

## **Aaron Henry, Ph.D: Teaching Dossier**

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### **Teaching Areas**

#### GRADUATE AND UPPER-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE

- Philosophy of Mind and Philosophy of Cognitive Science

#### INTRODUCTORY AND LOWER-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE

- Philosophy of Action (incl. Free Will)
- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Philosophy of Science
- Environmental Ethics

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## 1. Teaching Philosophy

My primary goal as a teacher is to make philosophy accessible to my students and stimulate their intellectual engagement in the area. My primary methods for accomplishing this goal are: (i) emphasizing an organizing course narrative; (ii) modeling effective philosophy in lecture and discussion; (iii) providing explicit instruction regarding the mechanics of philosophy; and (iv) creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment.

A classic discovery in the psychology of learning concerns the importance of narrative coherence for subsequent recall. Because success in a philosophy course requires remembering a certain amount of information, I rely on these well-documented features of human attention and memory when designing my lesson plans. For example, I always organize my courses and discussion sections around a question or puzzle. This then functions as the context against which individual texts and positions are then examined and explained—e.g., as responses to a background set of intellectual pressures. For example, it's easier to recall what distinguishes indirect realist, representationalist, and relationalist accounts of perceptual experience if one views them as competing strategies to salvage our ordinary concept of perception from the argument from hallucination. Apart from providing a meaningful context for understanding exotic and subtle ideas, this reminds students that how a philosopher approaches a question will crucially depend on their background assumptions about what calls for explanation. Students respond well to this approach and often comment on the clarity with which I communicate key concepts (“[Mr. Henry makes it] very easy to follow along. The limited words used on the board to tie ideas [together] was very helpful. The pace was great!”; “Prof. Henry was VERY clear in explaining even the most difficult concepts. He made it easy to understand”). I supplement this with handouts that I distribute at the start of lecture. In my experience, doing so discourages excessive notetaking and facilitates attention to lecture content (“Lecture notes being provided was a big help – allowed for more focus on the lecture itself”).

Merely grasping various philosophical positions is clearly insufficient for success in philosophy. One must also acquire skills for engaging critically with those positions. I impart these skills, in part, by modelling them effectively. In addition to lecturing, I structure my class time with an eye to exhibiting how to have a productive philosophical conversation. I do so by, for example, consistently trying to exercise the principle of charity toward student contributions and show how progress can be made collaboratively. Students notice this and confirm that they value the approach: “I liked that Aaron answered the best possible versions of our questions, [which] allowed focused debate on particular topics”; “[He is] good at ... working with students to ask the right questions”; “The conversation aspect of philosophy is greatly encouraged.”

Philosophical development requires more than effective modelling, however. It also requires explicit instruction in the mechanics of philosophy. In addition to training in the standard formal methods of philosophy, I believe that teachers can improve the clarity and depth of students' philosophical thought by strengthening their command of the language in which it is expressed. Too often, undergraduates enter a philosophy course lacking the skills in reading and writing required to fully achieve and exhibit their potential for the subject. In turn, students report frustration at having to learn these skills in a trial-and-error fashion—e.g., only after receiving a poor grade on a paper and without little understanding of how to improve. I've worked to remedy this situation in my in my role as 'Lead English Language TA'. This recent teaching initiative in the U of T Philosophy Department aims at strengthening command of philosophical writing in undergraduate students. Working directly with undergraduates, graduate teaching assistants, and course instructors, my aims were to embed

reading and writing pedagogy into the design of an undergraduate philosophy course for science students (“Philosophy for Scientists”) without sacrificing philosophical content or student engagement. The initiative was an undisputed success. Beginning next year, it is being expanded to include six undergraduate Philosophy courses at U of T.

