PHIL10131: *Metaphysics of Mind*

*2016-17 Course Organizer: Prof Jesper Kallestrup*

**1. Course Aims and Objectives**

This course examines some central questions at the intersection of Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind: questions that concern the fundamental kind of thing that minds are; how to find a place for them in a physical world; and how they can have behavioural effects if they are not themselves fully physical. The first part of the course will survey various historical views of what minds are such as dualism, the mind-body identity theory and functionalism. Secondly, we will then expound physicalism, and examine a causal argument to the effect that mental states must be identical with physical states. In the last part of the course we deal with various conceivability arguments against physicalism such as Chalmers’s zombie argument and Jackson’s knowledge argument.

**2. Seminar Content**

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3. Readings

Recommended textbooks include Danial Stoljar’s *Physicalism*, Routledge 2010 [P], Tom Crane’s *Elements of Mind*, Oxford University Press, 2001 [EOM], and Jaegwon Kim’s *Philosophy of Mind*, Westview Press, 2006 [POM]. Several of the class readings will be taken from *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Mind*, edited by Brian McLaughlin and Jonathan Cohen, Blackwells, 2007 [CDPM]. We will also make extensive use of the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mind*, edited by Ansgar Beckermann, Brian P. McLaughlin and Sven Walter, Oxford University Press 2009 [OHPM]. All of these books are on reserve in the main library. Copies are also available in the Blackwells Bookshop on South Bridge.

Week 1: Introduction

We will begin with a quick overview of the central topics to be covered in the course, and discuss class structure and assessment. We will also review some of the main positions that have been defended in the philosophical literature on the metaphysics of mind.

Required Readings:
2. Tim Crane, EoM, Chapter 2 ‘Body’.

Optional Readings:
2. Jaegwon Kim, POM, Chap. 1.

Week 2: Substance Dualism

We will look at substance dualism, the view that we are composed of an extended, non-thinking, material substance and a non-extended, thinking mental substance. We will also examine Descartes’ conceivability arguments for this view.

Required Readings:
1. Rene Descartes, *Meditations II and VI*.
The prescribed translation of Descartes’ *Meditations* is John Cottingham’s. This is available in at least three formats, the following from Cambridge University Press: *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings, The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Vol. II*, and *Meditations on First Philosophy, with Selections from the Objections and Replies*, translated by J. Cottingham with an introduction by B. Williams.
2. Jaegwon Kim, POM, Chapter 2 “Substance Dualism”.
3. Tim Crane, EoM, Chapter 9 and 10.
4. E. J. Lowe, ‘Dualism’ in OHPM.
Optional Readings:

Week 3: The Causal Pairing Problem
If substance dualism is true then it becomes problematic how the mental, being located outside space-time, can causally interact with physical objects at particular times and places. We will scrutinize this so-called causal pairing problem.

Required Readings:
1. Jaegwon Kim, PoM, Chapter 6 “Mind as a Causal System” and Chapter 7 “Mental Causation”.
3. Tim Crane, EoM, Chap 11.

Optional Readings:
1. Jaegwon Kim, ‘Mental Causation’ in OHPM.

Week 4: The Mind-Body Identity Theory
This week we will look at the mind-body identity theory, as advocated by Place, Smart, Davidson and others, both as a claim about psychophysical types and as a claim about psychophysical tokens. We will also assess some of the objections that were made against this theory.

Required Readings:
1. Tim Crane, EoM, Chap 14.

Optional Readings:

Week 5: Varieties of Functionalism
Functionalism says that to be in a mental state is to be in a state that plays a certain causal role. We will survey and evaluate different types of functionalism, such as analytic functionalism and the distinction between role-functionalism and filler-functionalism.
Required Readings:
1. Kim, PoM, Chapters 5 and 6.
2. Robert Van Gulick, ‘Functionalism’ in OHPM.

Optional Readings:

Week 6: Physicalism I: Defining the View
Physicalism says that ultimately there is nothing over and above the physical. To properly define this view we need to know what is meant by ‘physical’. If we are confined to what current physics tells us then physicalism is most certainly false, but if we also include properties, etc., in a future, complete physics then physicalism seems trivial. This problem is called Hempel’s Dilemma.

Required Readings
Stoljar, P, Chap 2-5.

Recommended Readings
Crane, EoM, Chap 12.
Barbara Montero, ‘What is the Physical?’ in OHPM.

Week 7: Physicalism II: Reduction and the A Priori
We continue to explore disagreements within the physicalist camp. In particular, some physicalists hold that mental and other special science properties are reducible to physical properties, and some physicalists claim that all the truths of our world are in principle a priori deducible from the physical truths. We will look at various objections to both of these claims.

Required Readings
Stoljar, P, Chap 6-8.

Recommended Readings
Crane, EoM, Chaps 12, 14 and 15.
Chaps 9 and 10 (on reductive physicalism) and chaps 11 and 12 (on a priori physicalism) in CDPM. Jaegwon Kim (2005), ‘Reduction, Reductive Explanation and Closing the “Gap” and “Explanatory Arguments for Type Physicalism and Why They Don’t Work” in his *Physicalism or Something Near*
Enough, Princeton University Press.
Julie Yoo, ‘Anomalous Monism’ in OHPH.
Lynne Rudder Baker, ‘Non-Reductive Materialism’ in OHPH.

Week 8: The Causal Exclusion Argument
The causal exclusion argument presents a challenge to non-reductive physicalism according to which mental states are distinct from, yet metaphysically necessitated by, physical states. How can mental states cause behavioural states if no effect has more than one cause and those behavioural effects have distinct physical causes?
Required Readings
Kim, PoM, Chap 6/7.
Recommended Readings
Crane, EoM, Chaps 17, 18 and 19.
Stoljar, P, Chap 11.
Chaps 13 (Kim’s ‘Causation and Mental Causation’) and 14 (Loewer’s ‘Mental Causation, or Something Near Enough’) in CDPM.
Jaegwon Kim, ‘Mental Causation’ in OHPM.
David Papineau, ‘The Causal Closure of the Physical and Naturalism’ in OHPM.

Week 9: Kripke's Argument against the Identity Theory
We now turn to arguments against physicalism. The first is Kripke’s conceivability argument against the mind-body identity theory. In order to assess this argument, we shall examine underlying issues in philosophy of language such as the putative rigidity of phenomenal terms as well as the distinctive way in which such terms have their reference fixed.
Required Readings
Recommended Readings
Stoljar, P, Chap 10.

Week 10: Chalmers' Zombie Argument
If physicalism is true, then zombie worlds, i.e. worlds that are void of consciousness despite being physically identical to our world, are metaphysically impossible. We will look at Chalmers’ anti-physicalist argument that such worlds are metaphysically possible, because they are conceivable and conceivability entails metaphysical possibility.
Required Reading
David Chalmers, ‘The Two-Dimensional Argument Against Materialism’ in OHPM.
Recommended Readings
Kim, PoM, Chapter 7.
Crane, EoM, Chapter 3, Sec. 29, 30.
D. Chalmers, Chapter 4 in his The Conscious Mind, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Week 11: Jackson's Knowledge Argument
After presenting Jackson's knowledge argument against physicalism, based on his thought experiment about black-and-white Mary, we will examine some influential responses, e.g. to do with the distinction between propositional knowledge and know-how, and the possibility of acquiring new knowledge of a fact that one already knew in some other way.

Required Readings

Recommended Readings
J. Kim, PoM, Chapter 7.
T. Crane, EoM, Chapter 3, Sec. 26, 28.