

Minds, Machines, and Persons

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Lectures and Office Hours

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2–2:50pm (Minor 125)

Office Hours: 3–4pm Thursday (Cocke Hall 102)

- Lecture attendance is required. Recordings will be available on Collab as a study aid.
- *Additional Office Hours (Priority PHIL7575):* 4–5pm Thursday (Cocke Hall 102)

Course Overview

Course Description

This course surveys foundational issues in the philosophy of cognitive science and mind. Part 1 asks the fundamental question, what is a mind? Are minds brains? Computers? Organisms? Do minds extend into the body and environment? We'll approach these questions by considering what it would take to make a machine with a mind (that is, to make genuine artificial intelligence). Part 2 turns to the problem of personal identity over time. Once you were a kid, now you are an adult, and one day you'll grow old. What (if anything) makes you the same person throughout these stages of your life?

Course Objectives

This course will introduce you to foundational topics in the philosophy of cognitive science and mind. If you study philosophy or cognitive science, the background you gain here will be applicable to your future courses. Perhaps more importantly, philosophy helps you develop skills that of use in every course, profession, and everyday life:

- How to read, interpret, and engage with difficult texts (philosophy courses prioritize research papers over textbooks)
- How to extract and engage with another person's argument in writing, conversation, and online while being rigorous yet charitable
- How to generate, develop, and present original ideas
- How to weave together science and the humanities (no prior scientific background is expected; relevant scientific concepts will be explained in lecture)

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Part One: Minds and Machines		
Aug 24	Introduction	No Readings
Aug 26	Introduction to Arguments	No readings
Aug 31	The Turing Test and Behaviorism I	Block, "Psychologism and Behaviorism"
Sep 2	The Turing Test and Behaviorism II	Dennett, "Can Machines Think"
Online Participation Opportunity 1 Sep 3		
Sep 7	Identity Theory and Multiple Realizability	Mindware "Identity Theory" and "Machine Functionalism" 254-257 Bisson, "They're Made of Meat" (short story)
Sep 9	Computer Theory of Mind I	Mindware Chapter 1 "Meat Machines" (stop after 2.1) <i>Mindware</i> Chapter 2 "Symbol Systems" (stop after 2.1)
Sep 14	Computer Theory of Mind II	Continue previous readings
Sep 16	The Chinese Room	Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs" [Optional: <i>Mindware</i> "The Chinese Room" 36-40]
Argument Response Due September 17th!		
Sep 21	Connectionism	Churchland and Churchland, "Could a Machine Think?"
Sep 23	Deep Learning I	Buckner "Deep Learning: A Philosophical Introduction" (Collab)
Sep 28	Deep Learning II	Buckner (Cont.)
Sep 30	The Extended Mind I	<i>Mindware</i> "Chapter 9: Extended Mind" (stop after 9.2 C)
Online Participation Opportunity 2 Sept 31st		
Oct 5	The Extended Mind II	Adams and Aizawa, "Why the Mind Is Still in the Head"
Oct 7	The Intentional Stance I	<i>Mindware</i> "Chapter 3: Patterns, Contents, and Causes"
Oct 12	Reading Day!! No Class!	
Oct 14	The Intentional Stance II	Continue last readings
Oct 19	Enactivism	Thompson "Life and Mind: A Tribute to Francisco Varela" [Optional Clark <i>Mindware</i> Chapter 10 "Enacting Perceptual Experience"]
Oct 21	Overflow Class	
Oct 22	Family Weekend! No Tutorials!! Short Paper 1 Due October 22nd!	

Date	Topic	Readings* and Assignments
Part Two: Personal Identity		
Oct 26	The Memory Theory I	Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity"
Oct 28	The Memory Theory II	Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity" (Cont.)
Nov 2	Election Day! No Class!!	
Nov 4	Brave Officer Problem	Reid, "Of Mr. Locke's Account of Our Personal Identity"
	Online Participation Opportunity 3 Nov 5th	
Nov 9	Brain Bisection	Nagel, "Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness"
Nov 11	Survival and What Matters I	Parfit, "Personal Identity"
Nov 16	Survival and What Matters II	Parfit (Cont.)
Nov 18	Bundle Theory I	Hume, "Our Idea of Identity," "Of Personal Identity," and "Second Thoughts" [Optional Gopnik "How Hume Helped me Solve My Mid-Life Crisis" (Collab)]
	Short Paper 2 Due Nov 19th!	
Oct 23 & Oct 25	Thanksgiving! No Class!!	
Nov 30	Bundle Theory II	Hume (Cont.)
	[Optional Smith "The Negation of Self In Indian Buddhist Philosophy" (Collab)]	
Dec 2	Animalism	Olson's "An Argument for Animalism" (Collab)
Dec 7	Overflow Class	
Dec 11	Final Exam Dec 11 10am-12pm (2hr) Minor 125	

*Unless otherwise noted, readings from Part 2 are in Perry, *Personal Identity*.

