



**Course Description:** We will investigate the nature of minds from a philosophical perspective. Is consciousness hard to explain, and if so, why? Do animals, robots, computers, or corporations also have beliefs, desires, and experiences? In what sense does the mind depend on the brain? What is the relation between body and mind? If other creatures have mind, are they like us in what they think and feel? We will consider how we might or might not know the answers to these questions. The course is intermediate level, open to everyone without prerequisite but preferably with some background in philosophy, psychology, or neuroscience.

Counts toward the 'contemporary analytic systematic areas' for the Philosophy AOC. Cross-listed in Psychology.

## FALL 2021

### Meeting times

T & Th, 10:30 – 11:50 AM  
ACE 217

### Modality

in-person

### Instructor

Prof. Nicolas Delon

### Email

ndelon@ncf.edu

### Office Location

ACE 303

### Office Hours (= come and chat)

12:30-3:30 PM

or by appointment

Book your slot:

<https://ndelon.youcanbook.me/>

**Overview & Learning Objectives:** This course aims to introduce students to fundamental philosophical questions, problems, and theories about the mind. You will learn about debates in the metaphysics and science of the mind, including about the mind-body relation, consciousness, mental 'content', and the evolution of the mind across species. You will also hone your argumentative skills and dive deeper into questions that pertain to other philosophical areas, such as metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of science, and issues such as free will, materialism, animal cognition, and artificial intelligence. Class meetings will be mostly discussion-based, with a minimal lecture component.

**Readings:** *PDFs of readings will be available on Canvas. There is no required textbook.* There are many options to choose from if you want one. To prepare this course, I have been working with Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Westview) and David Chalmers, *Philosophy of Mind: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford). Amy Kind, *Philosophy of Mind: The Basics* (Routledge) and John Heil, *Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction* (Routledge) are also oft-recommended texts.

### Approximate Evaluation Weighting:

25% Attendance & Participation

25% Weekly exercises (take-home and in-class)

25% Essay 1

25% Essay 2

**Attendance & Participation:** You are expected to be an active member of the course by regularly contributing to in-class discussions and activities. If you must miss a class due to an extenuating circumstance, you must notify me by email ASAP; you are allowed a maximum of 2 unexcused absences. If you are sick, please DO NOT come to class, but be sure to email me and your group members immediately (cf. COVID guidelines below).

**Assignments:** [in progress]. Assignments will include two papers, each based on a preliminary draft going through “peer review,” and take-home and in-class mini assignments (short responses, argument reconstruction, mapping, group activities, etc.). More details will be announced at the start of the semester.

**Expectations:** As a student, you are expected to read all assigned material before class, attend class, take notes, and review them in-between class meetings, participate in discussions, and complete assignments on-time. Check your email daily and Canvas frequently. I will communicate with you via your New College Gmail account and Canvas announcements, so make sure that you receive notifications for announcements.

You are responsible for knowing material covered in the assigned readings even if the material is not presented during class. Likewise, you are responsible for material covered during class (including discussions and activities) even if it is not covered in the assigned readings. Please seek help from me or your classmates and never hesitate to ask questions, consult resource centers (writing resource center, library). Needing help is expected and there are no silly questions. Silly is not asking questions when you need.

**Disability services and accommodation:** I am committed to providing an inclusive and effective learning environment for all students regardless of ability status. I will do my best to provide alternatives for materials and tests when applicable. Classes will not be livestreamed, but I will record meetings and post them on Canvas.

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the office of Student Disability Services (SDS) to arrange appropriate accommodations (<https://www.ncf.edu/disability-services-ncf>, HCL3, (941) 487-4496, [disabilityservices@ncf.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@ncf.edu)). To ensure that I can work with Student Disability Services to provide the resources that you need, please alert me of your accommodation eligibility as early as possible and request testing accommodation in writing at least 10 days before scheduled date of the exam listed on the syllabus. If obtaining accommodations from the SDS is itself challenging for you, let me know so I can help you.

To increase accessibility, especially in the event of students having to stay home for illness or covid-19 symptoms, I will record class meetings (audio of lecture and discussion; video of whiteboard). I will maintain records for at least the entire academic year. I will not use the recordings for purposes not related to teaching. Students reserve the right to access the recordings.

**Academic honesty:** Students are expected to be familiar with the college's academic dishonesty policy, as described in the General Catalog. Any violation of this policy may result in academic sanctions, up to and including, dismissal from the college.

**Religious observance:** Please alert me as soon as possible if an exam is scheduled at a day or time when you are prohibited from participating by your religious beliefs.

**Title IX:** New College of Florida is committed to equal access to education pursuant to Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. The law protects all individuals on our campus from gender-based discrimination or exclusion or instances of sexual misconduct. All full-time faculty, full-time staff, and resident advisors are Responsible Employees required to report any known instances of sexual misconduct or gender discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. Please contact our Title IX coordinator ([titleix@ncf.edu](mailto:titleix@ncf.edu)) or see the website (<https://www.ncf.edu/campus-life/title-ix/>) for more information.