My training and experience in the ELL initiative informs how I now approach designing my courses. For example, I’ve found that students respond best to instruction about the mechanics of philosophical writing when they see how it helps reveal a philosopher’s position or argument (e.g., “I liked that we learned special tips and words to look for in an author’s argument that could guide us when deciding what their premises are . . . [and] practice how to understand/find an author’s argument in the text”). To this end, I regularly embed small ‘how to’ interludes into my lectures when doing so illuminates the material currently under discussion—e.g., when a philosopher’s argument illustrates a principle that students can apply to their own writing. I also use ‘low stakes’ writing assignments (e.g., short reading responses) to encourage continuous written engagement with course material (which, among other things, reduces students’ anxiety around writing). And I normally begin a course with a ‘scaffolded’ essay assignment, which breaks the assignment down into an ordered series of steps and explicitly delineates my expectations for each step in the series (see §7.7 for an example).

The most significant part of making a subject accessible to students is creating a learning environment in which as many students as possible feel comfortable contributing and raising questions. This is especially critical in philosophy, which is sustained by one’s intuitive sense of puzzlement about familiar parts of the world. Those who are new to philosophy risk interpreting that experience as a personal defect reflecting negatively on their suitability to the subject as opposed to a resource to be cultivated, refined, and used to direct further inquiry. I work to nurture the latter mentality, first and foremost, by welcoming and showing respect for students’ questions. This is reflected in one of the most common pieces of feedback I receive from students: that they feel comfortable participating in my courses (“[Aaron] is kind and approachable, which makes it easy to engage in the course. I appreciate how he treats all comments as though they deserve to be heard”; “Aaron knows how to respond appropriately to questions and concerns. He is friendly and approachable which makes tutorial a comfortable place for discussion”). Despite these efforts to be inclusive, class discussions tend unfairly to reward the outgoing and punish the shy. Consequently, I ask students anonymously to write and submit a question or specific sources of confusion in lecture and discussion section, typically using online resources like Socratic. Apart from further reinforcing the importance of identifying and articulating a specific area of puzzlement, this gives shy students a chance to receive participation marks, and it also provides me with feedback that I use when planning my subsequent lectures and class discussions.

## 2. Professional Development

During my graduate studies at the University of Toronto, I took many steps to improving and extending my teaching abilities. In doing so, I witnessed significant improvements in student satisfaction and learning outcomes. Most recently, my 3<sup>rd</sup>-year “Issues in Philosophy of Mind” course (taught in the winter term of 2019) received Honourable Mention for the Martha Lile Love Teaching Award by the U of T Philosophy Department (a Department known for its teaching excellence). In this section, I describe two factors that have been particularly central to my development: the active soliciting of feedback about my performance as a teacher and the pursuit of explicit pedagogical instruction through U of T’s many teaching facilities, including the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (“CTSI”), the Teaching Assistants’ Training Program (“TATP”), and the Writing Instruction for TAs program (“WIT”).

The most significant factor in my development as a teacher has been reflecting on various sources of feedback about my performance in this role. First and foremost, there is insightful student feedback, reflection on which has improved my teaching in countless ways. To mention only two concrete examples, my recent choice to supplement my lectures with visually engaging PowerPoint slides (particularly in my philosophy of perception course) and online interactive resources like Socrative were each in direct response to student comments about how their learning could be enhanced. Since making these changes, students have praised both components of my teaching as important to their classroom experience. The latter intervention, in particular, has proven useful for combatting monopolization of the discussion by a vocal minority and for providing a platform to more marginalized voices in the classroom.

In addition to students’ feedback, I have had my teaching observed and evaluated repeatedly by my teaching mentor, Marleen Rozemond, and by an instructor from the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (“CTSI”), Alexandra Mutot. Their sustained and systematic feedback about my classroom performance has been a valuable source of insight. Most of all, it has both encouraged me to trust my strengths—e.g., that I explain concepts clearly and engagingly and listen carefully to students—as well as to experiment where there is room for improvement. One place where feedback has provoked me to adjust my teaching concerns the proportion of class-time I devote to lecturing versus discussion. Early in my career, I relied heavily on lecturing to communicate course material, taking student questions when I saw the occasional hand rise or briefly before switching to a new topic. I felt comfortable lecturing and feared that if I reserved too much time to discussion, I would either not have enough material to cover (on the scenario that students failed to speak up), or that their questions would take us on various tangents and would contribute to less material being covered. After experimenting, I quickly found such fears were misplaced. Especially in smaller classrooms, I now cover almost the same amount of material with a carefully facilitated discussion as I used to cover through pure lecturing. Furthermore, when key concepts and distinctions are allowed to emerge organically in a class discussion, it promotes an atmosphere of creative collaboration. As a teacher, this is exhilarating. Further, students report favorably on the ‘conversational’, ‘collaborative’, and ‘inclusive’ quality of my lectures and the feeling that they are actively directing the course’s trajectory. Any minor sacrifices in the amount of material covered are dramatically offset by increased student engagement and the felt excitement of practicing philosophy together as a group.

