

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
School of Philosophy, Theology & Religion
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Philosophy of Mind
Banner code: PHIL 0820250

20 Credits

MODULE GUIDE
2010/2011

This module outline **must** be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of *The Philosopher's Stone* and the *Philosophy Study Guide*, available from the Philosophy Office (room 107).

MOMD and Erasmus students should pick up a student pack (including the *Stone* and the *Philosophy Study Guide*) from the Philosophy Office. Erasmus students, please note that your attendance and assessment requirements are exactly the same as for all other students on this module. Please see the *Philosopher's Stone* for more information.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Module convenor: Nikk Effingham
Office number: 114
Email: N.Effingham@bham.ac.uk
Office hours: Wednesday 2-3, Friday 1-2.

Semester: One
Credit rating: 20
Level: I

Tutor: Seminars for this module will be taken by a tutor, who is a Postgraduate Teaching Assistant in the Department:

Paul Broadbent
E-mail: PXB343@bham.ac.uk

Seminar tutors do not have office hours; however, your seminar tutor will be very happy to talk to you about any aspect of this module by appointment. Please email him (or speak to him before or after your seminar) to arrange a place and time to meet.

2. ABOUT THE MODULE

MODULE SUMMARY

This module introduces central issues in contemporary philosophy of mind, focusing on the problem of whether our mental experience, especially its subjective character, can be incorporated into the naturalistic, scientific picture of the world. The first part of the course will survey such philosophical theories of the mind as dualism and the identity theory. The second half of the module will discuss functionalism, the mystery of consciousness and eliminative materialism

3. MODULE ORGANISATION

Lectures: Friday 2-3. Arts Lecture Room 4, on the 1st floor of the Arts Building. There will be **no lecture** during Reading Week (week 6).

Seminars: Seminars are weekly, starting in week 2. Attendance at seminars is compulsory. Seminar groups and times will be arranged during the first lecture of this module, in week 1. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have been allocated to a seminar group; if you do not get assigned to a group, or if you cannot make the time you have been allocated to, please see Janet Elwell in room 109 as soon as possible. **You may not change seminar group without Janet's permission.** Students who attend the wrong seminar group will be marked absent.

There will be **no seminar** during Reading Week.

Work and attendance

The work and attendance requirements for this course are that you:

- **Attend all seminars.** If you are absent from a seminar/class through illness or for any other reason, you should inform the module convenor as soon as possible – if possible, *before* the class.
- **Prepare adequately for seminars** as directed by your tutor or the module convenor. Students who do not turn up with *written answers* to the seminar questions will be asked to leave the seminar. This *includes* bringing all required reading to the seminar. Short of having an eidetic memory, it's pointless to read the material on the computer and then think this alone will help when we start referring to specific portions of the reading, or rereading specific paragraphs etc. **Bring it to the seminar.**
- **Complete written work on time:** Failure to complete assessed work by the due date constitutes a violation of the work and attendance requirements.

Persistent violations of work and attendance requirements will be reported to the Senior Tutor. If you have difficulties (e.g. personal, financial or family problems) that result in persistent failure to meet the work and attendance requirements, you should talk to your academic tutor or the Welfare Tutor.

Students are required by University regulations to display 'due diligence'. Failure to do so may result in your being barred from assessment, which can lead ultimately to exclusion from your degree programme.

Study budget

The University's Code of Practice specifies that a 20-credit module is expected to require about 200 hours work by students.

For this module, you are recommended to break this down roughly as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Lectures | 10 hours |
| Seminars | 9 hours |
| Writing up lecture/seminar notes | 19 hours |
| Preparation for seminars | 9 x 8 hours = 72 hours |
| Essay preparation | 2 x 45 = 90 |
| TOTAL: | 200 hours |

Prompt arrival at classes

Students should note that all classes in the University start **on the hour** and should end at 50 minutes past the hour. Late arrival at seminars may result in your being marked absent; if you arrive late it is your responsibility to ensure that your presence has been noted.

