

Philosophy of Mind

Prof. Anand Jayprakash Vaidya

Course: T / R, BBC 203 (15:00 – 16:15)

Office Hours: T / R, FOB 205 (4:30 – 5:30)

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Course Description: Philosophy of mind is one of the most challenging areas of philosophy. The central reason why it is so difficult to study is because it requires knowledge of a great number of other disciplines, such as linguistics, cognitive science, neuroscience, phenomenology, metaphysics, and epistemology. In this course we will begin by looking at classical and contemporary versions of Cartesian arguments for mind-body dualism. In particular we will be looking at how two-dimensional modal semantics can be used to argue that physicalism is false by way of the conceivability principle familiar from Descartes. From here we will move into a short review of metaphysical positions in the philosophy of mind, such as functionalism, biological naturalism, mysterianism, and Panpsychism. The remainder of the course will be up to the students to determine by interest and needs. Possible areas of exploration will be phenomenology and consciousness, neuroscience, moral psychology, mental disorders, and AI.

Grading: Although this course is an upper division course in philosophy, it will be run like a seminar. After the first part of the course on Cartesian arguments, students will be required to give presentations and meet with the professor to discuss their presentations. There will be one presentation and three short papers, each 2000 words in length.

Text: Prior to the beginning of January I will post the course text, which will most likely involve a Reader and some optional texts.