

PHIL 126 – Mind, Brain, Self, Evolution

Emory University – Spring 2018

Instructor's Name:	Catherine Fullarton
Class Meeting Time & Place:	MWF 9:00am – 9:50am, Bowden 118
Office Hours:	Wednesday 10:30am-12pm or by appointment
Office Location:	Woodruff Library 655 (6 th floor)
Email:	cfullar@emory.edu

Course Description:

This course considers the key concepts of the title – mind, brain, self, and evolution – in relation to questions about subjectivity and identity. What does it mean to be a subject? How do we understand ourselves as such, and in the context of the wider social and natural world? How should we understand identity through change or evolution?

We'll examine several major philosophical texts that have articulated responses to these and related concerns about consciousness, selfhood, subjectivity, development, change, and evolution. We will also consider several cases where normal subjectivity is challenged, rendered problematic, or breaks down. What do these so-called “pathological” cases reveal about normal subjectivity and personhood, and about our relations with the things that define “us”?

Our goal will be to develop a nuanced understanding of the texts and issues we study, and to see how they can help us make sense of our relations and responsibilities to ourselves and others. Doing so will require close reading, thoughtful preparation, active discussion in class, and a commitment to being present and to engaging thoughtfully and respectfully with others. This is reflected in the evaluation structure.

This course is open to all students at all levels. Students outside of philosophy – including students in health sciences, medicine, law, etc. – should find this course to be relevant and rewarding. No background in or familiarity with philosophy is expected or required.

Required Texts:

The following course texts are required. I encourage you to consult local independent bookstores (like Eagle Eye Bookstore, on the corner of North Decatur Rd. and Clairmont Ave., and Charon Books, in Little 5 Points) before the university bookstore and online retailers. Copies of these books should be readily available in used condition, and/or for free through Emory's library system. If acquiring them constitutes a financial hardship, please consult the instructor; alternate arrangements may be possible.

- René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 3rd Ed. (Hackett) [ISBN: 978-0872201927] [Different edition available online, through Emory's “Past Masters” collection]
- Alva Noë, *Out of Our Heads* [ISBN: 978-0809016488]
- Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness* [ISBN: 978-0374537197]

Other texts will be available on Canvas or through Emory's Library Databases.

NB: Please pay special attention to editions; translations can vary, and it's helpful for us to be on the same page.

The following texts are not required, but are highly recommended as resources for reading and writing:

- Strunk & White *The Elements of Style*, 4th Ed. [ISBN: 978-0205309023]
- Adler & van Doren, *How to Read a Book* [ISBN: 978-0671212094]

Evaluations:

Weekly Response Papers (300-500 words) + Peer-Responses 40%

Each week, students will be required to submit short expository papers or reading responses, *and* provide feedback on their peers' work. Eight of these will be graded.

Expository papers should provide a clear and concise explication of a key idea or issue in the text for that week's class (*not* the whole reading), and should culminate with one or two thoughtful and insightful questions that could be used to initiate in-class discussion of the material.

Peer Responses should aim to provide fruitful comments to improve the work, and posit questions to suggest ways to develop the work further.

Response Papers are due by 5pm on the Sunday before the material is to be discussed. Peer Responses are due by 5pm on the following Tuesday. Exceptions are noted in the syllabus.

Students will receive feedback and be graded on *both* components of the assignment. The final grade for this portion of the work will consider overall performance on responses, and feedback provided to peers, *plus* credit for improvement or consistently strong performance over the term.

Term Paper Proposal (approx. 1 page) + Presentation 10%

Before beginning their term paper, students must submit a proposal outlining their intended project/research, and have it approved by the instructor. This proposal should clearly outline a relevant philosophical question, and the material that will be used to address this question. It should also include a proposed bibliography that includes *at least* one text from the readings (secondary sources beyond the course readings are *not* required). See details about the term paper below, for more information. **The proposal is due by 11:59pm on March 30th, 2017.** It will be returned with feedback by the end of Week 12.

In-class presentations of term paper proposals will be scheduled during Weeks 13-16 so that students can get feedback on their work, and ask questions and provide feedback on peers' work. The grade for this portion considers the written proposal, in-class presentation, *and* the feedback provided to peers during their in-class presentations.