A second way that I’ve sought to develop as a teacher is by pursuing explicit pedagogical training through a variety of workshops and seminars available through U of T. For example, through the

Teaching Assistants' Training Program ("TATP"), I have attended more than ten, two-hour workshops on pedagogy, including on:

1. Teaching writing in the disciplines to multilingual students;
2. Leading discussion-based tutorials for Humanities;
3. Speaking is teaching: Fostering student engagement through communication;
4. Fostering academic integrity;
5. Finding practice-focused information on teaching;
6. Reading up: Instructional strategies for developing students' critical reading and analysis;
7. Making your syllabus work for you and your students;
8. Phases of learning: The 5 E's model of lesson design;
9. Accessibility 101: An introduction to accessible teaching and learning at the University of Toronto; and
10. Preparing your Teaching Dossier.

Furthermore, as part of my duties as the Lead English Language Teaching Assistant, I included 20 hours of additional training through the Writing Integrated Teaching program ("WIT") and the English Language Learning ("ELL") program at U of T. Furthermore, since the year that I took the Lead ELL TA position was the first year that it was run, no teaching resources had yet been developed for it. Accordingly, in addition to the training I received from workshops and seminars, I met regularly with the head of the English Language Learning program at U of T (Dr. Leora Freedman in 2016 and Dr. Paola Bohórquez in 2017) to discuss my progress with the initiative. These meetings with them were a profound source of insight about the needs of multilingual students, and the resources that I developed (e.g., handouts, tutorial exercises, writing clinics, and scaffolded assignment design) were directly shaped by my collaborations with Dr. Freedman and Dr. Bohórquez. I focused specifically on imparting transferable academic skills, including in active reading, identifying and effectively paraphrasing an author's argument, voice-marking, and reading-to-write. Further, these resources offer strategies for integrating language instruction into all the primary components of a standard university course, including at the level of overall course design (e.g., of lectures and assignments), tutorial organization (e.g., reading- and writing-intensive group exercises), and fine-grained written feedback on student work (e.g., ensuing constructive comments in grading). Through this experience, I've learned that the majority of students are highly motivated to master these language skills and also feel empowered in doing so. However, it's important they do not perceive the instruction as remedial but rather as a core part of learning how to do philosophy.

### 3. Teaching Experience

This part of my dossier outlines my past and present teaching responsibilities as a course instructor, teaching assistant, and grader. I have had the opportunity to play the role of course instructor in both introductory and advanced level courses. My instructorships in the Philosophy Department have been in philosophy of mind, metaphysics, epistemology, and environmental ethics. In the spring, I will also be leading a seminar in the Cognitive Science Program, which will be on attention and expertise. As a TA, I have worked in these areas, as well as in the philosophy of science and philosophy of action.

