

## SEMINAR IN PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

### Mental Representation

PHIL 8310 – Fall 2007

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OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Wednesday, 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

#### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Georges Rey, *Contemporary Philosophy of Mind: A Contentiously Classical Approach*  
Robert Cummins, *Representations, Targets, and Attitudes*

These two books are available at the UGA Bookstore. Additional articles and/or book chapters will be assigned and made available to the class in some suitable electronic format.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Philosophy of mind has been a growth area in contemporary Anglo-American (a.k.a. analytic) philosophy. One of the salient issues in this burgeoning literature is mental representation. It will be our focus for this seminar. We will begin by reading Georges Rey's *Contemporary Philosophy of Mind: A Contentiously Classical Approach*. This is a graduate level introduction to philosophy of mind that takes as its foundation the now traditional view that the mind works by processing mental representations—a view often referred to as the “representational theory of mind” (or RTM, for short). We will progress through this book as expeditiously as possible, given the backgrounds of the seminar participants. Then we will move on to more specific questions about mental representation, especially as they have surfaced in the literature in the last decade or so. These may include such questions as: How do mental structures come to represent features of the world in the first place? Do mental representations have a language-like format or an image-like format or some other format entirely? What is the relationship between mental representations and non-mental representation systems, e.g., natural languages (spoken, written or signed), pictures, notations, and the like? What is the relationship between mental representations and the qualitative aspect of mental life (i.e., the “feel” of being in a certain mental state)? We will read Robert Cummins' *Representations, Targets, and Attitudes*, which primarily addresses the first question above. Cummins will be visiting the Department of Philosophy in November to give a colloquium talk, and participants in the seminar will have an opportunity to discuss his work with him. We will also be reading work by other authors, such as Ruth Millikan, Andy Clark, John Haugeland, Lynne Rudder Baker, Colin McGinn and Michael Tye. Which other authors and which other questions we focus on will depend largely on the interests of the seminar participants.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** The written requirements for the course are a weekly reading journal and a term paper. The reading journal will not be graded, but unexcused failure to turn in journal entries will result in a grade penalty. You must have a paper consultation before starting to write the term paper. The consultation will not be graded, but failure to have a consultation and/or to meet the written requirements for the consultation will result in a grade penalty. You must turn in a first draft of your term paper. It will be graded and turned back to you with comments. This grade will count for 40% of your course grade. The final draft of your term paper must be responsive to the comments made on the first draft. It will count for 60% of your course grade. Finally, you will be required to give a 20 minute presentation of your paper to the class. These presentations will not be graded, but failure to give a presentation will result in a grade penalty.

*Reading Journals:* You must keep a journal with an entry for each week's reading assignment. These entries should be 1-2 pages long (minimum and maximum respectively). Your journal entry must be posted to the entire class by email by 10:00 am on Thursday. These journal entries will serve as the basis for discussion in class, so you are responsible for reading all the postings you receive before class on Friday. You will be allowed one missed journal entry for the semester, no questions asked. Any further missed entries will be considered on a case by case basis, and will not be excused unless you have some incontrovertible and documented reason for not turning it in. Each unexcused, missed journal entry will result in a half grade reduction of your overall course grade.

A journal entry should *not* be a summary of the reading, and it should *not* be a rambling, stream of consciousness commentary. Rather it should be a precise question about, or a precise comment on, some particular aspect of the reading. For example, you might notice a problem with something an author says. In that case, your journal entry should explain the problem and what you think the prospects are for a resolution. Or you might have a question about something an author says. In that case, your journal entry should formulate the question as clearly as possible and make an attempt at answering it. Or you might give an interpretation of a particularly difficult passage or idea. There are other possibilities as well—the point is to go into depth on some aspect of the reading. The journal entries are supposed to serve two functions. First, they are supposed to help the class discussion by motivating deeper reading of the text and more considered reactions to it. Second, they are supposed to help you find a paper topic.

