



CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Humanities

PHIL-207-001
Philosophy of Mind
Fall 2018

COURSE OUTLINE

The course description is available on the web @ <http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/web/phil.html>

Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for their records, especially to assist in transfer credit to post-secondary institutions.

1. Instructor Information

(a) Instructor	Megan Shelstad
(b) Office hours	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11:30 - 12:00 and 2:30 - 3:00
(c) Location	Young 312
(d) Phone 3951	Alternative: _____
(e) E-mail	shelstad@camosun.bc.ca
(f) Website	_____

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. Identify the key issues being debated by contemporary philosophers of mind.
2. Assess the differences among the fundamental theories of the nature of consciousness.
3. Subject these theories to critical examination.
4. Write about and discuss the importance of this area of philosophical research activity to our understanding of the complexities of the human mind.

3. Required Materials

- (a) Texts: **Blackmore, Susan. 2012. *Consciousness: An Introduction*. OUP.**

4. Course Content and Schedule

Lectures: Tuesdays: 12:30 am – 2:20 pm YOUNG 317

Seminar A: Thursdays – 12:30 – 1:20 pm YOUNG 317

Seminar B: Thursdays – 1:30 – 2:20pm YOUNG 317

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

- (a) **Assignments: 10% - Self-assessment Homework - see course outline**
(late or emailed homework NOT accepted, please submit while attending the relevant class, please type).
- (b) **Tests: 40% - 2 tests at 20% each**
- (c) **Exams: 25% - Final exam, in the exam period**
- (d) **Other: 10% - Seminar attendance and participation**
5% - Seminar discussion leader
10% - Presentation (last week of class)

6. Grading System

- Standard Grading System (GPA)
- Competency Based Grading System

7. Recommended Materials to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

Various videos and articles as listed on the reading schedule.
See Susan Blackmore's website, <http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites>

8. College Supports, Services and Policies



Immediate, Urgent, or Emergency Support

If you or someone you know requires immediate, urgent, or emergency support (e.g. illness, injury, thoughts of suicide, sexual assault, etc.), **SEEK HELP**. Resource contacts @ <http://camosun.ca/about/mental-health/emergency.html> or <http://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence/get-support.html#urgent>

College Services

Camosun offers a variety of health and academic support services, including counselling, dental, disability resource centre, help centre, learning skills, sexual violence support & education, library, and writing centre. For more information on each of these services, visit the **STUDENT SERVICES** link on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/>

College Policies

Camosun strives to provide clear, transparent, and easily accessible policies that exemplify the college's commitment to life-changing learning. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of College policies. Policies are available on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/>. Education and academic policies include, but are not limited to, Academic Progress, Admission, Course Withdrawals, Standards for Awarding Credentials, Involuntary Health and Safety Leave of Absence, Prior Learning Assessment, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Student Ancillary Fees, Student Appeals, Student Conduct, and Student Penalties and Fines.

A. GRADING SYSTEMS <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html>

The following two grading systems are used at Camosun College:

1. Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

2. Competency Based Grading System (Non GPA)

This grading system is based on satisfactory acquisition of defined skills or successful completion of the course learning outcomes

Grade	Description
COM	The student has met the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
DST	The student has met and exceeded, above and beyond expectation, the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
NC	The student has not met the goals, criteria or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.

B. Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html> for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
CW	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

SEMINARS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT HOMEWORK, INCLUDING ARGUMENT ANALYSIS

SEMINAR LEADERSHIP, ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (15% of final grade)

Completing any assigned reading is essential preparation for seminar assignments as well as for self-assessment homework.

The goal is engagement and discussion as well as increased familiarity with issues in philosophy of mind.

You also need to sign up (sheet available at the first class) to be a discussion leader for **one** seminar. There will likely be 2 spots for each seminar, so you will be working as a team in leading the class through that week's **practice**. This is worth 5% of your grade. The **practices** all come from the textbook.

The first week's seminar will be based on your reading of an article which you can find online (see course outline). We will then form small groups (3 or 4) and analyse the author's arguments. If you wish to do some preparatory notes in advance (highly recommended), you can use the following general template:

1. Author's main point/thesis/conclusion (should be done first, after reading essay at least once).
 2. Author's main reasons/premises to support the main point.
 3. Evidence to support reasons/premises (our selection is an essay so evidence likely will be in the form of examples, cases, illustrations, etc. Don't expect someone to insert statistics or experimental research into an essay although some could be mentioned).
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Self-assessment homework (10%)

Here is an edited paraphrase of Susan Blackmore's directions from her website about her intentions regarding the self-assessment questions and how to use them.