4. ASSESSMENT

The assessment for this module is as follows:

This module is assessed by two essays, each of 1,500 words. Each essay is worth 50% of the final mark.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

For the Philosophy Department's assessment criteria and guidance on how to meet them, see the *Philosophy Study Guide*.

ASSESSED ESSAYS

Two essays of 1,500 words each should be chosen from the lists provided below.

Presentation

Essays must be typed in at least 12 point in a readable font, with wide margins and page numbers, and should **not** be single spaced. They should include proper bibliography and references; **marks will be deducted for inadequate referencing/bibliography**. See the *Study Guide* for guidelines and the *Philosopher's Stone* for information about penalties.

Failure to provide adequate referencing can amount to plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and can lead to exclusion from your degree programme. Please see the *Study Guide* for guidance on avoiding plagiarism and the *Philosopher's Stone* for information about how cases of plagiarism are dealt with.

Word limit

Your essay **MUST NOT** exceed the word limit stated above. **You must state the exact number of words used (excluding bibliography) at the end of the main text of your essay, and again on**

the essay submission form. If you fail to do this, your essay may be returned to you so that you can add this information, and this may significantly delay the marking process.

See the *Philosopher's Stone* for more information about the word limits and penalties for exceeding them.

Deadlines

The first essay must be handed in by 12.30pm, Tuesday 23rd November, 2010.

The second essay must be handed in by 12.30pm, Tuesday 25th January, 2011.

See the *Philosopher's Stone* for information about the granting of extensions and penalties for unexcused late submission. Late submissions for which no extension has been granted will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day.

Handing in your essay

You must hand **two copies** of your essay by 12.30pm on the due date, to the Philosophy Office. An essay submission form must be included with your essay; you can fill this in when you submit your essay. See the *Philosopher's Stone* for more information about essay hand-ins.

Uploading your essay to turnitinUK

You must upload your essay to turnitinUK prior to handing in the hard copies. You will be asked to tick a box confirming this on the essay submission form, and your essay will not be accepted unless you have ticked the box (or attach the form excusing you from this, signed by the Department's plagiarism officer). The essay you submit in hard copy **MUST** be exactly the same as the one you upload to turnitinUK. However if discrepancies do occur, it will be the hard copy that is assessed. See the *Philosopher's Stone* for more information.

Return of assessed essays

A report on your first assessed essay should be available by the end of semester one provided the essay is submitted on time. A report on your second assessed essay should be available by 24th February 2011 provided the essay is submitted on time. You will receive an email (to your bham.ac.uk account) as soon as your essay is available to pick up from the Philosophy Office; please **do not try to pick up your essay before you have received the email.**

Please note that all essay marks are provisional until confirmed by the Board of Examiners in June. Note also that you are **NOT** entitled to question the academic judgement of the person marking your essay. If you are unhappy with your mark, you should make an appointment with the member of staff who marked the essay to discuss your performance. If you are still not satisfied, you can raise the issue with the Head of Department, who may then arrange for a second member of staff to look at the essay. The HoD will not do this unless you have already discussed your essay with the person who marked it.

Students are welcome to discuss their essay with the module convenor or their academic tutor during office hours.

ESSAY TITLES

The essay titles for the **first** essay are:

- (1) “You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body.” (C.S.Lewis). Discuss.
- (2) To what extent is Christianity consistent with materialism?
- (3) What does it mean to know all of the ‘physical facts’? If I did, would I know all of the mental facts?
- (4) In the 1982 film *E.T.* Elliot says “You could be happy here, I could take care of you. I wouldn't let anybody hurt you. We could grow up together, E.T.”. Could Elliot consistently think someone could hurt E.T. were he to be a Type-Type Identity theorist?

The essay titles for the **second** essay are:

- (1) Evaluate one response to functionalism.
- (2) Is there a possible world in which there are zombies? If so, does this indicate that property dualism is true?
- (3) Evaluate the claim that no-one has ever believed anything.
- (4) What is Zimmerman's argument for substance dualism? Is it sound?
- (5) Do electrons have mental properties?