Practicalities

We recognize that unexpected circumstances may arise, however, which require accommodations that we do not anticipate. If you are struggling to meet the requirements of the course, please reach out to your TA and professor. We can discuss a plan to accommodate you.

Texts for purchase

Required:

Andy Clark *Mindware*, second edition (with the red cover).
John Perry (Editor) *Personal Identity*, second edition.

These texts are available for purchase at the UVA bookstore. All other readings will be made available on Collab under the “Resources/Readings” tab. Lecture slides will be made available on Collab under the “Resources/Slides” tab.

Evaluation

Grading: We adhere to a blind grading policy. So when you submit your assignments, please include only your student number and section time.

1. Participation: 15%
2. Argument Response (600 words): 15% (September 17)
3. Short Paper 1 (1000–1500 words): 25% (October 22)
4. Short Paper 2 (1000–1500 words): 25% (11:59pm Nov 19th)
5. Final (2 hours): 20% (10am–12:00pm Dec 11)

Your written assignments should be uploaded to Collab by 11:59 EST on the days listed above. Before you write your assignments, I strongly suggest that you consult my brief writing guide (available on blackboard) and Jim Pryor’s longer, but excellent guide *How to Write a Philosophy Paper*: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>.

Participation: Participation is a major component of your grade and what you gain from this class. Philosophy can teach you the art of rational, charitable, communication. But you can learn this art only through practice. For that reason, your TA will grade you on your attendance *and participation* in sections (attendance is insufficient). That said, I recognize that participation marks can disadvantage certain students: for example, introverts and those with anxiety about public speaking. For that reason, your section leader will provide you with diverse opportunities to participate:

1. Breakout Sessions. You will split off into small groups and discuss a provided question or topic. Afterwards, you will discuss this question or topic as a class.
2. Group Discussions. You will have more open ended group discussions.
3. Online Participation Opportunities (Optional). After three sections, we will post questions in Forums in Collab. These questions will follow up on an issue we’ve discussed in class and/or breakout sessions. It is by no means mandatory to participate in this online forum. Rather, view these as an optional opportunity to demonstrate that you’re engaged in the class and develop you communication abilities, in a forum that does not depend upon public speaking.
4. Peer Feedback (Optional). Before submitting any of your papers, you may pair up with another student and provide feedback on each other’s work (you’ll then upload your peer feedback to Collab). This is a great way to improve your grades and learn how to charitably communicate. This counts towards participation.

If you have a legitimate reason to be absent from section, please email your section leader within 24 hours of class so that he can record your attendance. If Covid has made it impossible for you to participate at all (e.g. because you do not have access to internet), let us know and we will make every effort to adjust your requirements.

UVA Collab

The course Collab site should be your primary resource for course business, including readings, announcements, assignments, online exercises, lecture recordings, and the syllabus. To access the website, go to <https://collab.its.virginia.edu>, log in with your UVA computing ID and find PHIL 2500 under “My Courses”.

Assignments will be posted to Collab under the “Assignments” tab. Use that same tab to submit your assignments. Papers must be submitted as either Microsoft Word files or pdfs. I adhere to a blind grading policy. So when you submit your assignments, please include only your student number and section time.

Reading and Writing

Writing: Writing philosophy papers is a skill that takes years of diligent work to develop. But if you make the investment, your ability to write will stay with you throughout your life. Fortunately, many resources are available to help:

1. Start with my handout, “How to Write a Philosophy Paper”, available on Collab under the Resources/Writing tab. Since this handout is intended to help you write full essays (rather than argument responses), you should read it before you write Short Paper 1.
2. Pryor’s excellent (though longer) guide to writing in philosophy is available here: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
3. The UVA Writing Center <https://virginia.mywconline.com/> is a great resource. Dakota Jones, TA for this class, will be working at the writing center this semester. His office hours are Monday 3–5pm and Wednesday 11–1pm. It will be especially helpful to book an appointment with him.
4. I am happy to discuss your plans for the essay in office hours prior to the due date, and to elaborate on my essay feedback in person during office hours. This sort of one-on-one feedback is one of the best ways to improve.