They are intended to help you revise your understanding of each chapter. Some questions invite you to record your own opinion on a critical issue. This can be fun to do, especially if you are ruthlessly honest and write down what you really think. You will probably find that your ideas and opinions change substantially as you work through the course and it can be fascinating to look back at what you once believed (I say this from experience, having rejected many of my own daft theories of consciousness over the years!) You might start out with your own theory of consciousness that you think solves all the problems, and then end up rejecting it as rubbish, or vice versa.

<http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites>

Read the relevant chapter(s) before Tuesday's class leaving yourself plenty of time to answer the self-assessment questions. Use proper grammar, spelling and sentence-structure. Type and print out a hard copy and hand it in at the beginning of class. If you are emailing work to yourself to print on campus, give yourself enough time. **No late or emailed homework accepted.**

*****At all times use the "PRINCIPLE of CHARITY."*****

A "Pecha Kucha" style presentation (10%) will be done at the end of term. More information later.

Phil 207-001 Reading Schedule (from the textbook)

Readings to be done **before** class; schedule subject to change if needed.

Self-Assessment Homework (from textbook) usually will be due on Tuesdays at the **beginning** of class.

Late or emailed homework **NOT** accepted, please submit while attending the relevant class, please type.

Remember to turn OFF your cell phone for class and put it away. Laptops, ipads, etc. may be used for note taking only. See "Classroom Technology Use."

Camosun.ca/learn/school/business/current-students/documents/ClassroomTechnologyUse.pdf

Missing classes: if you miss a class due to illness or some other reason, it is not necessary to notify me unless a test is missed. It is the student's responsibility to find out from another student what was covered. Check your reading schedule.

Policy on missed tests: make-up tests will be permitted only in cases of illness or personal crisis. Documentation is required.

Disruptive behaviour, such as carrying on conversations when the instructor or others are speaking, is a sign of disrespect and is not acceptable in class.

Problems in the Philosophy of Mind

Week 1 (Sept. 4, 6): **Lecture** (Tuesday): Introduction, the Mind-Body problem, practice (p. 4)

Seminar (Thursday): Read the following article before class: "How the Internet, Social Media, and Smartphones are Dividing and Conquering Our Consciousness," Ben Dickinson, www.elle.com

Homework assignment #1 (due Sept. 11)

1. Describe the mind-body problem.
 2. What is behaviourism? Why did it flourish and then die?
 3. Describe the "mysterious gap" in as many different ways as you can.
 4. Who described the 'hard problem' and what is it? Is this a "real" problem that needs solving?
 5. What is a "qualia"? Provide some examples.
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Week 2 (Sept. 11, 13): **Lecture**: Sections 1.1 (What's the problem?) and 1.2 (What is it like to be ...?)

Seminar: Practice: What is it like being me now? (p. 21)

Homework assignment #2 (due Sept. 18)

1. Who coined the term 'Cartesian Theatre' (CT)? What is meant by it? What is wrong with it?
2. Name three theories that avoid theatre imagery altogether.
3. Explain, in your own words, Dennett's theory of multiple drafts.
4. What is meant by the phrase 'grand illusion'?
5. How might change blindness affect us in daily life?
6. Why are magicians' tricks relevant to consciousness?

The World

Week 3 (Sept. 18, 20): **Lecture:** Sections 2.4 (The theatre of the mind) and 2.6 (The grand illusion)

Seminar: Practice: *Where is this experience?* (p. 53)

Homework assignment #3 (due Sept. 25)

1. Describe the difference between ego and bundle theories. Where did each get its name?
 2. What is the status of multiple personality disorder in psychiatry today?
 3. Describe a typical experiment for testing the two hemispheres of a split brain patient independently.
 4. How many selves are there in a split brain patient: one, two or none? Describe at least one theory that gives each answer.
 5. Are you a bundle theorist or an ego theorist? How does this affect the way you live?
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The Self

Week 4 (Sept. 25, 27): **Lecture:** Section 3.7 (Egos, bundles & multiple selves), The Teletransporter p. 119

Seminar: Practice: *who is conscious now?* (p. 106)

Homework assignment #4 (due Oct. 2)

1. What did William James mean when he said that the thoughts themselves are the thinkers?
 2. In your own words explain Dennett's theory of the self.
 3. Do you feel as though you are, or have, a self? If so, how do you explain this feeling?
 4. What is the problem of free will?
 5. Explain Dennett's objection to Libet's experiment.
 6. According to Wegner, what causes the experience of will?
 7. Do you have free will?
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Week 5 (Oct. 2, 4): **Lecture:** Sections 3.8 (Theories of Self) and 3.9 (Agency and free will)

Seminar: Practice: *"Am I the same me as a moment ago?"* (p. 123)

Thanksgiving Day holiday – October 8 – college closed

Week 6 (Oct. 9, 11): **Lecture:** ***TEST 1*** (chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Seminar: Practice: *Where is this pain?* (p. 164)

Homework assignment #5 (due Oct. 16)

1. What is meant by "the unity of consciousness"? Why is it a problem?
2. Describe the binding problem(s).
3. Explain Zeki's theory of microconsciousnesses.
4. How does Edelman and Tononi's theory account for unity and diversity?
5. What is synaesthesia, and how can it be tested?
6. Do you think the unity of consciousness is an illusion?