Sexual assault awareness is important for our community to be vibrant and to have free exchange of ideas in a safe environment. The Victim Advocate number is (941) 504-8599; with 24 hour availability for assistance with crime, sexual assault, and partner violence. Sexual Assault does not discriminate between age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or race. It is important to have a clear understanding of what

sexual assault is and is not, as well as the resources available for sexual assault prevention and survivor support. More information is at [www.ncf.edu/sexual-assault-awareness](http://www.ncf.edu/sexual-assault-awareness).

**Equity, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity:** New College's commitment to academic excellence can only be realized in a learning environment that is inclusive, characterized by openness to diverse perspectives, and marked by mutual respect. Anything short of this aspiration is inconsistent with our commitment. Equal access, and the opportunity to participate fully in all of our programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, political ideology, national origin, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, is essential to that commitment and will be the standard to which we expect all members of our learning community to adhere.

**HB 233** ("Viewpoint Diversity" bill): Students may record classroom lectures without a requirement for prior notice and without the faculty member's consent, with specific limitations on where and how those recordings can be used. In particular, "a recorded lecture may not be published without the consent of the lecturer," and it may be employed only--

- a. "for a student's own personal educational use"
- b. "in connection with a complaint to the public institution of higher education where the recording was made"
- c. "as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding"

Recorded lectures used for other purposes may allow the faculty member to seek "damages plus court costs and reasonable attorney fees, with the total recovery not to exceed \$200,000."

A class lecture does not include student presentations, academic exercises involving student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), or private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

**COVID-19 guidelines:** The success of this class depends on mutual trust. Campus guidance: "As we prepare for the return of students to campus this weekend, let's do our part to support the health and safety of our New College community:

- Getting fully vaccinated against COVID-19 is strongly recommended.
- Wearing face coverings indoors and in crowded outdoor spaces is expected on our campus.
- Stay home if you feel sick or if you have a positive COVID test (vaccinated or not)."

I will fully accommodate students who miss class for medical reasons. I will not police the class and assume that we are all vaccinated or have good medical reasons not to be. If you wear a mask, please ensure proper fit, hygiene, and quality. If you feel symptoms before class, you may be excused. Please email me beforehand. I also recommend getting your *flu shot* in the fall.

Most importantly, please be **respectful, considerate, and kind** to each other.

## Course Schedule\*

Week	Date	Subject	Read	Assignments
1	T Aug 24	Overview		Canvas survey
	R Aug 26	Body and mind	Descartes, from <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (II and V)	
2	T Aug 31		McWeeny, "Princess Elisabeth and the mind-body problem"  Adamson, "What can Avicenna teach us about the mind-body problem?"	Defense/Response
	R Sep 2	Behaviorism	Ryle, "Descartes' myth"	
3	T Sep 7		Putnam, "Brains and behavior"	
	R Sep 9	Identity theory	Feigl, "The 'mental' and the 'physical'" Smart, "Sensations and brain processes"	
4	T Sep 14		Kripke, from <i>Naming and Necessity</i> Fodor, "Special sciences..."	
	R Sep 16	Functionalism	Putnam, "The nature of mental states"	
5	T Sep 21		Block, from "Troubles with functionalism"	Draft 1
	R Sep 23	Mental causation	Antony, "The mental and the physical"  (Kim, "The many problems of mental causation")	Argument mapping
6	T Sep 28	Mental content	Brentano, "The distinction between mental and physical phenomena"  Von Eckardt, "The representational theory of mind"	
	R Sep 30		Egan, "Wide content"	
7	T Oct 5	Naturalizing intentionality	Baker, "On a causal theory of content"	
	T Oct 7		Millikan, "Biosemantics"	
8	T Oct 12	<i>FALL BREAK</i>		Paper 1
	R Oct 14	<i>FALL BREAK</i>		
9	T Oct 19	Consciousness	Block, "Concepts of consciousness"	

\* Schedule subject to change. Please visit Canvas regularly and check your emails for changes.

	R Oct 21	Other minds	Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?" Atkins, "A bat without qualities" Zhuangzi, The happiness of fish	
<b>10</b>	T Oct 26	The hard problem and physicalism	Gertler, "The knowledge argument" Kind, "Chalmers' zombie argument"	Intuition pumps workshop
	R Oct 28		(Levine, "Materialism and qualia: the explanatory gap") Churchland, "The hornswoggle problem"	
<b>11</b>	T Nov 2	Comparative psychology	Andrews, <i>How to study animal minds</i> , Chapters 1-2	Draft 2
	R Nov 4		Andrews, Chapter 3	Generate hypotheses
<b>12</b>	T Nov 9	The evolution of mind	Godfrey-Smith, "The octopus" and "Put together by degrees"	
	R Nov 11		(Camp, "A language of baboon thought")	
<b>13</b>	T Nov 16	Thinking with others	Clark & Chalmers, "The extended mind"	
	R Nov 18		Paul, from <i>The Extended Mind</i>	Extend your thought
<b>14</b>	T Nov 23		Wodak et al, "What a loaded generalization: generics and social cognition" Siegel, from <i>The Rationality of Perception</i>	
	R Nov 25	<i>Thanksgiving</i>		
<b>15</b>	T Nov 30		Krueger, "Affordances and the musically extended mind"	Paper 2