Philosophy of mind (focus on human nature)
Sample syllabus
Fall 2010
Benjamin Bayer

Course description
This course will deal with three questions central to our view of human nature: What is the relationship between the mind and the body? Are human choices produced inexorably by their environment or genetics, or do people have power over their lives? And: What is a person, and what does it mean to be the same person through time?

As we shall discover, these questions are reciprocally related. Whether or not the mind reduces to the body determines whether it is plausible to think of the mind as exercising autonomy over its decisions. The more plausible libertarian theories of the will usually describe free action as action that is produced *by the self*, a view which means little unless there is a self that acts. Likewise, some of the most interesting (Kantian) theories about personal identity suggest that it is active choice that makes it possible for us to retain identity over time in the first place.

As we examine these questions, we will pay secondary attention to the methodology philosophers use to answer controversial metaphysical questions. Do they rely on armchair conceptual analysis, or naturalistic empirical investigation to produce their definitions and ontological claims? We will find that philosophers who use one method to answer one question often rely on the same method for others.

Texts
- Course pack

Lecture and reading schedule

The mind-body problem

Early modern figures
- Rene Descartes, dualism, from the *Meditations*
- Thomas Hobbes, materialism, from *Leviathan*
- Baruch d'Spinoza, dual-aspect theory, from *Ethics*
- George Berkeley, idealism, from the *Treatise*

Twentieth century anti-dualists
- Gilbert Ryle, logical behaviorism, "Descartes' Myth"
- J.J.C. Smart, identity theory, "Sensations and Brain Processes"
- Jerry Fodor, functionalism, "The Mind-Body Problem"
- Paul Churchland, eliminativism, "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes"

Twentieth century responses to anti-dualism
- John Searle, biological naturalism, "Minds, Brains and Programs"
- David Chalmers, anti-supervenience of qualia, "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness"

Free will and determinism

Early modern figures
- Rene Descartes, libertarianism, selections from the *Meditations*
- Baron d'Holbach, materialist determinism, from *The System of Nature*
- Baruch d'Spinoza, idealist determinism, from *Ethics*
- David Hume, early compatibilism, from *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
- Thomas Reid, early agency theory, from *Essay on the Active Powers of Man*

Nineteenth century figures (?)

- Arthur Schopenhauer, determinism, "Essay on Freedom of the Will"
- William James, indeterminism, "Determinism's Dilemma"

Twentieth century determinists

- A.J. Ayer, compatibilism, "Freedom and Necessity"
- Peter van Inwagen, incompatibilist determinism, "The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom"
- Daniel Dennett, pragmatic control without metaphysical freedom, Selections from *Elbow Room*

Twentieth century responses to determinism

- Jean-Paul Sartre, existentialist radical freedom of the will, from *Being and Nothingness*
- Timothy O'Connor, incompatibilist agent-causal libertarianism, "The Agent as Cause"
- Harry Binswanger, cognitive control agent-causal libertarianism, "Volition as cognitive self-regulation"

Personal identity

Early modern figures

- John Locke, the self as an enduring consciousness, "Of Identity and diversity," from *Essay concerning Human Understanding*
- David Hume, the self as a bundle of perceptions, "Our Idea of Identity," from *Treatise on Human Nature*
- Thomas Reid, agency theory of the self, from *Essay on the Active Powers of Man*
- Immanuel Kant, selections from *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of PracticalReason*

Twentieth century views

- Sydney Shoemaker, neo-Lockeanism, "Persons and their Pasts"
- Derek Parfit, reductionism about the self and its irrelevance, "Personal Identity"
- David Wiggins, the somatic/animalistic approach, from *Sameness and Substance*
- Roderick Chisholm, neo-Reidian anticriterialism, from *Person and Object*
- Christine Korsgaard, neo-Kantian self-constitution theory, "Personal Identity and Unity of Agency: A Kantian Response to Parfit"

Philosophy of mind (focus on methodology)
Sample syllabus
Fall 2010
Benjamin Bayer

Course description
Philosophy of mind is essentially an application of the philosophy of science to a traditional problem of metaphysics: the relationship between the mental and the physical. It relates to the philosophy of science because philosophers who examine the relationship between mind and body seek to understand the same types of explanatory or identity relationships they exploit in understanding, say, the relationship between temperature and molecular motion.

