

PHILOSOPHY 4410: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

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Texts (all required): *The Conscious Mind*, by D. Chalmers (Oxford); *Consciousness Explained*, by D. Dennett (Back Bay Books); *Who's in Charge?*, by M. Gazzaniga (Ecco).

General objectives of the course: At the end of the course, you will be asked to evaluate the course's success at meeting these objectives:

- Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories
- Developing skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Specific objectives of the course: This course will explore consciousness, the self, and freedom of the will. Underlying these topics is the question of whether consciousness can be explained by science, or whether it is something special. The importance of this question should be obvious, as it gets to the core of what we really are, ultimately. We will examine arguments and evidence for several different answers. But above all we will find that that the concepts and vocabulary we use when speaking loosely about these topics will not do as we press on with more difficult questions.

Work and expectations.

- Answer reading questions (35 in all)
- Write a paper (≥ 4 pages) on Dennett's materialism (Paper 1.0)
- Extend that paper (to a total of ≥ 8 pages) to include Chalmers' view, and your own judgments (paper 1.1)
- Write a well-considered book review of Gazzaniga's book (≥ 4 pages)
- Participate each day in class discussions

Points, and grading scale:

Reading questions (4 pts. each)	140
Paper 1.0	40
Paper 1.1	40
Book review of Gazzaniga	40
Participation	40
Total	300

A	276
A-	264
B+	255
B	246
B-	234
C+	225
C	216
C-	204
D+	195
D	186

On all your written work, **everything counts**: style, substance, organization, grammar, spelling - *everything*. I assume that anything you turn in to me will be as good as you can make it.



General policy regarding late work: Each reading question assignment is due at the beginning of class (or emailed to me by the beginning of class). Late reading question assignments will **not** be accepted. Papers (1.0 and 1.1) are due at the beginning of class (or emailed to me by the beginning of class); late papers will be docked 5 points for every day (24 hrs.) they are late. The book review is due at the posted time, and will **not** be accepted late. Students are welcome to present any extenuating circumstances to me, which may or may not lead to exemptions from these policies.

As students, you should expect me to be to class on time and to be well-prepared each day. I have the same expectation for you. While you are in class, I expect you to be just as attentive to the discussion as I am. You may kick me out of class if I fall asleep, or if I use a phone or computer for non-class related purposes, or begin to read a newspaper, or start my reading for another class.

What I believe letter grades mean:

A or A- The essay is **excellent**. The writing is clear and concise, using proper sentence structure, grammar, and spelling. The essay stays firmly on topic. The writer has accurately described the relevant philosophical positions and arguments. The essay demonstrates that the student has engaged the topic with intellectual curiosity and seriousness, going beyond classroom discussions and readings, and demonstrating a thorough understanding of the material.

B+ The essay is **very good**. The writing is clear and concise, using proper sentence structure, grammar, and spelling. The essay stays firmly on topic. The writer has accurately described the relevant philosophical positions and arguments, except perhaps with a few very minor errors. The essay shows intellectual engagement with the topic, but there is little in the essay which goes beyond classroom discussions and readings.

B or B- The essay is **good**. The writing is clear and concise, using proper sentence structure, grammar, and spelling. The essay stays on topic. The writer has provided a broadly accurate account of the relevant philosophical positions and arguments. There are some errors, but they do not detract from the central aim of the essay. There is little in the essay which goes beyond classroom discussions and readings.

C+ or C or C- The essay is **adequate** in meeting the assignment's requirements. The writing, in terms of grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, is at an acceptable level, though there are errors. The writer has provided an adequate account of relevant philosophical positions and arguments, but with some important errors or omissions. Perhaps the essay wanders from the topic, introducing needless examples or pursuing tangents. There are obvious objections or points that should have been considered.

D+ or D This essay is **not adequate** in quality. There are serious problems in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. It is not clear that the writer has grasped the relevant philosophical positions or arguments. The organization of the essay is unclear, or nonexistent. Nevertheless, it is clear that some attempt has been made to meet the assignment's requirements; but the result does not demonstrate an adequate mastery of the material.

F This essay is a **failure**. Writing errors abound, and there is no indication of an understanding of the material, or even that any serious effort has been made.