Do not hand in your second essay using a title from those listed for the first essay. **Do not** hand in your first essay using a title from those listed for the second essay.

5. OUTLINE OF THE MODULE

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Week 1 (beginning 29 Sept): | Dualism I |
| Week 2 (beginning 6 Oct): | Dualism II |
| Week 3 (beginning 13 Oct): | Type-Type Identity |
| Week 4 (beginning 20 Oct): | Knowledge Arguments |
| Week 5 (beginning 27 Oct): | Multiple Realizability |

WEEK 6 (beginning 3 November): READING WEEK (no lectures or seminars)

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Week 7 (beginning 10 Nov): | Functionalism |
| Week 8 (beginning 17 Nov): | Supervenience and Zombies |
| Week 9 (beginning 24 Nov): | Eliminative Materialism |
| Week 10 (beginning 1 Dec): | Panpsychism |
| Week 11 (beginning 8 Dec): | Dualism III: This Year's Dualism |

Seminar Topics and Required Reading

Some of the readings come from the set text (Heil); some from the coursepack; others have to be rooted out on the internet. I ***strongly*** suggest that you print these out ASAP and then you've got them there to begin with. Students are expected to bring all reading material to the seminar, along with answers to the questions. This ***includes*** material from the internet. If you don't have the reading with you, be expected to be asked to leave.

Topic 1 (week 2): Dualism I

Heil chapter 1-3.

Extract from Plantinga, A. (2007). 'Materialism and Christian Belief', in Van Inwagen, P. and Zimmerman, D. (eds.) *Persons: Human and Divine*. Oxford: OUP, 99-120. [in coursepack].

Topic 2 (week 3): Dualism II

Merricks, T. (1999). 'The Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting', in Murray, M. (ed.) *Reason For The Hope Within*. Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 261-287. [in coursepack]

van Inwagen, P. (1978). 'The Possibility of Resurrection', *The International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 9, 114-121 [available online; if you have a problem searching for it just use a campus computer and Google Scholar, input the article title and click on FullText@bham]

Topic 3 (week 4): Materialism and Type-Type Identity

Heil chapter 6.

Place, U. (1956). 'Is Consciousness a Brain Process?', *British Journal of Psychology*, 47, 44-50. [available online]

Topic 4 (week 5): Knowledge Arguments

Jackson, F. (1982). 'Epiphenomenal Qualia', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 32, 127-36. [available online]

Dennett, D. (1991). *Consciousness Explained*, London: Penguin, 398-406 [in coursepack]

Lewis, D. (1988). 'What Experience Teaches', reprinted in Lewis, D. (ed.) *Papers in Metaphysics and Epistemology* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 262-90. [in coursepack]

Topic 5 (week 7): Multiple Realizability

Putnam, H. (1967). 'The Nature of Mental States', available from <http://www-csli.stanford.edu/~paulsko/papers/PutnamNMS.pdf>

Lewis, D. (1980). 'Mad Pain and Martian Pain', in Lewis, D. (ed.) *Philosophical Papers Volume I*. Oxford: OUP, 122-30. [in coursepack]

Topic 6 (week 8): Functionalism

Heil Chapter 7.

Excerpt from Block, N. (1978) 'Troubles with Functionalism', reprinted in Lycan (ed.) *Mind and Cognition 2nd Edition*, Oxford: Blackwell. [in error, I included a chapter of Braddon-Mitchell and Jackson. That's not the required reading – although read it if you fancy. The Block excerpt is attached to this module guide]

Topic 7 (week 9): Supervenience and Zombies

Heil Chapters 9 and 13.

Kim, J. (1989). 'The Myth of Reductive Materialism', *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 63, 31-47. [available online; again if you have problems finding it use google scholar]

Topic 8 (week 10): Eliminative Materialism

Heil chapter 12.

