

Persons, Minds and Bodies

PHL240F

May-June 2020

Course Instructor: Dr. Jessica Wright jessicajulia.wright@mail.utoronto.ca

Lecture: Made available on Quercus asynchronously on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week.

Live Discussion: 10-11am Fridays on BB Collaborate. Attendance is encouraged but not mandatory.

Office Hours: Fridays 2-5pm on BB Collaborate, by appointment (sign up on Quercus)

Teaching Assistant: Andrew Lavigne andrew.lavigne@mail.utoronto.ca

Tutorials: Wednesdays at **11am** and **7pm, starting May 13th** and **ending June 10th**. Tutorial attendance is highly encouraged, but is not mandatory. You may attend whichever tutorial works best for your schedule. Tutorials will be held live on BB Collaborate.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to philosophy of mind. We will focus on issues in personal identity and the self, debates about the nature of consciousness, and apply these theories to questions about whether animals have minds, whether computers have minds, whether minds are “extended”, and whether the self is lost in cases of dementia. We will also think about how these theories about the self and consciousness apply to our understanding of death.

This is an *online, asynchronous* course. Course lectures will be delivered on Quercus in the form of recorded videos. The instructor will also host live, synchronous discussion periods on *BB Collaborate*. These live meetings are for the purpose of discussing the course content, applying the course content, and answering student questions. Tutorials will be hosted synchronously and will focus on philosophical skill-building and quizlet feedback. Because this is an asynchronous course, there is no mandatory attendance in live lecture or tutorials. However, course readings are difficult, and attendance at live discussions (and especially in tutorials) is *strongly encouraged*.

ONLINE LEARNING

The University of Toronto has put together a tipsheet on what minimum tech requirements you must have in order to participate in an online course. **It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the ability to access and engage with the course.** This includes the ability to watch course lecture videos, access Quercus, submit assignments online, and participate in live sessions with the TA and professor. Please find the minimal tech requirements [here](#).

Lectures and lecture content are the intellectual property of the instructor, Dr. Jessica Wright. Lectures will be made available online for the duration of the course, but may not be downloaded, recorded or distributed.

This course has been designed to be as accessible as possible for those facing added difficulties attending scheduled lectures online during the Covid-19 crisis. If you face

difficulties that you feel will impede your ability to engage with the course, please inform the course instructor as soon as possible.

TEXTS

All readings are available online via the course website (Quercus), or via the University of Toronto libraries website.

Many of the readings are available in hard copy in the following text, should you wish to purchase it:

David Chalmers *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

We are also reading the following book. This is available online, but if you wish to purchase a hard copy, here is the information

John Perry *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (Hackett, 1978)

You are not required to purchase any texts for this class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements are as follows. Failure to complete an assignment will result in no grade being assigned for that assignment (0%). Failure to complete the Final Assessment may result in no grade being assigned for the course.

40% 5 x Quizlets. You must submit at least 5 over the course of the term (of 6 possible quizlets). Which ones you submit are up to you. ***Quizlets are due weekly on Sundays.***

25% Final Essay (~1000 words) ***Due Monday June 08***

35% Final Assessment (take home) ***Due Date TBD. Between June 17-25***

Quizlets may not be submitted late. Accommodation requests for quizlets must be made at the beginning of class.

Late Papers will be penalized in proportion to their tardiness, 3% per academic day (i.e. from 79 to 76) to a maximum of 10% per week. Papers must be uploaded to the course Quercus website, instructions will be given in class.

Papers and final assessments will be uploaded to turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and possible plagiarism. Details about using Turnitin will be included in the essay assignment. You might also be asked to provide an oral defense of the argument in your paper.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Quizlets: Quizlets are weekly quizzes administered through Quercus. The quizlets are worth

8% of your final grade each. You will have a period of days to complete each week's quizlet. You must complete 5 quizlets over the course of the term, of 6 that are possible. Please note that, in the interest of providing feedback on quizlets, your answer may be used in class (anonymously) as a sample for educational feedback purposes. Because we will be discussing the answers to the quizlets in the week following completion of them, and because you will have ample time to complete them, ***late submissions and/or excuses for quizlets will not be accepted.*** If you require an accommodation for completion of the quizlets, you must register with Accessibility Services, and you must identify yourself to the professor ***at the beginning of term*** so that case-by-case accommodations can be fairly implemented. Students are expected to have watched the week's lecture videos and done the week's course readings *before* completing that week's quizlet.