It should, therefore, not be surprising that some of the earliest lengthy speculation about the philosophy of mind emerges in the early days of the scientific revolution. We thus begin by examining early modern dualists and anti-dualists, with special attention to the emergence of the split between the rival methodologies of conceptual analysis and naturalism. (The emphasis will be placed on *anti-dualism*, rather than materialism *per se*, because materialist and idealist critiques of dualism have more in common than is usually appreciated.) Though the distinction sometimes maps onto that between dualism and anti-dualism, this is not always the case, as we shall see that there remains an influential set of conceptual-analytic arguments against dualism, as well, both in the early modern period through to the twentieth century.

The fact that anti-dualist, materialist positions are usually associated with naturalistic methodology poses a challenge to their viability. Naturalistic methodology does not attempt to provide knock-down metaphysical arguments; instead it appeals to best explanations and other pragmatic guidance for forming theories. But when pragmatism becomes the rationale for a metaphysical position, what counts as an acceptable metaphysics becomes a matter of the most relevant values of the community, and it is debatable whether these are always identical to the values of materialistic science. So either materialism is no longer implied by naturalism, or there is reason to abandon naturalism. And if we must, therefore, adopt a non-naturalistic form of conceptual analysis, is this methodology more conducive to anti-dualism, or to dualism?

Texts
- John Heil, *Philosophy: A Guide and Anthology* (Oxford, 2004)
- John Heil, *Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction* (Routledge, 2004)
- Course pack

Lecture and reading schedule

Early modern figures and the emergence of the dualism, anti-dualism debate

Scientific background
- Galileo: from *The Assayer*

Early modern conceptual analysis: dualism
- Descartes' interactionism: from *Meditations*
- Locke on primary and secondary qualities: from *Essay*
- Leibniz's parallelism, from *Monadology*

Early modern conceptual analysis: anti-dualism
- Spinoza's dual-aspect theory: from *Ethics*
- D'Holbach's revision of Locke's primary/secondary quality distinction: from *System of Nature*
- Berkeley's idealism: *Treatise*

Early modern naturalism: anti-dualism
- Hobbes' explanationist argument: *Leviathan*
- Le Mettrie: *Man a Machine*

Contemporary anti-dualists

Conceptual analysis: logical behaviorism

- Ryle, "Descartes' Myth"
- Hempel, "The Logical Analysis of Psychology"

Naturalism: identity theory

- U.T. Place, "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?"
- J.J.C. Smart, "Sensation and Brain Processes"

Conceptual analysis: logical functionalism and eliminativism

- Lewis, "Psychophysical and theoretical identification"
- Churchland "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes"
- Stich, From *Folk Psychology to Cognitive Psychology*

Naturalism: explanationist functionalism

- Hillary Putnam, "The Nature of Mental States"
- Jerry Fodor, "Special Sciences (or: The Disunity of Science as a Working Hypothesis")

Conceptual analysis: two-factor logical functionalism about belief content

- Jaegwon Kim, "Multiple Realization and the Metaphysics of Reduction," or from *Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*
- Frank Jackson, from *From Metaphysics to Ethics*

Contemporary idealism

- Foster, "The succinct case for idealism"

Contemporary responses to twentieth century anti-dualism

Conceptual analysis: dualism or mysterianism about phenomenal consciousness

- Saul Kripke, "Naming and Necessity"
- Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia"
- David Chalmers, "Facing up the Problem of Consciousness"
- Colin McGinn, "Can we Solve the Mind-Body Problem?"

Naturalism: property dualism

- Searle, "The Irreducibility of Consciousness"

Naturalism: pure explanationism

- Cummins, from *Meaning and Mental Representation*
- Waskan, from *Models and Cognition*

Naturalism: relativism

- Stich, from *Deconstructing the Mind*

Subject naturalism: interpretation theories

- Davidson, "Radical Interpretation"
- Dennett, "Three Kinds of Intentional Psychology"
- Quine, on empathy, from *The Pursuit of Truth*
- Gordon and Goldman: Simulation Theory

Conceptual analysis: the body-body problem

- Montero, Papineau

Philosophy of science (historical)
Sample syllabus
Fall 2010
Benjamin Bayer

Course description
The philosophy of science asks fundamental questions about the epistemology of scientific discovery and justification. While the discipline often deals with questions that are specific to the special sciences, it is also motivated by problems that are of universal interest to all knowers. Chief among these is the so-called "problem of induction," the problem of how observations of particulars can help us acquire general knowledge about the unobserved.

