

# PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

PHIL 4310/6310 – Spring 2008

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Beth Preston

Office: 101B Peabody Hall  
Office Phone and Voicemail: 706-542-2819  
E-mail: epreston@uga.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Monday & Wednesday 10:00 am – 11:00 am

TEXTS (available at the UGA Bookstore)

- Alva Noë and Evan Thompson, eds. *Vision and Mind: Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception*
- York H. Gunther, ed. *Essays on Nonconceptual Content*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Perception and concepts have both been important topics in recent philosophy of mind. We will spend the first half of the semester reading a variety of articles in the philosophy of perception. In the second half of the semester we will read articles investigating the relationship between perception and concepts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- *Undergraduates* – Three papers (minimum 8 pages, maximum 10 pages if double spaced; minimum 5 pages, maximum 7 pages if single spaced). Each paper will count for one third of your final grade.
- *Graduate Students* – Three papers; the first two papers the same as the undergraduates, and for the third a term paper (15-20 pages) on a research topic of your choosing based on the course material and approved in a consultation with the instructor. The short papers will each count for 25% of your grade, and the term paper will count for 50%.

EXTENSIONS: Papers are to be handed in on the date and at the time specified in the Course Outline. If circumstances beyond your control (e.g., illness or a family emergency) make this impossible, you *must* ask for an extension. You may do this by e-mail, by phone, or in person. Extensions will not normally be granted a) retroactively, b) on the day the paper is due, or c) more than once during the semester. Documentation of the circumstances related to your request for an extension may be required.

LATE PAPERS: If you hand in a paper late without an extension, you will be penalized one half grade for every 24 hour period or fraction thereof beyond the date and time it is officially due. ***Papers that are more than three days late (72 hours, counting from the date/time the paper is due) will not be accepted, and you will be withdrawn from the course for failure to complete required work (see below).***

FAILURE TO COMPLETE REQUIRED WORK: If you fail to turn in a paper due *before* the

midpoint withdrawal deadline (Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>) you will be administratively withdrawn from the course with a W. If you fail to turn in a paper due *after* the midpoint withdrawal deadline you will be administratively withdrawn from the course with a WF.

**GRADING POLICIES:** Papers will be given letter grades, optionally followed by + or - . At the end of the semester all the letter grades will be converted into their numerical equivalents, weighted appropriately and averaged. The average will then be converted back into a letter to obtain the final grade. The following letter-number conversions will be used in grading.

<b>Letters to Numbers</b>		<b>Numbers to Letters</b>	
A	4.0	3.8-4.00	A
A-	3.7	3.5-3.79	A-
B+	3.3	3.2-3.49	B+
B	3.0	2.8-3.19	B
B-	2.7	2.5-2.79	B-
C+	2.3	2.2-2.49	C+
C	2.0	1.8-2.19	C
C-	1.7	1.5-1.79	C-
D+	1.3		
D	1.0	0.5-1.49	D
D-	0.7		
F	0	0-0.49	F
WF	0		

**LECTURE AND DISCUSSION:** There will be two 50 minute lectures each week, on Mondays and Wednesdays. Some time will be allotted for discussion at every class meeting, so please do not hesitate to bring up any questions or comments you may have. But the main opportunity for discussion and debate will be on Fridays, which are reserved primarily for this. You will be expected to have done the assigned reading, and to be able to answer basic questions about its content. You will also be 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. Attendance will be taken in each class by means of a sign-up sheet. You are expected to arrive on time for class and leave only when the whole class is dismissed.

***Administrative drops: The Instructor reserves the right, at her discretion, to withdraw administratively and without notice any student who accumulates six or more unexcused absences at any point during the semester. If it is before the midpoint withdrawal deadline (Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>), you will be given a W. If it is after the midpoint withdrawal deadline you will be given a WF.***

**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 manual on the University academic honesty policy. Copies of this booklet are available from the Office of Academic

Affairs in Old College. You can also find it online on their web page under Policies and Procedures at [http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm)

You are encouraged to work together by discussing the reading material and the paper topics with other people, and in particular with other students in the course. This constitutes an acceptable and commendable level of cooperation. However, all written work must be produced by each student independently of others. 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 all the collaborators to use;
- Plagiarism; this includes but is not necessarily limited to:
  - Copying from a book, journal, web site or other written work without indicating that it is a quotation or acknowledging the source;
  - Paraphrasing passages from a book, journal, web site or other written work without acknowledging the source;
  - Copying from another student's written work or web page 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 plagiarism or other violations of the standards for academic honesty, either in general or with regard to this course in particular, please ask.

