This course considers a variety of problems about the nature of mental phenomena and their relationship to the rest of reality.

Two types of mental phenomena which have given rise to philosophical debate are consciousness and intentionality. Consciousness is often said to be the stumbling-block for physicalist or materialist theories of the mind. But consciousness is also of intrinsic interest: what does it mean to say that a creature is or is not conscious? What is the difference between the conscious and the unconscious? How is human consciousness unified? 'Intentionality' is a philosophical term for the representational power of mental states (it therefore does not just refer to intentions to do things). Intentional mental states are those that are 'about' things in the world. This is sometimes described as their having representational content. What does it mean to have content? Can this be explained by a naturalistic conception of the world?

'Intentionality' is a philosophical term for the representational power of mental states (it therefore does not just refer to intentions to do things). Intentional mental states are those that are 'about' things in the world. This is sometimes described as their having representational content. What does it mean to have content? Can this be explained by a naturalistic conception of the world?

Another group of problems is epistemological: how do we acquire knowledge of our own minds and the minds of others? Is our knowledge of other minds based wholly on theoretical reasoning or does it also require empathy and imagination? Do we possess privileged knowledge of our own minds and if so, how is that explained?

Addressing problems about the nature of mental phenomena often requires philosophical study of specific mental faculties: the faculties of the will (including decision and intention), imagination and mind-reading for example. These phenomena all give rise to their own specific philosophical problems.

SYLLABUS

- **Epistemology of mind**: knowledge of one's own mind; unity of consciousness;
- **Consciousness**: varieties of consciousness; intentional theories of consciousness; the explanatory gap;
- **Intentionality and mental representation**: the nature of intentionality intentional objects; reductive theories of content; externalism and internalism;
- **Mental faculties**: intention and the will; imagination, mind-reading.

PREREQUISITES

This course presupposes some knowledge of basic metaphysics and epistemology, as covered in Part IA paper 1, and Part IB paper 1. Those who are coming into Philosophy Part II after another Tripos would do well to start by looking at some of the reading recommended for the Mind and Matter 'section of Part IA, Paper 01.

OBJECTIVES

Students taking this paper will be expected to:

1. Acquire a detailed knowledge of some of the concepts, positions and arguments in the central literature on the topics of the course.
2. Acquire an understanding of how different topics of the syllabus fit together.
3. Engage closely and critically with some of the ideas studied.
4. Develop their ability to think independently about the philosophical problems and arguments studied.

PRELIMINARY READING

On consciousness:


On 'intentionality' and mental content:


On the epistemology of mind:

CASSAM, Quassim, ed., *Self-Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). [On knowledge of one's own mind: see the introduction to this collection]

On mental faculties:

**READING LIST**

*Material marked with an asterisk* is important

**GENERAL BOOKS**

There are a number of good anthologies of essays in the philosophy of mind. Here are two:

- **CHALMERS, David**, ed., *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). [This contains many useful readings for a number of areas of the paper. Referred to below as CHALMERS]
- **GERTLER, Brie, and Larry SHAPIRO, eds.,** *Arguing About the Mind* (London: Routledge, 2007). [A more unusual anthology, with some good pieces that are not found in the normal textbooks]

On consciousness, a classic collection of readings is:


An excellent up-to-date anthology of commissioned pieces is:

- **MCLAUGHLIN, Brian, Ansgar BECKERMANN, and Sven WALTER, The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Also available online at: [http://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199262618.001.0001](http://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199262618.001.0001) [Intended as state-of-the-art accounts of the main issues in the area. Referred to below as MCLAUGHLIN]

**EPISTEMOLOGY OF MIND**

**Knowledge of One’s Own Mind: First-Person Thought**

Many take there to be something special about first-personal language and thought. Arguments for this often appeal to the special role first-personal language and thought plays in explanations of actions.


- **NAGEL, Thomas, The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), ch. 4 'The objective self'.
- **REICHENBACH, Hans, Elements of Symbolic Logic** (New York: Macmillan, 1948), sect. 50 'Token-reflexive words'.