Philosophy of science deals with other general epistemological questions, such as those about the nature of causality, explanation, laws of nature, reduction, theoretical entities, and to what extent our observations and our positing of unobservable entities are infused with theoretical assumptions. These questions are of independent interest, but the theme of this course is that these and other problems can be understood better by first understanding the problem of induction, and that the story of the controversy about induction can in many ways tell the story of the development of the philosophy of science.

Though many philosophy of science courses and texts begin the story at the beginning of the century, when the discipline was institutionalized, it is impossible to understand its story without studying the history of the high points of science, and the philosophical thinking undertaken by prominent scientists along the way. For this reason the course will introduce topics through a historical survey beginning with the ancient Greeks, ending in the twentieth century.

Texts
- Timothy McGrew, *Philosophy of Science: An Historical Anthology* (Blackwell, 2009)

Lecture and reading schedule

Ancient views on the role of deduction and induction

Deductivism and Plato
- Euclid
- Plato, from *Phaedo* and *Timaeus*

Socratic induction
- Plato, from *The Republic*

Aristotle on demonstration and induction
- Aristotle, from *Posterior Analytics*
- Aristotle, from *Physics*
- Aristotle, from *History of Animals* and *Parts of Animals*
- Commentary: John McCaskey, "Freeing Aristotelian *Epagoge* from *Prior Analytics* II 23."

The scientific revolution and early modern scientific thought

The medieval approach to science
- William of Okham, from *Quidlibetal Questions*
- Commentary: Edward Grant, "The reception and impact of Aristotelian learning and the reaction of the Church and its theologians."

The debate over authority vs. observation
- Cardinal Bellarmine, letters and lectures
- Galileo, from *Dialogues concerning Two New Sciences*

Early controversy over inductive methodology in science

- Francis Bacon, from *Novum Organum*
- Rene Descartes, from *Principles of Philosophy*
- Isaac Newton, from *Principia Mathematica,* "Rules of Reasoning in Philosophy"

Hume's problem about demonstration

- David Hume, from *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*
- Thomas Reid, from *Inquiry into the Human Mind and the Principles of Common Sense*

The triumph of nineteenth century science and controversy over induction

The nineteenth century debate over induction in science

- Richard Whately, from *Elements of Logic*
- William Whewell, selections
- John Stuart Mill, from *A System of Logic*

Hypothesis and abductivism

- Charles Darwin, from *Origin of the Species*
- Charles Peirce, "The Nature of Abduction"
- Pierre Duhem, "Against Crucial Experiments"
- Albert Einstein, "On the Method of Theoretical Physics"

Probabilism

- Pierre-Simon Laplace, from *Analytic theory of probabilities*
- John-Maynard Keynes, from *Treatise on Probability*

Twentieth century philosophy of science

Logical positivism

- Rudolf Carnap, "Theory and Observation"
- A.J. Ayer, from *Logic, Truth and Language*

Responses to positivism

- Carl Hempel, "Empiricist Criteria of Cognitive Significance: Problems and Changes," "The Raven paradox"
- W.V. Quine, from "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," "Natural Kinds"
- Nelson Goodman, "The New Riddle of Induction"
- Karl Popper, "Conjectures and Refutations"
- Thomas Kuhn, "The Structure of Scientific Revolution"

Realism and anti-realism

- Richard Boyd, "The Current Status of Scientific Realism"
- Larry Laudan, "A Confutation of Convergent Realism"
- Bas van Fraasen, "Constructive Empiricism"

Philosophy of science (problems)
Sample syllabus
Fall 2010
Benjamin Bayer

Course description
The philosophy of science asks fundamental questions about the epistemology of scientific discovery and justification. Though the discipline deals with a wide variety of topics of interest to the working of the special sciences, it is possible to discern interconnections between these various topics. This course surveys a variety of positions on standard philosophy of science topics while attempting to show which questions are fundamental to others.

