

University of London MA Philosophy of Mind

Seminar Class Schedule 2001-2

Location The MA Philosophy of Mind Classes will take place on Tuesdays at 6 pm at King's College London Philosophy Department, in the Lecture Room on the Ground Floor.

There will be ten seminars this semester, and ten seminars next semester. The first seminar will be on 2 October 2001. Each seminar will last for an hour and a half and will comprise a presentation by the lecturer followed by discussion.

Aims and objectives The aim of this course is to familiarise students with some of the main issues in the philosophy on mind, including the following: to explore fundamental issues about the nature of mind; to question the status of folk psychology and its relationship to scientific psychology; to examine views on the relationship between the mind and the body; and to familiarise students with various conceptions of the nature and content of mental states

The objectives are that, by the end of the course, students will have: (a) read and understood some of the main texts from the relevant reading lists and from elsewhere; (b) attended the seminars in this and the next semester, and participated in discussion; (c) acquired and developed the analytic skills which are necessary for the formation of their own considered views, for the evaluation of questions, and for putting forward good answers.

Reading Lists Each lecturer will hand out a reading list on his particular topic. These should be used in conjunction with the excellent reading list in the University of London Study Guide.

If you were thinking of buying some books, here are two surveys of some the current issues in philosophy of mind that you might find helpful:

Kim J. [1996] *Philosophy of Mind*. Westview Press.

Grayling A., ed. [1995] *Philosophy: a guide through the subject*: including M. A.

Davies 'The Philosophy of Mind', pages 250-335. (You may want to buy this anyway for its relevance to other papers that you are taking.)

In addition, there are a number of useful anthologies of recent papers, and buying one or more of these can save a lot of time delving in libraries for past journals: have a look in Waterstone's to see what will be most suitable for your interests.

Course Topics

First Semester

Weeks 1-5

Lecturer: Peter Goldie, KCL

Title: Some aspects of the mind-body problem

Outline: The central focus will be on two issues: mental causation and phenomenal consciousness. The lectures will cover arguments for physicalism, type-identity and token-identity theories; mental: physical reducibility and supervenience; functionalism; mental causation and the threat of epiphenomenalism; and the particular problem of phenomenal consciousness.

Weeks 6-10

Lecturer: Barry Smith, Birkbeck

Title: The status of folk psychology

Outline: These five seminars will explore the nature of psychological states and our knowledge of them; feasibility of a science of mind; the threat of eliminativism; positions taken by Donald Davidson, Daniel Dennett and Jerry Fodor.

Second Semester

Weeks 1-5

Lecturer: Tim Crane, UCL

Title: Intentionality and content

Outline: These seminars will explore the relationship between intentionality (or mental representation) and consciousness. They will address the following questions: are all conscious states intentional, and if not, how should we conceive

of non-intentional consciousness?; are all intentional states conscious, or can we make sense of non-conscious intentionality?; how is the general idea of intentionality related to the idea of a propositional attitude?

Weeks 6-10

Lecturer: Richard Samuels, KCL

Title: Theories of content

Outline: These seminars will focus on recent debates in the philosophy of mind over the nature of mental content. Specifically, they will (a) explore the dispute between externalists and internalists about content and (b) evaluate some highly influential accounts of content, including conceptual role, informational and teleological theories.

Assessment Students are required to sit a degree examination in this subject at the end of their final year (and a sessional test at the end of their first year, if part-time). Students may pre-submit three essays of up to 2,500 words each in place of the exam. However, students may pre-submit in only one of their three papers.

During the course, students should make arrangements for submitting essays directly with their college tutor; it is not the responsibility of the lecturers to read or mark essays.

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KCL

[September] 2001