

## Syllabus

# Phi 3320 Philosophy of Mind

(3 Cr) Fall 2018

**Instructor:** Dr. Mason Cash  
**Phone:** 407-823-6857  
**Office Hours:** MWF 10:00-11:00am.  
**Webcourses:** <https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1298726>

**E-mail:** Mason.Cash@ucf.edu  
**Office:** PSY 246  
**Web:** [bit.ly/MasonCash](http://bit.ly/MasonCash)

## Course Description

In this course we will critically examine philosophical articles that explore various theories, problems and arguments regarding the status of minds in the physical world and the relationships between mind, body and world. We will explore and discuss controversies including:

- The nature of the human mind (is it physical, like a brain, or nonphysical, like a soul?)
- The relationship between the mind and the brain
- Whether a physical machine (e.g. a robot) might genuinely think
- To what extent is the human mind/brain like a computer?
- What can we know and say about the mental lives of other people and the minds of animals?
- Can physical brains have genuine intentionality (the property of being *about* other things, a property only minds are supposed to have)?
- The self: What are you? What makes all the disparate process in your brain and body into *one* person (rather than two or five)?
- The extent of your cognitive system: Where are you? Are you wholly contained within your skin, or could important parts of you extend beyond?
- Is it possible to give an objective scientific account of a subjective phenomenon like consciousness?

### Required Text

Brian McLaughlin et al. *The Oxford Handbook on Philosophy of Mind* Oxford University Press 2009

### WebCourses site:

PHI3320-18Fall 0001 <https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1298726>

## Gordon Rule writing course.

Assignments marked with a \* contribute to this course's satisfying the Gordon Rule writing course requirement.

## Course Evaluation

### \*Short Paper (15%).

1000 words or so. Questions will be distributed in class and on WebCourses.

**\*Research Paper (25%). Due mid- November.** 2000 words or so. You will explore your chosen topic beyond our class readings and discussions, defending a position on a controversial topic in philosophy of mind. The paper should include substantial discussion of at least two papers or books not covered in this class. Topic suggestions will be distributed later in the semester. To write on a different topic (but still related to the material we cover in class) you must submit a written proposal (e.g. by email, of about 200 words), explicitly identifying the topic of your paper and the readings you think will be relevant to that topic.

### \*Midterm Exam (15%)

Composed of multiple choice and short answer questions.

### Two Minute papers (10%)

Always come to class —especially but not only on discussion sessions— having thought about how you would answer, in two minutes, questions about assigned readings, such as "What is the author's main thesis, and what are their reasons for holding it?" or "What did you find interesting, remarkable, relevant, or confusing about one of the readings for this week?". These answers will often be shared in small group discussions.

**Grading:** I will grade these from 0-2, on a scale that gives credit for evidence that you have read the assigned reading, and have thought about what it contributes to your understanding of the issues and questions we explore. You could easily get full marks for most of these.

**Contribution to final grade:** They cannot be made up outside of class; absences will earn a score of 0. But I will discard your lowest three scores. The rest will be totaled, and the total scaled to become a mark out of 10. (E.g. if we do 23 of these, that will be a possible total of 40. If you have earned 36/46, this will become 36/40, this will earn 9/10 for this aspect of the course).

### Discussion and tutorial participation (5%)

Many classes, often on Fridays, will be principally small group and whole-class discussions of the readings and topics for that week. Sometimes, questions may be posted on the schedule web page in advance of the class, so you can prepare answers to bring to class. There will also be a tutorial session, with opportunities to ask questions and get clarifications about the week's lectures and readings. Attendance will be taken and will count for up to 5% of your grade (one absence is excused automatically).

### \*Final Exam (30%) Wednesday December 5, 1:00 pm to 3:50 pm

Multiple choice and short answer questions, and a position paper.

## Course Policies:

### Class attendance

Class attendance and participation is expected. Absence of more than a week can adversely affect your grade.

### Submission of written work:

Your work should be submitted on paper in class, as well as to WebCourses by 11:59 pm on the due date.

### Extensions and Late Penalties:

Extensions will be granted only for *documentable* exceptional circumstances (medical or family emergencies). Ask for the extension as soon as you are aware of the problem, not on the due date. Anticipated absences are not reasons for extensions (submit it before you leave).

Late assignments will be deducted 5% of their potential value per day late (so an assignment worth a maximum of 10 points loses 1/2 a point a day; four days late its score will be deducted 2 marks. Weekend days count fully.

However, if you feel that your circumstances warrant consideration as an exception, discuss this with me as early as possible.