#### GUIDELINES FOR PAPERS

**Format:** Must be typed; may be either single or double spaced. You may print double-sided if you wish. Please number your pages. Please make sure that spelling, punctuation and grammar in your paper are correct and consistent, otherwise it may be returned to you to be corrected before being graded. Please staple or paper clip your paper. Do *not* put it in any sort of binder or folder. Please make sure your name is on your paper at the top of the first page. Do *not* include a cover page. Electronic submissions will *not* be accepted unless they have been approved in advance. They will be ordinarily be approved *only* if documented circumstances exist that make it impossible for you to turn in a hard copy of the paper.

**Evaluation:** Criteria will include, but are not necessarily limited to: a) understanding of material, b) organization, c) clarity of exposition, and d) quality of criticism advanced.

**Paper Topics:** The topics for the papers are designed to help you develop your ability to analyze the ideas and arguments presented by an author and to evaluate them.

- **Paper #1:** Choose one of the papers we have read in the first part of the course. Explain the main philosophical issue with which the paper deals, and the main argument the author makes in support of their view on this issue. Please note that this does *not* mean summarizing the whole paper. Instead you should figure out what the most important argument is, and focus on that. Then explain *one* problem you see with this argument. Do *not* give a whole list of criticisms—decide which possible criticism you think poses the most important or most interesting problem for the view, and focus on that.
- **Paper #2:** Choose one of the papers we have read in the second part of the course. Explain the main philosophical issue with which the paper deals, and the main argument

the author makes in support of their view on this issue. To what extent do you agree with the author's view on this issue? Explain your position. Please note that when you agree with an author, it is not enough to simply repeat their view. Instead you should do one of the following: give an argument of your own supporting the author's view; or explain a problem with the author's argument and then show how this problem can be solved.

- *Paper #3*: Choose *two* papers we have read this semester that have contrasting views on some issue we have discussed. Explain these contrasting views and the main arguments the authors give in support of them. Which view do you think is more correct? Explain your answer, noting the main problem you see with the view you think is less correct, and how the view you think is more correct either solves this problem, or is not subject to it in the first place, or—if the problem is shared—has other advantages that outweigh it.

*Graduate students* must write the first two papers as described above. The third paper is to be a research paper. Choose one or two papers we have read this semester that deal with an issue you would like to explore further. Then find three to five other papers we have *not* read for this course that also deal with this issue. At this point you should set up a consultation to present your topic and the literature you are considering using. This will allow problems to be identified beforehand, and advice to be offered. You may start writing only after your topic has been approved in the consultation. In your paper you should a) explain the issue you have chosen to work on, b) explain the different views on it represented by the papers you have chosen, and c) compare, contrast and evaluate these views, with an eye to developing a view of your own about this issue.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 7	Introduction to the course
Jan 9	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 7 (Gregory)
Jan 11	Discussion day
Jan 14	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 5 (Gibson)
Jan 16	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 10 (Fodor and Pylyshyn)
Jan 18	Discussion day
Jan 21	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY (no class)
Jan 23	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 11 (Marr)
Jan 25	Discussion day
Jan 28	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 2 (Merleau-Ponty)
Jan 30	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 18 (Ballard)
Feb 1	Discussion day
Feb 4	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 14 (Evans)
Feb 6	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 15 (Thompson, Palacios and Varela)
Feb 8	Discussion day
Feb 11	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 22 (Chalmers)
Feb 13	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 23 (Noë and O'Regan)
Feb 15	Discussion day
	<b>First Paper Due in Class</b>
Feb 18	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 8 (Lewis)

Feb 20	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 9 (Snowdon)
Feb 22	Discussion day
Feb 25	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 3 (Grice)
Feb 27	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 20 (Bach-y-Rita)
Feb 29	Discussion day
Mar 3	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 6 (Strawson)
Mar 4	MIDPOINT WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE
Mar 5	<i>Vision and Mind</i> , Chapter 16 (Dretske)
Mar 7	Discussion day
Mar 10-14	SPRING BREAK (no class)
Mar 17	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 2 (Evans)
Mar 19	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 3 (McDowell)
Mar 21	Discussion day
Mar 24	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 4 (Stalnaker)
Mar 26	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 5 (Peacocke)
Mar 28	Discussion day
	<b>Second Paper Due in Class</b>
Mar 31	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 6 (Cussins)
Apr 2	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 7 (Clark)
Apr 4	Discussion day
Apr 7	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 8 (Bermudez)
Apr 9	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 9 (Kelly)
Apr 11	Discussion day
Apr 14	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 10 (Crane)
Apr 16	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 11 (Martin)
Apr 18	Discussion day
Apr 21	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 12 (Hamlyn)
Apr 23	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 13 (Tye)
Apr 25	Discussion day
Apr 28	<i>Essays on Nonconceptual Content</i> , Chapter 14 (Gunther)
Apr 29	Reading Day
May 5	<b>Third Paper Due at 10:00 am</b>

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