*Paper Consultations:* All paper consultations must be completed by Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. Paper consultations are expected to last 20-30 minutes, so you should make an appointment for a convenient time outside of my regular office hours. 24 hours before the consultation you must send me by email or give me a hard copy of 1) a *written statement of your proposed topic* (one page maximum) and 2) an *annotated reading list* of five books or articles related to your topic. These books or articles must be from *outside* the required reading for the course. The reading list must be in Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) Author-Date System bibliographic format. You will not be expected to have read everything on your reading list thoroughly at this point, but you should have read enough so that you can explain what it is about and why you think it is relevant to your topic. The purpose of the paper consultation is to make sure you have a suitable topic that is neither too ambitious nor too slight for a term paper, and that you have some

relevant outside reading lined up. Failure to have a consultation and/or to meet the written requirement for the consultation, including correct CMS Author-Date System formatting of the annotated bibliography will result in a one half grade reduction of your first draft grade.

*Term Paper:* 15-20 pages, single or double spaced, in hard copy. Electronic submissions will be accepted only if you have a good reason and have obtained permission in advance. The term paper is to be a research paper, and must draw on some other material in addition to the assigned readings.

The *first* draft of the term paper is due in my office by 10:00 am on Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. No extensions will be allowed, except for serious illness or emergency situations, which must be documented. If you turn in your draft late without an extension, you will be penalized one half grade on the draft for every 24 hour period or portion thereof beyond the date and time it is due. The first draft must be a complete draft of the paper. It must be formatted in accordance with the CMS Author-Date System. One half grade will be taken off on your first draft if you fail to follow this format correctly and consistently. Your draft will be graded, and you will be given comments and suggestions for revising it. Your draft will be returned to you in class on November 30<sup>th</sup>. You are expected to revise your paper in light of the comments and suggestions, and also to make improvements and revisions of your own. The idea, in other words, is to rewrite it from the ground up, not just tinker with a few details.

The *final* draft of the term paper is due in my office by 10:00 am on Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. Extensions will not be allowed, since this is the last day of the final exam period. If you turn in your final draft late, you will be penalized one half grade on the final draft grade for every 24 hour period or portion thereof beyond the date and time the paper is due. You must hand in your commented first draft with the revised final draft. The final draft will not be graded unless the commented first draft is available for comparison purposes. As with your first draft, your final draft must be formatted throughout in accordance with the CMS Author-Date System. One half grade will be taken off your final draft grade if you fail to follow this format correctly and consistently.

*Paper Presentations:* After you have turned in your first draft, you will be required to present your paper to the class. The purpose of this is to get feedback from your classmates that may help you in writing your final draft. The length of the presentations will probably be 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions and discussion, but this will depend on how many presentations we have to fit into the allotted class meetings. Rather than reading your paper to the class, you should plan to present the main points in a talk format. You may use Powerpoint, transparencies, handouts, etc. You may also wish to make your entire draft electronically available to the class prior to your presentation so that they can read it if they have time and sufficient ambition. Presentations will not be graded, but one half grade will be taken off your overall grade for the course if you fail to give one.

**CLASS MEETINGS:** The class meets from 9:05 am to 12:05 pm on Fridays. There will be a 10-15 minute break roughly in the middle of the class period.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** This is a seminar. Participation in class discussion is required. You will be expected to have done the assigned reading, including the journal entries posted to you

by your fellow students. You are also expected to come prepared with questions and comments, and to participate in the discussion of issues introduced by others.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is required as a matter of University policy.

**GRADING POLICIES:** Letter grades will be assigned to the first and final drafts of your term paper. Grades followed by + or - may be assigned. Any grade penalties you have incurred will be subtracted from these letter grades. The final grade will be determined by averaging the numerical equivalents of the two letter grades, converting this numerical average back to a letter grade, and then subtracting course grade penalties you have incurred, if any. The average will be weighted so that the first draft counts for 40%, and the final draft for 60%.