Final Paper (5-6 pages, double-spaced) 30%

Students are required to write a final term paper addressing a philosophical question or issue relevant to the course, and engaging *in a substantial way* at least one of the texts on the syllabus.

The final paper must not exceed 7 pages (5-6 pages is ideal), excluding the Works Cited page. It should be written in a 12pt. standard font (Times New Roman, Arial, etc.) with 1-inch page margins. A rubric and additional information about the final paper requirements will be provided closer to the due-date.

The term paper is due by 11:59pm on Saturday May 5th, 2017.

<u>Engagement</u>	<u>20%</u>
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Thoughtful, respectful engagement is crucial to this course. Students are required to come to class prepared, having completed the readings *in advance*, and ready to engage thoughtfully in each class. This includes *bringing the textbook or printed text that we will be discussing*. It also includes contributing thoughtfully to discussion.

Thoughtful engagement includes: coming to class prepared (having completed & thought about the readings); contributing to in-class discussion in a way that enhances collaborative learning; asking questions that advance our collective understanding of the ideas; and being a sincere, reliable, and supportive interlocutor for peers.

Because regular, thoughtful engagement is so crucial to this course, students are permitted *one unexcused absence* (UA). After the first UA, students will lose 2% of the final grade for each subsequent UA. In order to count as *excused*, absences *must* be accompanied by a note from the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE).

Attendance is taken at the start of class, which means that lateness (after 9:00am) may be counted as an absence.

<u>Critical Thinking Component (CTC)</u>	<u>REQUIRED</u>
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This is a four-credit class. Attendance and participation, writing assignments, presentations and the final paper will comprise three out of the four credits. Students will earn their fourth credit by completing a mandatory online component designed to equip them with basic critical thinking skills. All students in introductory philosophy courses are required to complete this online component. It is a self-guided course, located on the course's Canvas site, which focuses on informal logic. It has 13 short online tests, all of which **must be passed by April 20th, 2018**.

While this component is not graded, it is a condition of passing the course as a whole. In other words, *failure to pass this component will result in the student not passing the course, regardless of grades earned on other course requirements*. If you encounter any difficulties or have any questions about the CTC, please contact Prof. Jennifer Meeks (jlobo@emory.edu).

Grading:

Weekly Response Papers & Peer-Evaluation	40%
Term Paper Proposal & Presentation	10%
Term Paper (5-6 pages)	30%
Engagement	20%
<u>Critical Thinking Module</u>	<u>P/NP</u>
TOTAL	100%**

*These grade weightings should be considered guidelines rather than fixed values; I reserve the right to adjust for performance improvement or diminishment of effort over the course of the term.

**Students must complete all required assignments in order to pass the course.

A Note on Writing...

In this class, you'll have many opportunities to develop and enhance your writing abilities *and* your critical thinking. You are also *highly* encouraged to make an appointment with the **Emory Writing Center** for further assistance with brainstorming, writing, and essay development.

If writing in English is a particular challenge for you, please consult the Writing Center and/or come see me during office hours to discuss your specific concerns.

Other Important Policies

Attendance & Participation

Students are expected to attend every class, and to engage thoughtfully with each other and with the course ideas. As such, only one unexcused absence will be permitted. After one unexcused absence, students will lose 2% of their final grade for each subsequent unexcused absence. Students who miss class for a legitimate academic, athletic or personal reason should visit the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) to have the absence documented. Absences without a note from OUE will be considered unexcused.

Paper Extensions

The goal of this course is to have students engage thoughtfully with difficult philosophical material. As such, students should plan ahead to ensure sufficient time to complete their assignments to the best of their ability. Requests for extensions must be made by email *at least* 48hrs before the assignment deadline and the email must include *both*: (1) the reason for the request, and (2) the proposed new submission deadline. Students will receive email confirmation if the request is granted.

Because they involve peer-reviews that are automatically assigned by Canvas, extensions cannot be granted for weekly writing assignments. Late submissions may incur grade deductions up to the full grade value of the work.

Accessibility Information

From the OUE:

“Office of Accessibility Services works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact OAS. It is the responsibility of the student to register with OAS. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and that disability accommodations are not provided until an accommodation letter has been processed. Students registered with OAS who have a letter outlining their academic accommodations, are strongly encouraged to coordinate a meeting time with your professor that will be best for both to discuss a protocol to implement the accommodations as needed throughout the semester. This meeting should occur

as early in the semester as possible. Students must renew their accommodation letter every semester they attend classes. Contact the Office of Accessibility Services for more information at (404) 727-9877 or accessibility@emory.edu. Additional information is available at the OAS website at <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html>.”