**Knowledge of One's Own Mind: First-Person Authority**

Does our knowledge of our own mental states differ in fundamental ways from our knowledge of the external world, either epistemically or psychologically? Do we have privileged access to our own minds? How do we acquire self-knowledge?

- **SMITHIES, Declan, and Daniel STOLJAR, eds., *Introspection and Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). [The introduction provides a very helpful overview over the philosophical terrain. See also essays by Schwitzgebel, Dretske, Gertler, Sosa, Byrne, Moran]
CONSCIOUSNESS

Varieties of Consciousness

What is the difference between access and phenomenal consciousness? Do both kinds give rise to the “hard problem” of consciousness?


*DENNETT, Daniel, 'Towards a Cognitive Theory of Consciousness', in his Brainstorms (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), pp. 149-73. Also available on Moodle


HILL, Christopher, Consciousness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804274


The Explanatory Gap

What is the “hard” problem of consciousness?

*AKINS, Kathleen, 'What Is It Like to Be Boring and Myopic?' in B. Dahlbom, ed., Dennett and His Critics. 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 124-60. Also available on Moodle


PAPINEAU, David, Thinking About Consciousness (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1093/019243824.001.0001

Intentional Theories of Consciousness

Intentionalist theories of consciousness argue that what it is for a mental state to be phenomenally conscious just is for it to have a particular type of content. There are broadly, two types of intentionalist theories: first-order and higher-order.

First order representationalist theories argue that the phenomenal character of an experience is identical with its representational content.


CRANE, Tim, 'Intentionalism', in MCLAUGHLIN, above, pp. 474-93. Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199262618.003.0029


Higher-order internationalist theories argue that phenomenal consciousness requires inner awareness. To be conscious a mental state must be the object of another mental state.
**INTENTIONALITY AND MENTAL REPRESENTATION**

The Nature of Intentionality

What is intentionality?


**Intentional Objects**


QUINE, W.V.O., 'Existence and Quantification', in his *Ontological Relativity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 91-113. Also available on Moodle


**Reductive Theories of Content**

Can we give a naturalistic account of representational content?

*CUMMINS, Robert, *Meaning and Mental Representation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).* [The whole book is highly recommended, but chapters 6-8 are particularly useful here]


FODOR, Jerry, *Psychosemantics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), ch. 4 'Mental and the world order'.


**Externalism and Internalism**

Does the content of our mental states depend on our relationship to the external environment?


*FODOR, Jerry, *Psychosemantics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), ch. 2 'Individualism and supervenience'. Also available on Moodle


EVANS, Gareth, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), ch. 6 'Demonstrative identification'.

MENTAL FACULTIES

Intention and the Will

Do we have a distinct faculty of the will? What are intentions and what role do they play in the phenomena of addiction and weakness of will?


*DAVIDSON, Donald, Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), ch. 2 'How is weakness of the will possible?'. Also available online at: [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3521354.0007.009](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3521354.0007.009)

*HOLTON, Richard, 'How Is Strength of Will Possible?' in S. Stroud and C. Tappolet, eds., *Weakness of Will and Practical Irrationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 39-67. Also available online at: [https://doi.org/10.1083/0199257361.003.0003](https://doi.org/10.1083/0199257361.003.0003)


Can we gain knowledge through imagination? Or can we only imagine what we know?


**Mind-Reading**

How do we know about the mental states of others? According to theory theorists, we employ a theory of mind. According to simulation theorists, we imaginatively project ourselves into others’ situation.

*CARRUTHERS, Peter, and Peter SMITH, eds., *Theories of Theories of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Also available online at: [http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511597985](http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511597985). [Essays by Gordon, Carruthers and Heal]*


Do we have a distinct capacity for empathy?


---

We welcome your suggestions for further readings that will improve and diversify our reading lists, to reflect the best recent research, and important work by members of under-represented groups. Please email your suggestions to phillib@hermes.cam.ac.uk including the relevant part and paper number. For information on how we handle your personal data when you submit a suggestion please see [https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/general-data](https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/general-data).