

## **VORLESUNG**

### **PHILOSOPHY OF MIND - INTRODUCTION**

**Instructor: Dr. Cristina Borgoni**

**Time: Wednesday 11:45-13:15**

**Place: UR09.51**

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**Office hours: Wednesday 17:30-18:30 (or by appointment), R 513**

**Language: English**

#### **Course Summary**

The guiding question of this course is the nature of the mind and its constitutive aspects. The course discusses two aspects of the mind – representation and consciousness – from the perspective of contemporary philosophy. It centers on two current debates in the field. The first is between individualism and anti-individualism about the mind (also called ‘internalism vs. externalism’). Is a person’s mind fully determined by her subjectivity? Or does her environment determine her mind? The second debate regards the mind-body problem. How does the mind relate to the body if they seem to follow different rules? What is the place of the mind in the natural world? This course will introduce students to the externalism debate and the mind-body debate as well as analyze the limits of the mind-body problem as a way to deal with constitutive questions about the mind.

#### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to Philosophy of Mind. It is divided into four units. In unit one we will settle the framework of the course: we will examine different questions regarding the mind and establish the basic terminology to be used throughout the course. In unit two we will explore the debate between individualism and anti-individualism, which deals with the factors we should take into account to understand what the mind is. Is a person’s mind fully determined by her subjectivity? Or does the person’s environment determine her mind? Unit three will deal with a different debate, the mind-body problem. How does the mind relate to the body if they seem to follow different rules and are supposedly “made out” of different matter? We will analyze the two debates together in unit four. Does solving the mind-body problem help us understand the nature of the mind?

#### **Level of Difficulty**

This course is introductory to the extent that lectures will not presuppose previous knowledge about the subject matter. All terminology will be explained in detail. However, this is not an easy course. You will be expected to master difficult original texts, synthesize arguments and

think about the mind on a very abstract level. Do not hesitate to bring your doubts and questions to lectures and office hours. You are very welcome to do so!

### **How do I do well in this class?**

Attendance is not required; however, it is highly recommended. Discussions in philosophy of mind have a high level of abstraction. Understanding them by yourself is not an easy task. Some of the assigned readings presuppose a lot of philosophical background that will be covered in lecture. Coming to lectures is the best way to succeed in the course and to acquire knowledge about the field. Additionally, you are advised to keep up with the reading, as it will save you time in the preparation for the final exam. More importantly, your comprehension of the lectures is directly correlated with your effort to read the texts before class.

### **Course Materials**

All course materials will be available online on the course website (at <http://moodle.uni-graz.at>). The course material is composed of chapters from different textbooks of original texts in philosophy of mind. Please check the website regularly for updates.

### **Assignment**

There is one written final exam in English. The exam will cover the material explained in lecture.

### **Program**

#### **Unit 1: Contemporary Philosophy of Mind – 4 weeks**

##### **I. Varieties of Questions Regarding the Mind**

Read: Dennett, D. "What Kinds of Minds are There?" in: *Kinds of Minds: Towards an Understanding of Consciousness* 1996, pp. 1-18. / Burge, T. *Origins of Objectivity*, 2011, pp. 57-59.

##### **II. Consciousness – background**

Read: Dennett, D. "A Visit to the Phenomenological Garden", in *Consciousness Explained*, 1991, pp. 43-65 / Kim, J. (1996), "Consciousness" in *Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 155-164.

##### **III. Representation – background**

Read: Crane, T. (1995), "The Puzzle of Representation", in *The Mechanical Mind*, pp. 8-13; 22-36.

IV. Philosophy of Mind in the XX century

Read: Burge, T. "Philosophy of Mind: 1950-2000", in *Foundations of Mind*, 2007, pp. 440-442, 452-455.

**Unit 2: The Nature of the (representational) Mind – 5 weeks**

V. Descriptivist theories of reference and meaning

Read: Kripke, S. (1972) *Naming and Necessity*, pp. 26-34.

VI. Attack on descriptivism and the routes of mainstream externalism

Read: Kripke, S. (1972) *Naming and Necessity*, pp. 70-94 / Putnam, H. "It Ain't Necessarily So" in *Philosophical Papers* vol I, pp. 237-239.

VII. Externalist arguments regarding meaning

Read: Putnam, H. (1975) "The Meaning of 'Meaning'", in *Philosophical Papers* vol. II *Mind, Language and Reality*, pp. 215-227.

VIII. From meaning to mind: Anti-individualist arguments I

Read: Burge, T. (1982) "Other Bodies", in *Foundations of Mind*, 2007, pp. 82-91.

IX. Anti-individualist arguments II and objectivity

Read: Burge, T. (1979) "Individualism and the Mental", in *Foundations of Mind*, 2007, pp. 100-106.

**Unit 3: The Mind in the Nature – 4 weeks**

X. Origins of the mind-body problem

Read: Descartes, *Passions of the Soul* (selection) /Descartes, *Meditations* (selection)

XI. The dualist dilemma

Read: Crane, T. (2001) *Body*, in *Elements of the Mind*, pp. 34-51.

XII. Varieties of Physicalism and consciousness I

Read: Nagel, T. (1974) "What is It Like to be a Bat", *The Philosophical Review* 83 (4), pp. 435-450.

XIII. Physicalism and consciousness II

Read: Jackson, F. (1982) “Epiphenomenal Qualia”, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32 (127), pp. 127-136.

**Part 4: Constitutive Questions and The Mind-Body Problem – 2 weeks**

XIV. Compatibility and contrasts between the two debates

Read: Burge, T. (1979) “Individualism and the Mental”, in *Foundations of Mind*, OUP 2007 (selection).

XV. The mind-body problem and constitutive questions

Read: Crane, T. (2001) *Elements of Mind*, pp. 66 – 69.

\*\*Attention: Additional (optional) readings will be indicated throughout the course.