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic misconduct that could result in expulsion from the university. If you are *at all* uncertain about or unfamiliar with this term, it is *imperative* that you review the Honor Code on this subject. Ignorance of the policy is *not* an excuse for plagiarism.

Emory Honor Code

From the OUE:

“The Honor Code applies to all work submitted for courses in Emory College. Students who violate the Honor Code may be subject to a written mark on their record, failure of the course, suspension, permanent exclusion, or a combination of these and other sanctions. The Honor Code may be reviewed online at: <http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>.”

The Honor Code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

Reading Schedule & Due Dates

Students are expected to have read the following texts *before* the date indicated and should be prepared to discuss the material in class the day it is assigned.

Readings marked [supp.] are supplementary: they are *recommended* but *not required*. Often, these will be helpful texts that provide additional background or context. They may or may not be addressed or mentioned in class, but are recommended as further resources for your readings responses and/or final paper.

I. INTRODUCTION

Week 1 - Introduction

W/ Jan. 17th

Course Introduction

Syllabus, Course Introduction, and What You Need to Know About Philosophy
[no readings]

F/ January 19th

Course Introduction

Jorge Luis Borges, “Borges and I” [PDF on Canvas]

Week 2 - Aristotle

M/ January 22nd

Aristotle

Aristotle, Selections from *De Anima*

W/ January 24th

Mind-Body Dualism

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, I

- [supp.] Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind: A Beginner's Guide*, Ch. 1 – Dualism

--- Note: Schedule Change Period ends tomorrow (Jan. 25th) ---

F/ January 26th

Mind-Body Dualism

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, II

Week 3 – Descartes's *Meditations*

M/ January 29th

Mind-Body Dualism

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, V

W/ January 31st

Mind-Body Dualism

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, IV

F/ February 2nd

Mind-Body Dualism

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (review previous readings)

Week 4 – Responses to Descartes

M/ February 5th

Mind-Body Dualism

Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, "Correspondence with Descartes" (excerpt from *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period*) [PDF on Canvas]

René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, Part I [PDF on Canvas]

- [supp.] Jennifer McWeeny, "Princess Elizabeth and the Mind-Body Problem" [PDF on Canvas]

W/ February 7th

Problems with Cartesianism Dualism

Gilbert Ryle, "Descartes's Myth" [PDF on Canvas]

F/ February 9th

Brain, Body and Mind

Princess Elisabeth, Descartes, Ryle, continued (review previous readings)

Week 5 – Materialism, Pan-psychism, Consciousness

M/ February 12th

Panpsychism

Margaret Cavendish, “Correspondence” (excerpts from *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period*) [PDF on Canvas]

W/ February 14th

Materialism

Thomas Hobbes, “On Man” (excerpt from *Leviathan*) [PDF on Canvas]

Terry Bisson, “They’re Made out of Meat!” [PDF on Canvas]

- [supp.] Francis Crick and Christof Koch, “What is the Function of the Claustrum?” *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 360.1458 (29 Jun., 2005): 1271-1279.

F/ February 16th

Consciousness

David Chalmers, “The Puzzle of Conscious Experience,” *Scientific American* 273 (1995): 80-86.

Week 6 – Extended Minds & Other Minds

M/ February 12th

Body & Mind

Daniel Dennett, “Where am I?” [PDF on Canvas]

W/ February 14th

Extended Minds

Andy Clark and David Chalmers, “The Extended Mind,” *Analysis* 58.1 (Jan. 1998): 7-19.

F/ February 16th

Other Minds

Nagel, “What Is It Like To Be A Bat?”

Week 7 – Enactivism

M/ February 19th

Enactivism

Alva Noë, *Out of Our Minds*, “Preface” and Chapter 1: “An Astonishing Hypothesis.”

- [supp.] Fernando Vidal, “Brainhood, Anthropological Figure of Modernity,” *History of the Human Sciences* 22.1 (Feb. 2009), 5-36.

W/ February 21st

Enactivism

Noë, *Out of Our Minds*, Chapter 2: “Conscious Life.”