Final Essay: An argumentative philosophy paper. You will be provided with a choice of essay topics for your final paper. Some tutorial time will be dedicated to explaining and working on the skills associated with writing a philosophy paper.

Final Assessment: The final assessment will be in take-home format. Students will be provided with a window for completion of the final assessment. Available June 18th at 12am and due June 20th at 11:59pm.

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility, as am I as a course instructor. If you require accommodation, or if you have any accessibility concerns about the course or course materials, please let the professor know, and contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility.

EMAIL POLICY

I will do my best to respond to email within two days of receipt. Please keep all emailed communication with the instructor and your course TA polite, professional, and brief. Longer questions may be best discussed during office hours. Unless it is an emergency, I will not respond to emails on weekends or holidays. I will not discuss substantive philosophical questions via email, but I am happy to do so in person during live discussions or office hours. I may not respond to emailed questions if the information you are asking about can be easily found in the syllabus.

Your TA will announce their own email policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves. Students are expected to know what constitutes Academic Integrity. Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>. It is the rulebook for

academic behaviour at U of T. Please refer to U of T's guidelines on "Using Sources", which includes a tipsheet on "How Not to Plagiarize", available [here](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

All readings subject to change without notice.

WEEK 1: Introduction, Persons, & Animal Minds

Topic #1: Introduction & Persons (May 5th)

(1) Mary Anne Warren *selections from* "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"

Topic #2: Animal Minds (May 7th)

- (1) Descartes *selections from Discourse on the Method*
- (2) Thomas Huxley "On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata, and its History"
- (3) Don Ross "The Elephant as a Person" (aeon)

Sunday May 10th: 1st Quizlet due

WEEK 2: Substance Dualism

Topic #1: Substance Dualism (May 12th)

(1) Rene Descartes, Meditations II and VI from *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Topic #2: Problems for Dualism (May 14th)

- (1) Gilbert Ryle "Descartes' Myth"
- (3) Daniel Dennett "Why Dualism is Forlorn"

Sunday May 17th: 2nd Quizlet due

WEEK 3: Physicalism

Topic #1: Physicalism (May 19th)

- (1) U. T. Place "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?"
- (2) D. M. Armstrong "The Causal Theory of Mind"

Topic #2: Problems for Physicalism (May 21st)

- (1) David Chalmers *excerpts from The Conscious Mind*
- (2) Frank Jackson "Epiphenomenal Qualia"

Sunday May 24th: 3rd Quizlet due

WEEK 4: Minds & Machines

Topic #1: Do computers have minds? (May 26th)

- (1) Alan Turing "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"
- (2) Searle "Minds, Brains and Programs" *excerpts*

Topic #2: Mind, extended? (May 28th)

(1) Andy Clark and David Chalmers “The Extended Mind”

Sunday May 31st: 4th Quizlet due

WEEK 5: Personal Identity**Topic #1: Psychological Continuity vs. Bodily Continuity (June 2nd)**

(1) John Perry *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* First Night

Topic #2: Psychological Continuity vs. Bodily Continuity (June 4th)

(1) John Perry *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* Second Night & Third Night

Sunday June 07th: 5th Quizlet due

Monday June 08th: Final Essay due

WEEK 6: Problems of Personhood**Topic #1: Dementia (June 09th)**

(1) Ronald Dworkin “Life Past Reason”

(2) Rebecca Dresser “Dworkin on Dementia”

Topic #2 June 11th: Death (June 11th)

(1) Jeff McMahan “The Metaphysics of Brain Death”

Sunday June 14th: 6th Quizlet due

Final Assessment: during final assessment period (Due June 20th, 2020)