absent if you are not present during roll-call (roughly within 5 minutes of the beginning of class).

Communication & Electronic Devices

Communicating with anyone outside of the classroom during class hours is not allowed, except in the case of emergencies. Please turn your phones off, or put them on silent, before class begins. Laptops, tablets and other electronic devices are to be used for taking notes only. Each violation of these rules will result in a deduction of 5% from your grade. If you email me about class-related matters, please make sure to add '352' in the subject-line.

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability that may affect your academic performance, you should make sure that the documentation is on file with Disability Support Services (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu) to determine the accommodations you need, and meet with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Academic Integrity

I trust you to avoid all forms of dishonest academic conduct in this course, such as plagiarism or

cheating. Academic dishonesty is not only a violation of my trust, it is a serious academic offense, and will be treated as such. If I suspect that you have engaged in any violations of academic integrity, I will report you to the Rice Honor Council, which could have serious repercussions both for your course grade and for your future at Rice. I recognize that what constitutes academic dishonesty is sometimes a subtle issue, so if you have any uncertainty about whether your actions might count as a violation of academic integrity, I encourage you to either contact me or consult the Rice honor system handbook (<http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/>).

SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change over the course of the semester, depending on the pace at which we move through the material and the interests of course participants. Any changes will be announced via the OWL-Space site.

WEEK 1: FOUNDATIONS IN PHILOSOPHY OF MIND & SCIENCE

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| <i>Aug. 25</i> | Flanagan, O. (1991). Minds and Bodies: René Descartes and the Possibility of a Science of the Mind. In 'The Science of the Mind', Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (pp.1-22).

<i>OPTIONAL</i> : Godfrey-Smith, P. (2009). Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (pp.13-18). |
| <i>Aug. 27</i> | Churchland, P. (2013). Matter and Consciousness (3ed). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (pp.87-102).

Churchland, P. (1981). Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes, The Journal of Philosophy, 78(2): 67-90.

<i>OPTIONAL</i> : Churchland, P. (2013). Matter and Consciousness (3ed). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (Ch.2). |

WEEK 2: MULTIPLE REALIZABILITY & ANTI-REDUCTIONISM

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| <i>Sep. 1</i> | Block, N. and Fodor, J. (1972). What Psychological States Are Not, Philosophical Review, 81(2): 159-181.

<i>OPTIONAL</i> : Putnam, H. (1967 [1975]). The Nature of Mental States. In 'Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2: Mind, Language and Reality'. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press (pp.429-440). |
| <i>Sep. 3</i> | Fodor, J. (1974). Special Sciences (or: The Disunity of Science as a Working Hypothesis), Synthese, 28: 97-115

<i>OPTIONAL</i> : Oppenheim, P. and Putnam, H. (1958). The Unity of Science as a Working Hypothesis. In 'Concepts, Theories, and the Mind-Body Problem', ed. H. Feigl et al. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press (pp. 3-36). |

WEEK 3: SOME DISSENTING VIEWS

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| <i>Sep. 8</i> | Kim, J. (1992). Multiple Realization and the Metaphysics of Reduction, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 52(1): 1-26. |
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Sep. 10 | Shapiro, L. (2000). Multiple Realizations, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 97(12): 635-654.

WEEK 4: COMPUTATIONAL-FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATION: THE MIND AS SOFTWARE

Sep. 15 | Fodor, J. (1968). The Appeal to Tacit Knowledge in Psychological Explanation, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 65(20): 627-640.
Cummins, R. (1977). Programs in the Explanation of Behavior, *Philosophy of Science*, 44(2): 269-287.

WEEK 4: COMPUTATIONAL-FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATION: THE MIND AS SOFTWARE (*CONT.*)

Sep. 17 | Marr, D. (1982). *Vision*. W. H. Freeman, San Francisco, CA (Ch.1).
Dennett, D. (1978). Artificial Intelligence as Philosophy and as Psychology. In 'Brainstorms', Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (pp. 109-126).

WEEK 5: COMPUTATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND AUTONOMY: A CASE-STUDY

Sep. 22 | Pylyshyn, Z. (1984). *Computation and Cognition*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (Ch.2).
OPTIONAL: Newell, A. (1982). The Knowledge Level, *Artificial Intelligence*, 18(1): 87-127.
Sep. 24 | Fodor, J. and Pylyshyn, Z. (1988). Connectionism and Cognitive Architecture: A Critical Analysis, *Cognition*, 28: 3-71.
OPTIONAL: Hinton, G. (1992). How Neural Networks Learn from Experience, *Scientific American*, 267(3): 145-151.

WEEK 6: PERSONAL VS. SUBPERSONAL EXPLANATION

Sep. 29 | Dennett, D. (1969) *Content and Consciousness*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul (pp.90-96).
Hornsby, J. (2000). Personal and Sub-Personal: A Defence of Dennett's Early Distinction, *Philosophical Explorations*, 3(1): 6-24.
Oct. 1 | Davies, M. (2000). Interaction without Reduction: The Relationship between Personal and Sub-Personal Levels of Description, *Mind & Society*, 1(2): 87-105.
OPTIONAL: Drayson, Z. (2014). The Personal/Subpersonal Distinction, *Philosophy Compass*, 9(5): 338-346.

