

PHI 5329, Philosophy of Neuroscience

Spring 2018, Mondays, 6:00 p. m.- 8:50 p.m., PSY 228B

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Mundale

Office: Dept. of Philosophy, 230 Psychology Building

Office hours M 2-4, Th 9:30-11:30 and by appointment.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE!

The message below is from The Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs:

“As of Fall 2014, all faculty are required to document students’ academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course.... Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.”

Required Academic Activity:

Fill out the Philosophy of Neuroscience Student Questionnaire (distributed at first class), and I will record that you completed it. This document will **not** count toward your course grade, though UCF requires us to record it through the course website as a “graded” assignment in order to count it for financial aid documentation of attendance.

Course description. This is an advanced, graduate-level course in the philosophy of neuroscience. This course assumes a *basic* level of familiarity with neuroscientific terms and concepts, but it does not assume, nor does it require expertise in it. Similarly, I also assume familiarity with *basic* philosophical concepts and techniques. Topics may include such foundational issues as the neuron doctrine and the localization of function, as well as more contemporary issues such methodological and epistemological issues in brain mapping, ethics in neuroscience, phantom limb phenomena, the viability of reductionist models, and other issues. Please be aware that this course comes with a demanding workload.

Texts.

- Carter, R. (2014). *The Human Brain*, 2nd edition.
- All other readings will be provided to you, free of charge, through a combination of online and electronic resources.

Grades. Your grade for this course is based on the following four components:

- 1) Attendance, Evidence of Preparation and Meaningful Class Participation - 10%
- 2) Three Progress Tests (each approx 13.3%) - 40% total
- 3) Research presentation - 20%
- 4) Research Paper – 30% total

Note: I use the plus/minus grade convention (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F).

Course Requirements.

Research paper. The research paper is a scholarly, detailed exposition on some specialized aspect of **an assigned course topic (or a closely related topic central to the Philosophy of Neuroscience)**. I will distribute a list of approved paper topics and additional guidelines about the paper early in the semester. If you wish to write on a topic not listed on the handout you will have an opportunity to do so, but will have to submit a thesis statement that will be subject to approval. The paper must be at least 4,500 words long (roughly 15-16 pages, but I go by word count, not page count), not counting bibliography, notes, cover page, appendices, and anything other than the main text. Papers that fail to make the length requirement will be severely downgraded or failed, depending on the extent of the deficiency. A separate handout addressing the paper requirement in more detail will be distributed early in the semester. Your final papers are due on the last day of class, on Monday, April 23. The research paper requirement is 30% of your grade. If you do not receive a passing grade on the research paper (a “D”, or score of 65), you will not receive a grade higher than a “D” in this course, regardless of your performance on the other components in the course. As part of the research paper requirement, you will be required to turn in a thesis statement and rough draft.

Research presentation. Toward the end of the semester students will give a research presentation to the class which will be based on the subject of their second research paper. This requirement is 20% of your grade, and I will provide more details early in the semester.

Participation in class discussions. I will take attendance. Poor attendance will have a negative impact on your grade. Please come ready to discuss the assigned material. The readings are intended to stimulate thoughtful questions, comments and observations. Meaningful participation is required. What constitutes good participation? Being respectful of others is required, of course. Disagreement and debate is expected and encouraged, but personal attacks are not. Merely agreeing with someone’s point or saying, “I like that too”, for example, are not considered significant participation. Comments that range off-topic are not considered to be meaningful contributions. Thoughtful, specific criticism or praise of a given text, constructing good arguments for or against a given theory, making important distinctions among cases and positions, or finding some overlooked implication of some claim *are* examples of the kinds of contributions that are significant. If several discussion topics go by and you have contributed little to nothing, assume that 10% of your course grade will be little to zero. Be prepared for me to put you on the spot and to ask you direct questions about the assigned reading. Excessively bad behavior toward others in this class will result in a lower grade, a failing grade, or dismissal from the course, depending on the extent of the improper behavior. Seek neither to dominate the class discussion nor to hide from it.