F/ February 23rd

Enactivism

Noë, *Out of Our Minds*, Chapter 3: “The Dynamics of Consciousness.”

Week 8

M/ February 26th

Enactivism

Noë, *Out of Our Minds*, Chapter 4: “Wide Minds.”

W/ February 28th

Enactivism

Noë, *Out of Our Minds*, Chapter 5: “Habits.”

F/ March 2nd

Enactivism

Noë, *Out of Our Minds*, Chapter 6: “The Grand Illusion.”

No Classes March 12th – 16th (Spring Break)

Week 9

M/ March 5th

Mental Health & Selfhood

D.F. Wallace, “The Depressed Person,” *Harper’s Magazine* (Jan. 1998). [PDF on Canvas]

- [supp.] Matthew Ratcliffe, except [PDF on Canvas]

W/ March 7th

Mental Health & Selfhood

R.D. Laing, Selections from *The Divided Self* [PDF on Canvas]

- [supp.] Paul Lysaker and John Lysaker, Schizophrenia and Alterations in Self-Experience: A Comparison of Six Perspectives,” *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 6.2 (2008): 331-340.

F/ March 9th

Mental Health & Selfhood

Wallace and Laing, continued (review previous readings).

Week 10

M/ March 19th

Identity & Alterity

Katherine Rowland, “We Are Multitudes,” *Aeon* [PDF on Canvas]

W/ March 21st

Identity & Alterity

Gloria Anzaldúa, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” [PDF on Canvas]

F/ March 23rd

Identity & Alterity

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (4th Edition), Chapter 2 [PDF on Canvas].

Week 11

M/ March 26th

Organism & Umwelt

Jakob von Uexküll, Selections from *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* [PDF on Canvas]

W/ March 28th

Organism & Umwelt

Uexküll, Selections from *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* [PDF on Canvas]

F/ March 30th

Organism & Umwelt

Uexküll, Selections from *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* [PDF on Canvas]

Week 12

M/ April 2nd

Evolution

Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds*, Chapter 2: “A History of Animals.”

- [supp.] Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds*, Chapter 1: “Meetings Across the Tree of Life”

W/ April 4th

Evolution

Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds*, Chapter 3: “Mischief and Craft.”

F/ April 6th

Evolution

Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds*, Chapter 4: “From White Noise to Consciousness.”

- [supp.] Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds*, Chapter 6: “Our Minds and Others.”

Week 13 – *NB: Final week to complete and submit (optional) extra-credit work.

M/ April 9th

Posthumanism

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, Introduction.

W/ April 11th

Posthumanism

Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, Chapter 1.

F/ April 13th

Posthumanism

Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, Chapter 2.

Week 14

M/ April 23rd

Topics & Student Presentations

TBD

W/ April 25th

Topics & Student Presentations

TBD

F/ April 27th

Topics & Student Presentations

TBD

Week 15

M/ April 30th

Course Review

Conclusion & Closing Thoughts – No Reading

Grading Scale:

93.0 - 100.0	A	87.0 - 89.9	B+	77.0 - 79.9	C+	67.0 - 69.9	D+
90.0 - 92.9	A-	83.0 - 86.9	B	73.0 - 76.9	C	60.0 - 66.9	D
		80.0 - 82.9	B-	70.0 - 72.9	C-	Below 60.0	F

Critical Thinking Module P/NP

Optional Extra Credit Work:

At any time *before* Week 14, you can earn up to 3% in extra credit by completing any of the following extra credit assignments. (This extra credit will be added to your overall grade *up to* a maximum of 100% in the course; i.e., if it increases your grade *beyond* 100%, you'll get 100%). You can earn a maximum of 3% through extra credit work, even if you do more than one project.

- Report on a Relevant Talk or Event**

Attend an academic talk or event relevantly connected to the course themes, such as one of the Philosophy Department's colloquia, or a talk organized by the [Emory Center for Mind, Brain and Culture](#), and submit a 1-page report summarizing the central arguments and articulating 1-2 questions that could be used to generate discussion about the key claims. Consider what kinds of things you might ask the presenter, if you had the chance to follow-up with them. After submitting this assignment, I may call on you to present your report to the class, or encourage you to email the speaker with your questions (so make them good!).

Final Disclaimer:

This syllabus should be considered provisional. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time, as the course progresses. Such changes will be reflected in the version of the syllabus available through Canvas.