The Brain

Week 7 (Oct. 16, 18): **Lecture:** Section 4.11(The unity of consciousness)

Seminar: Practice: *Is this experience unified?* (p. 171)

Homework assignment #6 (due Oct. 23)

1. What was the “argument from design” supposed to prove? Why is it false?
 2. Describe some theories in which consciousness directs evolution. What is wrong with them?
 3. What is a selfish replicator?
 4. Describe some differences between sociobiology and evolutionary psychology.
 5. If you believe in the possibility of zombies, what is the function of consciousness?
 6. Do you personally believe that consciousness evolved by natural selection?
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Evolution

Week 8 (Oct. 23, 25): **Lecture:** Sections 5.13 (Evolution and consciousness),The Sentience Line, p.219

Seminar: Practice: *Is this a meme?* (p.233)

Homework assignment #7 (due Oct. 30)

1. Think of some ways in which Darwinian processes may be involved in the evolution of mind.
 2. What are memes? Compare two theories that make use of memes in understanding consciousness.
 3. How might you tell whether an animal (e.g. a cow, a fish on a hook, or a battery hen) is suffering? Can you be sure?
 4. List three or more skills which suggest that an animal has a theory of mind.
 5. Do other species have language? Why is this relevant to consciousness?
 6. Which living things do you think are conscious, and why?
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Week 9 (Oct. 30, Nov. 1): **Lecture:** Sections 5.14 (The function of consciousness)& 5.15 (Animal minds)

Seminar: Practice: *what is it like to be that animal?* (p.236), Activity: Zoo choice

Homework assignment #8 (due Nov. 6)

1. Give an example of emergent intelligent action in a simple animal and a simple machine.
 2. What things do people claim machines could never do? What do you think?
 3. People are generally bad at judging whether machines or other creatures have goals, desires or intentions. Give two or three examples that illustrate this.
 4. What is the relevance of embodiment to machine consciousness?
 5. Compare Kurzweil's and Brooks's visions for the future of conscious machines.
 6. How would you set about building a conscious machine? (assume you could have any components or apparatus you needed.)
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Remembrance Day holiday – November 12 – college closed

Artificial Consciousness

Week 10 (Nov. 6, 8): **Lecture:** Sections 6.17 (Could a machine be conscious?) and 6.18 (How to build a

conscious machine)

Seminar: *Practice: Is this machine conscious? (p. 278)*

Week 11 (Nov. 13, 15): **Lecture:** ***TEST 2*** (chapters 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18)

Seminar: *Practice: What is it that is conscious? (p. 293)*

Homework assignment #9 (due Nov. 20)

1. Give some examples of "Eureka moments". Why are they relevant to nonconscious processing?
 2. Describe some of the processes involved in creativity.
 3. In which ways have emotional responses to unconscious stimuli been demonstrated?
 4. What is intuition?
 5. Describe at least two experiments in which a dissociation was found between conscious and unconscious perception.
 6. If events and stimuli you fail to notice nevertheless affect your emotions and behaviour, what does this tell you about your own consciousness? Does this bother you?
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Borderlands

Week 12 (Nov. 20, 22): **Lecture:** Section 7.19 (Unconscious processing), "The concept of flow" p. 317-18

Seminar: *Practice: Was this decision conscious? (p. 305)*

Homework assignment #10 (due Nov. 27)

1. What factors are involved in reality monitoring?
 2. What are the differences between perceptions, imagery, hallucinations, and pseudo-hallucinations?
 3. Describe some of the ways in which hallucinations can be induced.
 4. Describe some of the drugs used by shamans and the worlds they claim to see.
 5. What is sleep paralysis? What are its most common features and why is it so frightening?
 6. What experiences have you had that hover on the boundary (if there is a boundary) between reality and imagination. Do any of these help you in thinking about the nature of consciousness?
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Week 13 (Nov. 27, 29): **Lecture:** Section 7.20 (Reality and imagination)

Seminar: *Practice: Is this my normal state of consciousness? (p. 358)*

Week 14 (Dec. 4, 6): **Lecture:** Pecha Kucha presentations

Seminar: *Practice: Mindfulness (p.449)*

*****FINAL TEST IN EXAM PERIOD*****

Make work schedules and travel plans accordingly; exams are part of the term.