### Grading & Evaluation

Your work for the course will total a score out of 100. I use this to determine a letter grade. I think a rigid set of cutoff points for grades is unfair because this would mean that people with very similar score get different grades (it would be unfair for a student who earns with 79.75 should not necessarily get a C+, while another student with 80.0 earns a B-).

I think it is better for you to earn a fair grade, even if this means that your final grade is not completely predictable grade. You should have a sense of the approximate grade your performance so far would earn, and should just do you best to improve our grade in whatever assignments or exams remain.

So I try to make principled distinctions between groups of students, rather than using arbitrary cutoffs. Borderline cases are decided using (in order): exam scores, quiz scores, discussion participation, class participation.

**VERY ROUGHLY**, the following are the *approximate* bounds of the ranges at which I often award grades.

Score	0-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Grade:	F	D- D D+	C- C C+	B- B B+	A- A

**IMPORTANT:** Final grades may not necessarily precisely follow the above approximate boundaries; they may vary by +/- 3 points or so. If, for example, you end up with 78.5, this does not necessarily mean that you were 0.5 points from earning a B-. The cutoff for B- might be as high as 83 or so in some semesters.

### Communication:

If you e-mail me, you should include PHI 3320 in the subject line and your full name at the end of your message. I will not respond to messages from unidentified students. Also, to protect your privacy, it is against university policy for me to discuss grades in e-mail messages. If you wish to discuss grades, please come to my office hours or talk to me after class.

## Classroom Behavior

Your responsibilities as a student of UCF are outlined in The Golden Rule. <http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

### Plagiarism & Cheating

UCF faculty support the UCF Creed. **Integrity** - practicing and defending academic and personal honesty - is the first tenet of the UCF Creed. This is in part a reflection of the second tenet, **Scholarship**: - I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of membership in the UCF community.

Course assignments and tests are designed to have educational value; the process of preparing for and completing these exercises will help improve your skills and knowledge. Material presented to satisfy course requirements is therefore expected to be the result of your own original scholarly efforts.

UCF's Golden Rule defines **plagiarism** as follows: "**whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.**" **Cheating** is using **unauthorized material, or giving or accepting unauthorized help on assignments or tests.** These contradict the educational value of course assignments and quizzes. Students who attempt to obtain unearned academic credentials that do not reflect their skills and knowledge can also undermine the value of the UCF degrees earned by their more honest peers.

I have a responsibility for your education and the value of a UCF degree, and so have a responsibility to discourage and prevent unethical behavior, and to respond to infringements of academic integrity when necessary. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense.

**The typical penalty for plagiarism or cheating in this course will be a loss of credit for the assignment AND a deduction of one grade for the course (e.g. a B+ becomes a B), which may result in a failing grade in the course.** (So you would do better to do a bad job honestly than to cheat and get caught.) Perpetrators may also be required to take an academic integrity seminar. Serious cases can lead to academic probation, suspension, expulsion from the University, or the revocation of a degree. <http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/> has more about UCF's Rules of Conduct.

I use [www.TurnItIn.com](http://www.TurnItIn.com) and other methods to make it difficult to plagiarize or cheat and relatively easy to detect attempts to do so. I hope you will consider it not worth the risk, and can appreciate that **doing the assignments honestly is part of the educational experience** that you came to university to have. Copies of papers may be retained by TurnItIn.

### Accessibility and Classroom Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request.

Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has discussed appropriate accommodations with the professor. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

## Initial Class Schedule

Most readings are from the Place of Mind Textbook at the pages listed. Others will be available from the WebCourses site in .pdf format. Read each reading before the class in which it will be discussed.

See the WebCourses site for the schedule after this time.

<b>Week ending Friday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Aug 24	<p>Course Introduction</p> <p>It would be beneficial, but not essential, for you to read the introduction to the textbook before class: "The Place of Mind in a Scientific Universe" (pp. 1-10)</p>	<p><b>Cartesian Dualism</b></p> <p>Introduction, Descartes Meditations 1 and 2 Early ModernTexts.com. Click on Descartes <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i>. Select Meditations 1 and 2.</p>	<p><b>Dualism</b></p> <p>Descartes (Meditation 6) 19-25. Also available at Early ModernTexts.com. Select Meditations 5 and 6.</p>
Sept 31	<p><b>The Nature of Mind</b></p> <p>Selections (see below) from Descartes' correspondence with Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, and from the Objections and Replies to Descartes' <i>Meditations</i></p>		