WEEK 7: NEW DIRECTIONS IN PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE: EXPLANATION, THEORIES, AND MODELS

Oct. 6 | Godfrey-Smith, P. (2009). *Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (Ch.13).
OPTIONAL: Godfrey-Smith, P. (2009). *Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (Ch.2)

- Oct. 8 Giere, R. (1999). Using Models to Represent Reality. In 'Model-Based Reasoning in Scientific Discovery', ed. L. Magnani, N. Nersessian, and P. Thagard. Springer (pp. 41-57).
- OPTIONAL*: Downes, S. (1992). The Importance of Models in Theorizing: A Deflationary Semantic View, Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association: 142-153.

WEEK 8: LAWS IN THE 'SPECIAL SCIENCES'

- Oct. 13 *MID-TERM RECESS*
- Oct. 15 Woodward, J. (2001). Law and Explanation in Biology: Invariance is the Kind of Stability that Matters, *Philosophy of Science*, 68(1): 1-20.
- Cummins, R. (2000). 'How Does it Work?' Versus 'What Are the Laws?': Two Conceptions of Psychological Explanation. In 'Explanation and Cognition', ed. F. Keil and R. Wilson. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (117-144).

WEEK 9: THE 'NEW MECHANISTIC PHILOSOPHY' & NEURAL MECHANISMS

- Oct. 20 Bechtel, W. and Abrahamsen, A. (2005). Explanation: A Mechanist Alternative, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 36(2): 421-441.
- OPTIONAL*: Machamer, P. et al. (2000). Thinking about Mechanisms, *Philosophy of Science*, 67(1): 1-25.
- Oct. 22 Craver, C. (2005). Beyond Reduction: Mechanisms, Multifield Integration and the Unity of Neuroscience, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 36(2): 373-395.
- OPTIONAL*: Craver, C. (2009). Levels of Mechanisms: A Field Guide to the Hierarchical Structure of the World. In 'The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Psychology', ed. J. Symons and P. Calvo. New York, NY: Routledge (pp. 387-399).

WEEK 10: MECHANISTIC EXPLANATION IN PSYCHOLOGY

- Oct. 27 Bechtel, W. (2007). Reducing Psychology While Maintaining Its Autonomy via Mechanistic Explanation. In 'The Matter of the Mind: Philosophical Essays on Psychology, Neuroscience, and Reduction', ed. M. Schouten and D. Jong. Oxford: Blackwell (pp. 172-198).
- Oct. 29 Piccinini, G. and Craver, C. (2011). Integrating Psychology and Neuroscience: Functional Analyses as Mechanism Sketches, *Synthese*, 183(3): 283-311.
- OPTIONAL*: Kaplan, D. (2011). Explanation and Description in Computational Neuroscience, *Synthese*, 183(3): 339-373.

WEEK 11: AGAINST MECHANISTIC EXPLANATION IN PSYCHOLOGY?

- Nov. 3 Weiskopf, D. (2011). Models and Mechanisms in Psychological Explanation, *Synthese*, 183(3): 313-338.
- OPTIONAL*: Barrett, D. (2014). Functional Analysis and Mechanistic Explanation, *Synthese*, 191(12): 2695-2714.

- Nov. 5* | Couch, M. (2011). Mechanisms and Constitutive Relevance, *Synthese*, 183(3): 375-388.
- OPTIONAL:* Fernandez-Duque, D. et al. (2014). Superfluous Neuroscience Information Makes Explanations of Psychological Phenomena More Appealing, *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 27(5): 926-944.

WEEK 12: NEURAL MECHANISMS & MULTIPLE REALIZATION

- Nov. 10* | Aizawa, K. and Gillett, C. (2009). The (Multiple) Realization of Psychological and Other Properties in the Sciences, *Mind & Language*, 24(2): 181-208.
- Sullivan, J. (2008). Memory Consolidation, Multiple Realizations, and Modest Reductions, *Philosophy of Science*, 75(5): 501-513.
- OPTIONAL:* Bechtel, W. and Mundale, J. (1999). Multiple Realizability Revisited: Linking Cognitive and Neural States, *Philosophy of Science*, 66(2): 175-207.
- Nov. 12* | Polger, T. (2010). Mechanisms and Explanatory Realization Relations, *Synthese*, 177(2): 193-212.

WEEK 13: MECHANISMS & NATURAL KINDS

- Nov. 17* | Weiskopf, D. (2011). The Functional Unity of Special Science Kinds, *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 62(2): 233-258.
- Nov. 19* | Buckner, C. (forthcoming). Functional Kinds: A Skeptical Look, *Synthese*.

WEEK 14: MECHANISMS, COMPUTATION & CONTENT

- Nov. 24* | Von Eckardt, B. and Poland, J. (2004). Mechanism and Explanation in Cognitive Neuroscience, *Philosophy of Science*, 71: 972-984.
- Egan, F. (forthcoming). Function-Theoretic Explanation and Neural Mechanisms. In 'Integrating Mind and Brain Science: Mechanistic Perspectives and beyond', ed. D. Kaplan. Oxford University Press.
- Nov. 26* | *THANKSGIVING RECESS*

WEEK 15: PERSONAL VS. SUBPERSONAL EXPLANATION REVISITED

- Dec. 1* | Bennett, M. and Hacker, P. (2003). *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell (Ch.3 excerpt).
- Pöyhönen, S. (2014). Intentional Concepts in Cognitive Neuroscience, *Philosophical Explorations*, 17(1): 93-109.
- Dec. 3* | Colombo, M. (2013). Constitutive Relevance and the Personal/Subpersonal Distinction, *Philosophical Psychology*, 26(4): 547-570.
- Shea, N. (2013). Neural Mechanisms of Decision-Making and the Personal Level. In 'Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychiatry', ed. K. Fulford et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press (pp. 1063-1082).