Reading: This course will teach you how to read and engage with difficult texts. Reading these texts will teach you two skills that are crucial both for philosophy and everyday life. First, how to extract the argument from sources that are not pre-digested. Second, how to read short, intricate, passages extremely closely. For those of you who are accustomed to textbook-based courses, these readings will feel long and difficult. However, we will help you with philosophical reading in three ways:

1. Lectures and tutorials will extract material from the readings. We suggest that you read the papers before class, and use our lessons as a way to compare your understanding of

the material to ours. Pay attention to how we interpret the material, since we provide a model of how experts read difficult texts.

2. Your TA will hold a tutorial session on how to read philosophy texts.
3. Your first assignment – the argument response – is designed to teach you how to closely read a passage.
4. During Part 1 of the course, some of the readings are from your textbook *Mindware* and are thus partially pre-digested. Other times, we assign the relevant parts of *Mindware* as an optional complement to the original texts. You can consult the optional textbook readings if you feel stuck on the original texts.

Email Policy

The following guidelines apply to email communication during this course:

- Use zci7c@virginia.edu for all course-related questions
- I will make every effort to reply to legitimate email inquiries within 48 hours during weekdays. **If I have not responded by 48 hours, email again.**
- Before you email, check to ensure that you can't find the answer to your question on the syllabus. Long, substantive questions should also be reserved for class discussions or office hours. As a general rule, you shouldn't email about questions that take more than a couple sentences to ask or answer. If your question is too long, I'll tell you to ask it in office hours or class discussion.
- If you're reading the syllabus closely, good for you! Please send me a picture of a dinosaur (and/or a member of the Toronto Raptors because I'm Canadian).
- In the subject line of each email, include the course identifier and a clear statement of purpose (e.g., PHIL 2500 Question about Term Paper); otherwise, your message may be deleted along with spam.

General Policies

- **Flexible Deadlines Policy** You make take up to three days worth of extensions total, across your three papers, no questions asked. The three days is spread across all your papers, so if you use it all up on your first assignment, this is it. If you take an extension, it is your responsible to mark down how many days you have used on the top of your assignment (it is an honor code violation to lie about this number). Extensions beyond the three days will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances include illness with a medical note, a disability that has been documented with the Student Disability Access Center, or undue hardship determined by a councillor (or if you would prefer, in consultation with me). That said, I've seen students undergo hardship when they could have availed themselves of university services. If personal circumstances are interfering with your performance in this course, talk to someone (e.g. the access center, a councillor, or me).
- **Late Papers** will be marked down at a rate of $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade per day (once your flexible deadlines are used up).

- **Accessibility** It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. I also encourage students with disabilities to work with the Student Disability Access Center to explore a range of options to removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. Please visit their website for information on this process and to apply for services online: sdac.studenthealth.virginia.edu. If you have already been approved for accommodations through SDAC, please send me your accommodation letter and meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together. If you have never received accommodations but are struggling, I feel you and I've been there. Asking for accommodations is intimidating, and it's hard to know from the inside when help is needed. So I say this: please don't suffer in silence. If you're having a hard time, talk to me or the Student Disability Access Center.
- **Mental Health and Counselling** UVA's Center for Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is a valuable resource for students with short-term and chronic mental health issues. CAPS clinicians offers student support groups, short-term counselling, and an after hours crisis hotline, and CAPS provides referrals to assist students in accessing resources in the community when long-term care is needed. Referrals are individualized, and take into account a students' travel situation and insurance. If you are suffering or struggling, you're not alone, and the university is here to help. To schedule an appointment, contact CAPS over the phone (434-243-5150), email (sth-caps@virginia.edu), or in person (Student Health Center, 400 Brandon Avenue) during business hours Monday to Friday 8-4:30pm. If you are experiencing an emergency after hours or on the weekend, please contact the After Hours and Weekend Crisis Assistance: 434-297-4261.
- **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated and is an Honor offense at the University of Virginia. I will report violators to the honor committee, where penalties range from a 0 on the paper to expulsion from the university. For the UVA plagiarism policy go to: <https://honor.virginia.edu/plagiarism-supplement>. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, and also for knowing the particular plagiarism penalties. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) the use of a thinker's ideas or words without proper citation; the purchase of assignments; the use of internet resources without proper citation; and the submission of work written (in whole or in part) by another; and sharing your answers to tests with other students before the tests are completed. The University and I take plagiarism extremely seriously; intellectual integrity is a foundation of our honor system.