The course begins by asking "What is science?," i.e., what demarcates it from other fields or modes of discourse? Answers to this question often turn on further questions about what science *does*, and how it manages to do it. Thus questions about the nature of scientific justification or confirmation are of central importance to the philosophy of science. Theories of confirmation also influence theories of explanation, because our model for how we know *what* is true in science often influences our model for how we know *why* something is true. How we understand both confirmation and explanation further influences how we are to understand the reality of scientific conclusions: if we think evidence is adequate to justify scientific theories, we will be more likely to think that scientific conclusions reveal an objective reality; if not, not. By the same token, if we think evidence is adequate, and not influenced by subjective factors, we will think that science is not a social construct.

Though some of these problems in the philosophy of science seem pedantic, this course will emphasize that they have real importance for our contemporary cultural/political scene. What counts as genuine science vs. pseudo-science is often the focus of debates over the teaching of evolution vs. creationism, and controversies over the reliability of environmental science, especially climate science. The theories we have studied often purport to establish criteria for proper science, and to the extent that a picture of proper science often depends on further theories of confirmation and explanation, these theoretical topics come to be of tremendous cultural importance.

Texts
- Theodore Schick, *Readings in the Philosophy of Science: From Positivism to Postmodernism* (McGraw-Hill, 1999)

Lecture and reading schedule

What makes science what it is?
- Science is verifiable: A.J Ayer, "The Elimination of Metaphysics
- Science is falsification: Karl Popper, "Science: Conjectures and Refutations," "Darwinism as a Metaphysical Research Program"
- Science is puzzle-solving: Thomas Kuhn, "Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research"
- Science has no clear essence: Larry Laudan, "Science at the Bar—Causes for Concern"

What data does science draw on?
- Observations are distinct from theory: Rudolf Carnap, "The Methodological Character of Theoretical Concepts"
- Observations depend on theory: N.R. Hanson, "Observation"
- Observations depend on a social paradigm: Thomas Kuhn, from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*
- Basic observations are not theory-dependent in any interesting way: Michael Huemer, from *Skepticism and the Veil of Perception*

How does science justify itself on the basis of this data?
- Ampliative inferences is not logically justified: David Hume, from *The Enquiry*
- Confirmation is deducing predicted observations from hypotheses: Carl Hempel, "The Role of Induction in Scientific Inquiry"

- Science is not confirmed by hypothetico-deduction: Karl Popper, "The Problem of Induction"
- Science is underdetermined by evidence: Pierre Duhem, "Physical Theory and Experiment"
- Scientific inference is inference to the best explanation: Peter Lipton, "Contrastive Inference"
- Science is justified through a chain of inductive inference: John Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction"
- Basic cause and effect relationships can be directly observed: Rom Harre and Edward Madden, from *Causal Powers: A Theory of Natural Necessity*

How does science explain facts/formulate laws of nature?

- Explanation works by deducing an observation from a law of nature: Carl Hempel, "Laws and their Role in Scientific Explanation"
- Explanation works by describing a causal process: Wesley Salmon, "Why Ask, Why?"
- Explanation relies on pragmatic factors: Bas Van Fraasen, "The Pragmatics of Explanation"
- Explanation unifies disparate pieces of knowledge: Philip Kitcher, "Explanatory Unification"
- Explanation cites analogical models: Rom Harre, from *Principles of Scientific Thinking*

Does science reveal objective reality?

- Unobservables are real: Grover Maxwell, "The Ontological Status of Theoretical Entities"
- Unobservables are not real: Bas van Fraasen, "Constructive Empiricism"
- Beyond realism and anti-realism: Arthur Fine, "The Natural Ontological Attitude"
- Realism and explanatory success: James Brown, "Reality and Scientific Progress"

Which field is paradigmatic of scientific discipline?

- Science should reduce to physics: Paul Oppenheim and Hilary Putnam, "Unity of Science as a Working Hypothesis"
- Not all science reduces to physics: Jerry Fodor, "Special Sciences"
- Different sciences involve different explanatory standards: John Dupre, "The Disunity of Science"
- Scientific pluralism is too permissive: George Reisch, "Pluralism, Logical Empiricism, and the Problem of Pseudoscience"

What role do social values play in scientific conclusions?