Questions - PHIL 4410 - Fall 2012

1. Briefly present one argument for thinking that the mind is a natural product of the physical world.
2. Briefly present one argument for thinking the mind is not a natural product of the physical world.
3. What is the main idea of Descartes's argument quoted by Dennett on page 30?
4. What is the problem with dualism represented by Casper (pp. 35-6)?
5. How is the "Fourier transform" discussion (p. 48) related to the "pictures in the head" discussion (pp. 52-3)?
6. What is a philosophical zombie? (72-3)
7. What is the intentional stance? (76-7)
8. What is the heterophenomenological method? (82-3)
9. What is cartesian materialism? (107)
10. Extrapolate: from the contrast between figures 5.5 and 5.6, how will Dennett's view differ from cartesian materialism? (108-11)
11. Explain briefly the Orwellian and Stalinesque ways of accounting for the color phi phenomenon. (114-21)
12. What does it mean to call consciousness a "virtual machine"? (210-8)
13. What are the jobs of the "word demons" and the "content demons"? (234-9)
14. What is the difference between phenomenal states and psychological states? (Chalmers, pp. 11-12)
15. What is the difference, as Chalmers uses the terms, between "awareness" and "consciousness"? (28-9)
16. What is supervenience? Give an example. (32-4)
17. What is the difference between logical and natural supervenience? (34-8)
18. How might Chalmers defend himself against Dennett's "Tibetan Prayer Wheel" complaint? (see Dennett, 281-2, and Chalmers, 46-7)
19. Why does a reductive explanation require logical supervenience? (Chalmers, 47-8)
20. In brief, what is Chalmers' response to Dennett's view? (113-4)
21. What is Chalmers' view? (124-9)
22. What is Dennett trying to show with the CADBLIND thought experiment?
23. What is a zimbo? (310)
24. How does Dennett's discussion of blindsight challenge Chalmers' distinction between phenomenal and psychological states? (326)
25. How would Chalmers reply to Dennett's treatment of the inverted spectrum? (389-98)
26. How would Chalmers reply to Dennett's account of Mary? Where exactly would he point out Dennett's mistake? (398-406)
27. What is Fractional Personality Disorder? (422)
28. What is "episodic" self experience?
29. Page 446: "When Bernard Malamud claims that 'all biography is ultimately fiction', simply on the grounds that 'there is no life that can be captured wholly, as it was', there is no implication that it must also be ultimately untrue." Explain.
30. List three actions you performed recently that you would normally call "free," and three which you normally would call "not free." What was your sorting principle in making these lists?

31. Suppose you are sitting in a room with a friend. You don't know it, but if you were to try to get up and leave, a mind-control device would force you to stay where you are. As it happens, you make no such attempt. Is your decision to stay with your friend free? Explain.
32. Describe a case where you are caused to do something you have no reason to do. Describe a case where you had a reason for doing something, but didn't.
33. Gazzaniga thinks freedom and responsibility "emerge" in groups of interacting people. Does this make him a dualist? Explain.
34. How, according to Gazzaniga, does neuroscience answer Hume's question, as raised on p. 165)?
35. If determinism is true, does it make sense to deliberate over whether we should reform our laws and institutions of punishment and reform? Explain.

Date	Topic	What to read for that day	Questions to turn in, and assignments
Tu, 8/28	Introduction	-	-
Th, 8/30	Overview: Materialisms, Dualisms	-	1, 2
Tu, 9/4	Descartes and materialism	Dennett, 3 - 42	3, 4
Th, 9/6	Zombies, intensional stance, heterophenomenology	Dennett, 43 - 98	pick any three from 5, 6, 7, 8
Tu, 9/11	Deconstructing the cartesian theater	Dennett, 101-38	9, 10, 11
Th, 9/13	Evolution of consciousness	Dennett, 171-226	12
Tu, 9/18	Little demons of consciousness	Dennett, 227-52	13
Th, 9/20	Discussion: Dennett's view	Dennett, 253-82	Be prepared with pros/cons
Tu, 9/25	Discussion	-	Paper 1.0 due
Th, 9/27	Phenomenal vs. psychological states	Chalmers, 3-31	14, 15
Tu, 10/2	Supervenience and reduction	Chalmers, 32-38 and 41-51	pick any three from 16, 17, 18, 19
Th, 10/4	Arguments against materialism	Chalmers, 93-122	20
Tu, 10/9	Chalmers' dualism	Chalmers, 123-31; 276-310	21
Th, 10/11	Breaking into introspection	Dennett, 285-320	22, 23
Tu, 10/16	Deconstructing qualia	Dennett, 321-68	24
Th, 10/18	No class - follow Friday schedule		
Tu, 10/23	Discussion	-	-
Th, 10/25	Dennett's replies to dualist arguments	Dennett, 369-411	25, 26
Tu, 10/30	Debate	-	-
Th, 11/1	Class cancelled		
Tu, 11/6	Debate	-	Paper 1.1 due
Th, 11/8	Selves?	Dennett, 412-30	27
Tu, 11/13	Strawson, "Against narrativity"	Strawson (to be provided)	28, 29
Th, 11/15	Introduction to free will	Read Gazzaniga, chapters 1-4	30
Tu, 11/20	Compatibilism		31
Th, 11/22	Thanksgiving break		
Tu, 11/27	Causes vs. reasons	Read Gazzaniga, chapters 5-7	32
Th, 11/29	Does freedom require dualism?		33
Tu, 12/4	Morality and the brain		34
Th, 12/6	Whence and whither responsibility?		35
	Final (take-home) exam: review of Gazzaniga's book		