Churchland, P. (1981). 'Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes', *Journal of Philosophy*, 78, 67-90. [available online]

Topic 9 (week 11): Panpsychism

Nagel, T. (1979). 'Panpsychism', *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 13. [in coursepack].

Strawson, G. (2006). 'Realistic Monism', in Freeman, A. (ed.) *Consciousness and its Place in Nature*. Exeter: Imprint Academic, p. 3-31. [in coursepack]

6. READING LIST

Compulsory purchase: You must purchase John Heil's *Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction 2nd Edition* and the coursepack.

Course pack: A course pack is available for this module for £1. This includes readings for the seminars. If you have not yet bought a course pack, please buy one from the Philosophy Office.

Reading list: However, here is a general reading list:

Armstrong, D. (1968). *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*, London, Routledge.

Braddon-Mitchell, D. and Jackson, F. (2007). *Philosophy of Mind and Cognition 2nd Edition*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Burwood, S., Gilbert, P. and Lennon, K. (1998). *The Character of Mind*, London, UCL.

Carruthers, P. (2004). *The Nature of Mind*, London, Routledge.

Chalmers, D. (1996). *The Conscious Mind*, Oxford, OUP.

Churchland, P. (1988). *Matter and Consciousness Revised Edition*, London, MIT Press.

Crane, T. (2003). *The Mechanical Mind 2nd Edition*, London, Routledge.

Kim, J. (1996). *Philosophy of Mind*, Boulder, Westview Press.

Kirk, R. (2003). *Mind & Body*, Chesham, Acumen.

Lowe, E. J. (2000). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Macdonald, C. (1989). *Mind-Body Identity Theories*, London, Routledge.

Maslin, K.T. (2001). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Rey, G. (1997). *Contemporary Philosophy of Mind*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Tye, M. (1989). *The Metaphysics of Mind*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

The following compilations may be of interest as well:

Heil, J. (2004). *Philosophy of Mind: A Guide and Anthology*, Oxford, OUP.

Lycan, W. and Prinz, J. (2008). *Mind and Cognition: Third Edition*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Mclaughlin, B. and Cohen, J. (2007). *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Mind*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Additionally, on-line resources in this area are excellent. It's just pointless giving you a reading list for the topics, as David Chalmer's website (I leave you to find it yourselves via google) already has

a *comprehensive* bibliography. All I'd be doing is repeating the same stuff here, so I won't bother including it.

Also, some articles relevant to the Christianity article aren't available in our library. I've copied some of them, and they can be got from me in my office. Because people have a tendency to steal stuff (which is what happened last time I did this) to get that folder come to my office with a crisp £20 note as a deposit to be returned upon the safe return of the articles.

Finally, of course, the Heil textbook has a list of recommend readings. Again, there's no use in me duplicating them here.

7. SEMINAR QUESTIONS

Seminars are *exclusively* for those students who are prepared and ready to debate the appropriate topic. To this end *every* student must turn up with written notes ready for discussion. These should be an A4 typed sheet or equivalent (but why hold back? If you have more to say, write more! Particularly as your notes made at this stage can be used for later reference when it comes to writing the essay).

These notes can be on any issue, or issues, relevant to the topic for discussion. However, I have included study questions relating to the set readings. **These are only for your use if you want** – if you'd rather concentrate on a particular topic not covered by the questions, or alternatively only concentrate on a small handful of the questions, feel free to do so. So answering all of the questions is not obligatory (although I hope that answering the questions will aid in understanding the texts, so double as a study aid).

This also means that, in weeks where it is appropriate to do so, you can concentrate on just one ISSUE if that is what you want to do. Whilst you should be basically familiar with each piece, if you turn up with a *thorough* understanding of one piece at the cost of getting to grips with every details of the other pieces, that's fine. However, to repeat: you should be familiar with the basics of each piece of set reading, particularly as I will build on some of the concepts in later lectures.

