

# PHL340: Issues in Philosophy of Mind

University of Toronto

Summer 2015

## Course Instructor:

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Office Hours and Location: TBA

## Course Description

*The Perceptual Turn*: what do philosophers of mind care about? In the 80s, it was mental representation: how we manage to have thoughts about objects and their properties. In the 90s, it was consciousness: how the world as described by physical science relates to the qualitative character of conscious experience. The 2000s brought a new (and at the same time not so new) focus: perception. We'll examine some recent attempts to illuminate the nature and role of perceptual experience. 'Issues' include: perceptual objectivity, perceptual justification, perceptual content, perceptual attention, and perceptual demonstrative thought.

## Course Reading

Weekly readings will mostly be made available on Blackboard, and lecture handouts will be distributed in class. Students should also acquire the following text (I've had the UTM campus bookstore order copies):

- Brewer, Bill. *Perception and Its Objects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

## Evaluation

*Grading*: We adhere to a blind grading policy. So when you submit your assignments, please only include your student number.

### 1. Short Paper: 20%. Due: Friday of Week 3

- *Instructions*: You will be required to write a short paper. It will require the close reading and analysis of a passage from one of the readings. I'll send out a list of passages, along with more detailed instructions, well before the assignment is due. The paper must be no more than 1000 words. Your TA has been instructed to penalize anyone who goes over the word limit. Submit these paper on Blackboard before 11:59 p.m. (EDT) on the due date. *NOTE*: all papers must be submitted in .doc format.
- *Feedback*: The paper is designed in part to teach you the skills you will need to write the term paper, so your TA has been instructed to provide a higher than usual number of comments. Take this feedback seriously.

### 2. Term Paper: 40%. Due: Final Day of Classes

- *Instructions*: These papers must be no longer than 2000 words. Anything longer will be penalised. Topics will be distributed well ahead of the due date. Submit these papers on Blackboard before 11:59 p.m. (EDT) on the final day of classes. *NOTE*: all papers must be submitted in .doc format.

3. Final Examination: 40% Date and Location: TBA

- The final exam is cumulative and will take place during the official exam period. It is a two hour exam, and will be a mix of fill-in-the-black and short answer questions. Only material covered in lecture will be examinable.

## Course Schedule

1. Course Introduction and the Arguments from Illusion and Hallucination

2. Classical Responses and Transparency

*Reading:* Tim Crane “The Problem of Perception”

*Optional:* P.F. Strawson “Perception and Its Objects”

3. Representationalism

*Reading:* David Chalmers “The Representational Character of Experience”; Michael Tye *Consciousness, Color, and Content* (Chs. 3-4)

*Optional:* Charles Travis “The Silence of the Senses” [This is *very* hard]; Bill Brewer *Perception and Its Objects* (Ch. 4)

4. Direct Realism

*Reading:* John Campbell *Reference and Consciousness* (Chs. 6); Bill Brewer *Perception and Its Objects* (Ch. 5)

*Optional:* Matt Soteriou *The Mind’s Construction* (Ch. 1); John Campbell *Reference and Consciousness* (Ch. 7)

5. Perceptual Content I: How Far Does It Go?

*Reading:* Susanna Siegel “Which Properties are Represented in Perception?”

*Optional:* Tim Bayne “Perceptual Experience and the Reach of Phenomenal Content”

6. Perceptual Content II: Beyond Vision

*Reading:* Casey O’Callaghan “Lessons from Beyond Vision (Sounds and Audition)”

*Optional:* P. F. Strawson *Individuals* (Ch. 2) [This is fun]

7. Perceptual Justification I

*Reading:* Jim Pryor “The Skeptic and the Dogmatist”

8. Perceptual Justification II

*Reading:* Roger White “Problems for Dogmatism”

*Optional:* Susanna Siegel “Cognitive Penetrability and Perceptual Justification”

9. Perceptual Objectivity: Berkeley’s Puzzle

*Reading:* John Campbell “Berkeley’s Puzzle”

*Optional:* Gareth Evans “Things Without The Mind” [This is *extremely* hard]

10. Perceptual Attention: Access and Consciousness

*Reading:* Ned Block “On a Confusion about the Function of Consciousness”; Declan Smithies “Attention is Rational-Access Consciousness”

*Optional:* Wayne Wu *Attention* (selections)

#### 11. Perception and Thought

*Reading:* Declan Smithies “What is the Role of Consciousness in Demonstrative Thought?”; Imogen Dickie “Visual Attention Fixes Demonstrative Reference By Eliminating Referential Luck”

*Optional:* John Campbell “Consciousness and Reference”; Wayne Wu *Attention* (selections)

#### 12. Review

## Course Business

1. *Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.* The University of Toronto takes plagiarism (and academic misconduct more generally) very seriously. For a complete statement of the policies governing academic conduct, see the University’s *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, and also for knowing the particular plagiarism penalties. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) the use of a thinker’s ideas or words without proper citation; the purchase of assignments; the use of internet resources without proper citation; and the submission of work written (in whole or in part) by another. Penalties for plagiarism range from a zero on the assignment to suspension from the University of Toronto. Furthermore, TAs in the Philosophy Department are known to be excellent detectors of plagiarism: *if you cheat, we will catch you*. So don’t do it.
2. *How to Avoid Plagiarising:* Most students plagiarise because they believe themselves to be without options. But no student will ever be without options in this course. If you find yourself in trouble, and tempted to cheat, contact me *immediately*. If you haven’t *yet* cheated, a solution can always be found. In addition, the University of Toronto provides a host of resources designed to help students in academic need. UTM has a writing centre and friendly registrars, and the Philosophy Department has its own Essay Clinic (though you must book ahead). Students who wish to talk to someone may also contact the University’s Counselling & Psychological Services (CAPS).
3. *Late Penalties.* This will be a challenging and fast-paced course. It is highly recommended that you attend every class meeting and get your work in on time. Late penalties on assigned work are set at 1/3 of a letter grade per day, to a maximum of three days (this includes weekends/holidays), unless accompanied by a documented medical explanation or due to a family emergency. Any work outstanding beyond this point will receive a grade of 0.
4. *Your Course Contact.* I am your primary contact for this course. You must use your ‘utoronto’ email account if you need to correspond with me (or your T.A.). Course-related emails **MUST** have “PHL340” somewhere in the subject line. I will not answer emails that ask for information readily available on either Blackboard or the course syllabus, so it is always a good idea to begin by checking those two places. I will also not answer emails that ask for information easily obtainable through regular class attendance. Lastly, I will not answer emails that ask substantive philosophical questions—those with such questions should bring them to my office hours. I will respond to all other emails within two working days.
5. *Special Accommodations.* I am more than happy to assist with special accommodations for students registered with accessibility services. If you are registered with accessibility services, please don’t hesitate to have your accessibility services representative get in touch with me.