

Seminar in the Philosophy of Mind: Phil 8310
Consciousness, Intentionality, and Introspection

Fall 2009
Thursday 12:30-3:15
Room: Peabody 219

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Office Hours: Fr 12:00-1:30,
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Course Description

What is it for a mental state to be phenomenally conscious? Descartes famously argued that consciousness is an irreducible feature of reality that inheres in a distinct substance, the so-called *res cogitans*. In contrast to Descartes, many contemporary philosophers believe that the world is entirely material. As a consequence, they try to explain phenomenal consciousness in nonphenomenal terms, with the ultimate goal of reducing it to something physical. Many of them believe that a preliminary step in this process is to explain consciousness in terms of intentionality, that is, in terms of the capacity of mental states to represent.

In this course, we will discuss the three most important contemporary theories that reduce consciousness to intentionality: 1) the *representational theory of consciousness*; 2) the *higher-order monitoring theory of consciousness*; and 3) the *self-representational theory of consciousness*. According to the representational theory, a mental state is conscious if and only if it represents in the right way. According to the higher-order monitoring theory of consciousness, a mental state is conscious if and only if it is *represented* in the right way. And, according to the self-representational theory of consciousness, a mental state is conscious if and only if it represents itself. In this seminar, we will not only compare these theories. Rather, our purpose is to gain insight into the nature of phenomenal consciousness. We will also address issues such as the nature of introspection and the phenomenology of experience.

Assignments

1. *Presentation and Small Paper* (together worth 25% of your final grade): All students will give an in-class presentation (about 20 min) and write a short paper (app. 8 pages) based on the presentation. In your presentation, you should introduce one of the readings and provide at least some comments and criticisms. In your paper, you should write up and refine your presentation. Ideally, this paper should develop one critical point in more detail.

2. *Final Essay* (worth 75% of your final grade): Your final essay (app. 15-20 pages) should discuss one problem dealt with in this course. You are encouraged to discuss your topic with me before you start working on it.

Readings

All readings will be made available on the webct website for this course. Many of the readings can also be found in the following two collections:

Ned Block, Owen Flanagan, and Güven Güzeldere (eds), *The Nature of Consciousness*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1997.

Rocco J. Gennaro, *Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004.

Uriah Kriegel and Kenneth Williford, *Self-Representational Approaches to Consciousness*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006.

David Rosenthal, *Consciousness and Mind*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.

Michael Tye, *Consciousness, Color, and Content*, Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002.

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

Schedule of Classes

Please note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Aug 20	Introduction
Aug 27	Franz Brentano, Selections from <i>Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint</i>
	Book II: Mental Phenomena in General:
	I The Distinction Between Mental and Physical Phenomenal
	II Inner Consciousness

1. The Representational Theory of Consciousness

Sept 03	Michael Tye, “Representationalism: The Theory and its Motivations”
	Michael Tye, “Blurry Images, Double Vision, and Other Oddities: New Problems for Representationalism”

- Sept 10 Sydney Shoemaker, "Phenomenal Character"
Michael Tye, "On Moderation in Matters Phenomenal: Shoemaker and Inverted Qualia"
- Sept 17 Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"
Michael Tye, "Knowing What It Is Like"
- Sept 24 Joseph Levine, "Materialism and Qualia"
Michael Tye, "The Explanatory Gap as a Cognitive Illusion"

2. The Higher-Order Monitoring Theory of Consciousness

- Oct. 01 David M. Rosenthal, "A Theory of Consciousness"
David M. Rosenthal, "Thinking that One Thinks"
- Oct. 08 David Armstrong, "What is Consciousness"
William G. Lycan, "Consciousness as Internal Monitoring"
William G. Lycan, "The Superiority of HOP to HOT"
- Oct. 15 Peter Carruthers, "HOP over FOR, HOT theory"
Robert Van Gulick, "Higher-Order Global States"
- Oct. 22 Fred Dretske, "Conscious Experience"
Alex Byrne, "What Phenomenal Consciousness Is Like"

3. The Self-Representational Theory of Consciousness

- Oct. 29 Güven Güzeldere, "Is Consciousness the Perception of What Passes in One's Own Mind?"
Terry Horgan, John Tienson, and George Graham, "Internal-World Skepticism and the Self-Representational Nature of Phenomenal Consciousness"

- Nov. 05 Kenneth Williford, "The Intentionality of Consciousness and Consciousness of Intentionality"
Uriah Kriegel, "Consciousness and Self-Consciousness"
- Nov. 12 Uriah Kriegel, "Naturalizing Subjective Character"
Robert van Gulick, "Morrer Mirror – Is That All?"
- Nov. 19 John J. Drummond, "The Case(s) of (Self-)Awareness"
Joseph Levine, "Conscious Awareness and (Self-)Representation"
- Dec. 03 Wrap up session