Progress Tests. Over the course of the semester there will be three progress tests to gauge incrementally your command of the material. I will say more about these in class. Taken all together, the three tests will count for 40% of your course grade, so each will count approximately 13.3%.

E-mail

E-mail is an **essential** part of this course, and your Knight’s email address is considered by UCF to be an official means of contacting you. Please remember the following general guidelines:

- Check your e-mail at least several times a week (daily is better). **Regular e-mail will be used in place of Canvas email**, since I find it to be more convenient and more reliable for most purposes. My email address is: Jennifer.Mundale@ucf.edu or embodiedmind@earthlink.net

- **Include descriptive "Subject" headings: something that is descriptive** and relevant to the subject of your e-mail. If you just hit reply to my last message, be sure to change the subject.

- Do not expect to discuss grades or anything confidential in e-mail. I cannot send you your grades in e-mail, as faculty are prohibited from doing so by privacy rules and regulations. I will communicate with you about these by posting them online.

- **Include your name and your class on your e-mail messages** (I may have hundreds of students in a given semester, and surely more than one class, so identify yourself).

Cheating and Plagiarism

I do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism and will punish cheaters to the fullest extent allowed through the Office of Student Conduct. If you don't have enough integrity to do your own work, drop the class now and re-examine your purpose in life and at UCF. Final research papers will be processed through Turnitin.com. The following guidelines are reproduced for your information from the UCF Golden Rule (<http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/conduct.html>):

“Academic Dishonesty/Cheating

A. Cheating is a violation of student academic behavior standards. The common forms of cheating include:

1. Unauthorized assistance: communication to another through written, visual, or oral means. The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment or project. The unauthorized possession or use of examination or course related material may also constitute cheating.
2. Plagiarism: whereby another's work is deliberately used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own. Any student failing to properly credit ideas or materials taken from another is plagiarizing.

B. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.”

Important University Dates

Classes Begin	Monday, January 8, 2018
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 15, 2018
Late Registration	Monday, January 8, 2018 - Friday, January 12, 2018
Drop/Swap Deadline on myUCF	Thursday, January 11, 2018 11:59 PM
Add Deadline on myUCF	Friday, January 12, 2018 11:59 PM
Spring Break	Monday, March 12, 2018 - Saturday, March 17, 2018
Withdrawal Deadline	Wednesday, March 21, 2018 11:59 PM
Classes End	Monday, April 23, 2018
Final Examination Period	Wednesday, April 25, 2018 - Tuesday, May 1, 2018
Grades Due in myUCF	Friday, May 4, 2018 12:00 PM

Initial Topics and Readings (will be expanded after first class meeting).

Week	Date and Scheduled Material
1	January 8: Introductions Introduction to Class, Student Questionnaires, Syllabus, Preview initial readings. Please begin by acquainting yourself with <i>The Human Brain</i> textbook, especially pages 1-130
2	January 15: Historical Foundations and Classic Debates of Neuroscience, The Neuron Doctrine Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday. No class, but finish above material, and the following for next week: "Neuroanatomical Foundations of Cognition: Connecting the Neuronal Level with the Study of Higher Brain Areas " and , "Golgi and Cajal: The neuron doctrine and the 100th anniversary of the 1906 Nobel Prize"
3	January 22: Historical Foundations and Classic Debates of Neuroscience, cont'd Discussion of above materials. For next week, Stanly Finger, <i>Origins of Neuroscience</i> , Chs. 1-4, and "Concepts of Localization"
4	January 29: Historical Foundations and Classic Debates of Neuroscience, Localization of Function Discussion of above materials.
5	February 5: Progress Test #1 over above materials.

Note: Monday, April 30, is our Final Exam Week Meeting, 7:00 PM – 9:50 PM: Note that this class meeting is later than regular class time because of final exam scheduling. We will not have a final exam but I have tentatively scheduled Progress Test #3 for this date, which will not be cumulative but will only cover material back to Progress Test #2.