- Scientific conclusions are socially constructed: Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, "The Social Construction of Scientific Facts"
- Scientific conclusions are not socially constructed: Stephen Cole, "Voodoo Sociology: Recent Developments in the Sociology of Science"
- Some but not all facts are socially constructed: John Searle, from *The Construction of Social Reality*
- Social values determine what counts as "significant truth": Philip Kitcher, from *Science, Truth and Democracy*
- The values that aid scientific theories can themselves be objective: Tara Smith, "Social Objectivity and the Objectivity of Value"

Applying philosophy of science to contemporary controversies

- Evolution vs. creationism
- Climate science: pro and contra

American Pragmatism
Sample syllabus
Fall 2010
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Course description
American culture is thought to be less philosophical than Europe's. But one cannot make this judgment without qualification without first looking to the distinctive contribution to philosophy originated by Americans in the 19th and 20th centuries: pragmatism.

As it turns out, there is much in this philosophic contribution which results from, if it does not contribute to American distrust of abstract philosophy. Pragmatism is skeptical of reasoning from armchair first principles. Instead it places trust in disciplines and institutions which have stood the test of time) (such as science, religion, and art) and sees attempts by philosophers to "legislate" prescriptions for these fields as baseless and unmotivated by uncontroversial facts. Its skepticism about armchair philosophy is of a piece with its general rejection of the contemplation model of the mind, and its endorsement of attention to action and consequences in our lived experience.

Since pragmatists themselves do not believe that a philosophical problem can be solved without attention to its historical context, this course will examine the development of pragmatism in *its* historical context. We will begin with the roots of pragmatism in European philosophy and its descendants. Though these roots may seem to be in conflict with each other—Hume's empiricism, Hegel's rationalism, Emerson's romanticism—there are threads uniting them, threads which were picked up by the classical pragmatists (Peirce, James, and Dewey), and fashioned into what they took to be a new philosophy for a new century.

And, like good pragmatists, we will also attend to the *consequences* of pragmatism: to the cultural influence it has had on American institutions, whether in education or in politics. Whether these consequences were especially useful ones will then be discussed, by prominent critics of pragmatism.

Texts
- Susan Haack and Robert Lane, eds., *Pragmatism: Old & New: Selected Writings* (Prometheus, 2006)
- William James, *Pragmatism* (Dover, 1995)
- John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Beacon Press, 1957)
- Course pack

Lecture and reading schedule

European roots of American pragmatism

The target of pragmatism: foundationalism and the quest for certainty
- Descartes, from *Meditations* and *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*

Early accounts of pragmatic justification
- Hume, "Skeptical Solutions to these Doubts," from *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
- Kant, "Opinion," from *The Critique of Pure Reason*

Anti-foundationalism and romanticism
- Hegel, "Sense Certainty," from *The Phenomenology of Mind*
- Emerson, from "Self-reliance" and "The American Scholar"

C.S. Peirce

The critique of Descartes
- Peirce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities"
- Peirce, "The Fixation of belief"

The pragmatic theory of meaning

- Peirce, “How to Make Our Ideas Clear”
- Peirce, “A Definition of Pragmatism”
- Peirce, “Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis”

William James

Psychological work

- James, “Habit” from *Principles of Psychology*

Theory of knowledge

- James, “The Will to Believe”

The pragmatic theory of meaning and truth

- James, *Pragmatism* (entire)

Ethical consequences

- James, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life”

John Dewey

More anti-Cartesianism

- Dewey, “Escape from Peril,” from *The Quest for Certainty*

Systematic pragmatism

- Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (entire)

The pragmatic theory of truth

- Dewey, “Truth and Consequences”

Ethical consequences

- Dewey, “Theory of Valuation”

Applications to culture

- Dewey, “Theories of knowledge” and “Aims in Education,” in *Democracy and Education*
- Dewey, “The Live Creature,” from *Art and Experience*

Late pragmatism

- Meade, “Mind, Self and Society” and/or “The Social Self”
- Schiller, “The Making of Truth”
- Lewis, “A Pragmatic Conception of the *a priori*”
- W.V. Quine, from “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”
- Rorty, “Pragmatism, Relativism, and Irrationalism”

American challenges to American Pragmatism

- Russell, from *History of Western Philosophy*
- Blanshard, from *The Nature of Thought*
- Dennett, “Postmodernism and Truth”
- Peikoff, “Why Must one Act on Principle?”