Seminar One: Dualism I

- (1) Briefly define the following: qualitative identity; numerical identity; physicalism; dualism; Cartesian Dualism; occassionalism; parallelism; idealism; epiphenomenalism.
- (2) What is Plantinga's argument from possibility? Do you think the possibility he cites as a counterexample to physicalism is really possible? If so, does it demonstrate dualism is true?
- (3) What is the argument from impossibility? What is the *tu quoque* response that van Inwagen uses?
- (4) What *counterargument* does Plantinga use against van Inwagen? Are you convinced by it? If not, why not? If so, does that mean you're a dualist?
- (5) Imagine dualism were true. Is there a problem of my mind causally interacting with the world? If so, what is the best solution on offer?

Seminar Two: Dualism II

- (1) Does my having a soul entail dualism?
- (2) If I disassemble a tent and put it back together two weeks later, is it the same tent? If I cut the tent up into pieces, which I weld back together before reassembling it, is it the same

tent? If I reduce it to its constituent atoms, let them travel around the universe for a billion years and then stick them back together, is it the same tent I end up with?

- (3) Can God let me be destroyed by being reduced to my atoms, and then put me back together? What if he put a single atom in a different place – would that make any difference?
- (4) How do you rate van Inwagen's proposal for what Christians should believe about the afterlife?
- (5) Do you think a Christian can be a materialist? If not, why not?

Seminar Three: Materialism and Type-Type Identity Theory

- (1) What are types? What are tokens? Give five examples of mental types. For each, give three example tokens.
- (2) If Lois Lane says 'Clark Kent is a wonderful man.' is she talking about Superman? How does that relate to Place's discussion at the start of §2 of his paper? Does Lois provide an 'adequate characterization' of superman (*cf* Place p. 45)?
- (3) Are all volcanoes islands? Imagine that things had gone differently, and by chance every volcano was also an island (that is, all volcanoes were unattached to other land masses, and were big enough to come out of the ocean). Would all volcanoes be islands then? How does this relate to what Place says on p. 46? How does what he say on p. 46 influence his philosophy of mind?
- (4) 'Lightning is a motion of electrical charges' Is that sentence true? If it isn't, where does that leave Place's argument for Type-Type identity theory? If it is, is Place correct in saying that assertions about consciousness are of that ilk?
- (5) 'If we assume, for example, that when a subject reports a green after-image he is asserting the occurrence inside himself of an object which is literally green, it is clear that we have on our hands an entity for which there is no place in the world of physics.' (p. 49). Is that true? What *is* going on when someone asserts the existence of a green after image? What, if anything, ends up being green?

Seminar Four: Knowledge Arguments

- (1) What are qualia? What's the Mary scenario?
- (2) Imagine everyone else in the world was blind, and always had been, and you were not. They ascribe to you amazing abilities such as being able to avoid holes, and win in all boxing matches. Is there any way you could explain to them *how* you did these things? Would such a blind person then know what it was to see?
- (3) What's the Knowledge Argument?
- (4) Does the Mary scenario give you any reason to believe the premises of the Knowledge Argument? Why does Dennett think they don't? Are these good reasons?
- (5) What is the Ability Hypothesis? If you accept the Ability Hypothesis, how is this meant to avoid the conclusion of the Knowledge Argument?
- (6) Is it true the sum total of propositions that Mary knows does not increase when she leaves the room, and she only acquires a new ability?

Seminar Five: Multiple Realisability

Firstly, a note on the readings. Only portions of the Putnam reading are important for this seminar. Whilst you should read the whole article, only section III is really pertinent to the questions below.

Some of it, particularly in section II, gets quite technical. Remember, it's a research skill to be able to successfully navigate around such technicalities to get from an article what *you need*, as opposed to understanding every little point (which, in the case of Putnam's paper, aren't really relevant to this topic).