If you are on the borderline between one letter grade and another other factors may be taken into account. These factors include, but are not limited to: class participation, attendance, and improvement during the semester.

The following letter-number conversions will be used in grading.

<i>Letters to Numbers</i>		<i>Numbers to Letters</i>	
A	4.00	3.75-4.00	A
A-	3.66	3.50-3.74	A-
B+	3.33	3.25-3.49	B+
B	3.00	2.75-3.24	B
B-	2.66	2.50-2.74	B-
C+	2.33	2.25-2.49	C+
C	2.00	1.75-2.24	C
C-	1.66	1.50-1.74	C-
D+	1.33		
D	1.00	0.50-1.49	D
D-	0.66		
F	0.00	0.00-0.49	F

***Summary of grading penalties:***

- Failure to have a paper consultation and/or to meet written requirements of the paper consultation, including correct formatting of annotated bibliography – ½ grade off first draft grade.
- CMS formatting incorrect or inconsistent in first and/or final draft of paper– ½ grade off the draft in question.
- Late paper without an extension – ½ grade off the draft in question for every 24 hour period or portion thereof beyond the due date/time.
- Failure to give a paper presentation – ½ grade off overall course grade.
- Missed journal entry (unexcused) – ½ grade off overall course grade for each missed entry.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** You are expected to abide by the standards for academic honesty

established by the University of Georgia. If you have not already done so, you should familiarize yourself with these standards by reading *A Culture of Honesty*, a handbook on the University academic honesty policy. You can find this online, along with a number of other useful documents pertaining to academic honesty at the University of Georgia, at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

You are encouraged to work together by discussing the reading material with other people, and in particular with other students in the course. This constitutes an acceptable and commendable level of cooperation for this course. Here are some examples of activities which are *not* acceptable, and will be regarded as violating the academic honesty standards:

- Writing a paper for another student to use, or allowing another student to write one for you;
- Collaborating with other students in the actual writing of a paper for one or all of the collaborators to use;
- Plagiarism; this includes:
  - Copying from a book, journal, or other written work without indicating that it is a quotation or acknowledging the source;
  - Paraphrasing passages from a book, journal, or other written work without acknowledging the source;
  - Copying from another student's written work without acknowledging the source;
  - Using other people's ideas, opinions, theories, data or statistics without acknowledging the source (unless the ideas or information in question are common knowledge).

If you have any questions about what activities constitute violations of the standards for academic honesty, either in general or with regard to this course in particular, please ask.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Aug 17	Introduction to the course
Aug 24	Rey – Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2
Aug 31	Rey – Chapter 3 and Chapter 4
Sept 7	Rey – Chapters 5 and 6
Sept 14	Rey – Chapters 7 and 8
Sept 21	<b><i>No class. A makeup session will be scheduled later in the semester.</i></b>
Sept 28	Rey – Chapter 9
Oct 5	Rey – Chapters 10 and 11
Oct 12	Cummins – Chapters 1-3
Oct 19	Cummins – Chapters 4 and 5
Oct 26	<b><i>Fall Break</i></b>
Nov 2	Cummins – Chapters 6 and 7
Nov 8	<b><i>Paper consultations must be completed by this date.</i></b>
Nov 9	Cummins – Chapters 8, 9 and 10

Nov 16 Cummins – “Unexploited Content” (2006)  
“Representation and Indication” (2004)

Both of these papers can be downloaded in pdf format from Cummins’s web page at <https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/rcummins/www/HomePage/Cummins.html> Please note that “Unexploited Content” is listed as forthcoming on the web site, but it came out in 2006.

Nov 19 ***First draft of term paper due by 10:00 am.***

Nov 23 ***Thanksgiving Break***

Nov 30 Paper presentations (9:05 – 10:45)

Meet with Rob Cummins (11:00 – 12:05)

Dec 4 Paper presentations

Dec 14 ***Term paper due by 10:00 am.***

***Please note: This syllabus is intended for guidance only, and is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and posted by email.***