- (1) What is multiple realisability? If pain is multiply realisable, then what problems does it pose to *type-type identity theory*? Try and formalise the argument in terms of premises and a conclusion.
- (2) What examples does Putnam give of pain being multiply realisable? Are they convincing examples? Can you think of any more examples?
- (3) Does it matter whether the examples of multiple realisability are actual examples or merely possible examples?
- (4) For Lewis, what is pain in humans? And in his example of Martians? Does this mean that Lewis thinks there are two things that can be *contingently* identical? If not, then what *does* he mean when he says pain is two different things depending upon what species is being discussed?
- (5) What does Lewis mean when he says an 'appropriate population'? Are there any problems with Lewis's definition of what an appropriate population is? Are there any problems if the appropriate population turns out to have only a single member?
- (6) Where do you think this leaves Type-Type Identity Theory? (*If you're not sure, that's an acceptable answer to this question for the purposes of the tutorial*)

Seminar Six: Functionalism

The set reading is Chapter 7 of Heil and the 'Excerpts from Troubles with Functionalism' which is attached to this module guide. By all means read the Braddon-Mitchell and Jackson chapter in the coursepack, but it is not a required text as stated in the coursepack.

- (1) What is functionalism? What is a function? How are inputs and outputs relevant to functional states?
- (2) Can functionalism account for multiple realisability of mental states? Give an example. Does this make functionalism a Type-Type Identity Theory, or a Token-Token Identity Theory, or neither?
- (3) Ned Block comes up with an example of China trying to implement a functional state similar to that my brain is meant to implement. Is this scenario possible? If it is possible, does this mean China would be thinking? If China is thinking, is there any way to demonstrate to someone who thought otherwise that they were wrong? If China isn't thinking, is this a problem for functionalism?
- (4) Same as (3), but with Block's more esoteric example of the Bolivian economy.
- (5) In the second half of Block's paper he discusses a form of functionalism that characterises the functional inputs/outputs in terms of neuron behaviour and/or the behaviour of our bodies. Does this allow the functionalist to avoid the problems from the China Brain and Bolivian Economy examples? If so, what further problems does Block think it has?
- (6) *"But even an appeal to such suspicious entities as infinite disjunctions will not bail out functionalism, since even the amended view will not tell us what there is in common to pain-feeling organisms in virtue of which they all have pain [...] Further, these are just the grounds on which functionalists typically acerbically reject the disjunctive theories*

sometimes advanced by desperate physicalists. If functionalists suddenly smile on wildly disjunctive states to save themselves from chauvinism they will have no way of defending themselves from physicalism.” (Block, p. 438). What does Block mean by this quote? Is he right?

Seminar Seven: Supervenience and Zombies

- (1) What is *supervenience*? Kim distinguishes two varieties in his paper. What are they? How do they differ?
- (2) Why would a property dualist want to say mental properties supervene on physical ones? What are the problems Kim raises if they do?
- (3) Give some examples of scenarios where certain properties of an object are *causally relevant* whilst other properties of that object are *not* causally relevant.
- (4) Is my property of ‘being in pain’ causally relevant to me crying out when I put my hand on a hot stove? If so, is my property of being in a brain state causally relevant to the same act? What problem does this cause for property dualism? How can they avoid these problems? Evaluate any responses you come up with.
- (5) If an elephant snaps a plank because it is heavy, and it snaps the plank because it weights a tonne, is the snapping of the plank causally overdetermined?
- (6) What is a zombie? How does it pose problems for physicalism?
- (7) Do mental properties supervene on physical properties?

Seminar Eight: Eliminative Materialism

- (1) What is a propositional attitude? What is Eliminative Materialism
- (2) Briefly sketch Stich’s argument for EM. Do you think it is sound? If not, why not. If so, how do you think someone would respond to it, and how would you defend the position from that response?
- (3) What is folk psychology?
- (4) Briefly sketch Churchland’s argument for EM. Is there any reason to think folk psychology should be eliminated? If not, what should we say in response to Churchland’s arguments that it should be? If so, does this mean EM is true?
- (5) Is EM self contradictory?

Seminar Nine: Panpsychism

Questions for this seminar will be released in a later lecture.