#### Course Instructor

Course Title	Dates Taught	Course Level and Duration	Duties	Enrollment	Course Description
Philosophy of Mind	Fall 2022	4 <sup>th</sup> year, one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and led 24 1.5-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, and teaching assistant supervision	50	An advanced undergraduate course on the 'hard problem' of consciousness and the conceptual challenges confronting the scientific investigation of consciousness and self-consciousness.
Philosophy of Perception	Fall 2022	4 <sup>th</sup> year, one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and led 24 1.5-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, and teaching assistant supervision	50	An advanced undergraduate course on contemporary philosophy of perception. Topics include consciousness, illusion, perceptual justification, and the intimate ties between perception and action.
Minds & Machines	Fall 2022	2 <sup>nd</sup> year, one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and led 24 1.5-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, and teaching assistant supervision	100	A survey course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness and its relation to the body; personal identity and survival; knowledge of other minds; psychological events and behaviour.
Minds & Machines	Winter 2022	2 <sup>nd</sup> year, one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and led 24 1.5-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, and teaching assistant supervision	50	A survey course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness and its relation to the body; personal identity and survival; knowledge of other minds; psychological events and behaviour.
Seminar in Cognitive Science (in the Cognitive Science Program)	Winter 2020	4 <sup>th</sup> year, one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and led 13 3-hour seminars, assignment design, student contact.	30	Advanced treatment of topics in cognitive science. (The focus of this course is on theoretical controversies around the nature of control, skill, and expertise)

Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality	Fall 2019	1 <sup>st</sup> year, one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and facilitated 26 1.5-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, teaching assistant supervision.	200	An introductory course on the central questions of philosophy, focusing on issues in metaphysics and epistemology, using a selection of classical and contemporary texts.
Environmental Ethics	Fall 2019	2 <sup>nd</sup> year, one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and facilitated 26 1.5-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, grading.	80	An introductory survey of the central questions in environmental ethics, including whether the nonhuman world is intrinsically ethically significant or only insofar as it is connected to human well-being, and our ethical obligations in light of climate change.
Issues in Philosophy of mind	Winter 2019	3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and facilitated 26 1.5-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, grading.	35	An intermediate level course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness, illusion, and perceptual belief.
Issues in Philosophy of mind	Summer 2018	3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and facilitated 12 3-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, teaching assistant supervision, and grading	29	An intermediate level course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness, illusion, and perceptual belief.
Knowledge and Reality	Summer 2016	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	<i>Instructor:</i> Designed and facilitated 12 3-hour lectures, assignment design, student contact, gradership supervision, and grading	39	An introductory survey to epistemology and metaphysics. Topics include: skepticism, belief, justification, causality, identity across time, and time.
Issues in Philosophy of Mind	Winter 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> -year undergraduate one-semester course	<i>Guest lecture:</i> Designed and delivered 4 1.5 hour lectures on the mind-body problem		An intermediate level course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness, illusion, and perceptual belief.
Freedom, Responsibility, and Human Action	Winter 2017	3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	<i>Guest lecture:</i> Designed and delivered 2 3-hour lectures on free will and determinism	35	An introduction to the nature of human action, freedom, and responsibility in light of contemporary knowledge concerning the causation of behaviour.



### Lead English Language Learning Teaching Assistant

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Dates Taught</b>	<b>Course Level and Duration</b>	<b>Duties</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Course Description</b>
Philosophy for Scientists	Fall 2017; Fall 2016	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	<p>Participated in intensive training sessions in pedagogy, focusing on language and writing instruction.</p> <p>Consulted with instructor in designing course syllabus.</p> <p>Designed and led training sessions for course TAs (on topics like constructive grading strategies)</p> <p>Designed and led writing clinics for undergraduate students and reading- and writing- focused tutorials on integrating language and writing instruction with course content. Developed resources on language and writing instruction</p> <p>Collected data (e.g., surveys, student writing samples, etc.)</p> <p>Documented activities (e.g., unit goals, monthly updates, a final report about the initiative's impact).</p>	150	An introduction to philosophy tailored for students with backgrounds in mathematics and science. Topics include: causation, explanation, the relation between scientific and reality, the role of mathematics in science, the reality of numbers, and the relevance of scientific and mathematical discoveries to 'big' traditional philosophical questions.

## Teaching Assistant

Course Title	Dates Taught	Course Level and Duration	Duties	Enrollment	Course Description
Persons, Minds, and Bodies	Winter 2017	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Tutorials, grading, student contact, invigilation	150	A survey course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness and its relation to the body; personal identity and survival; knowledge of other minds; psychological events and behaviour.
Persons, Minds, and Bodies	Summer 2015	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Tutorials, grading, student contact, invigilation student contact	50	A survey course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness and its relation to the body; personal identity and survival; knowledge of other minds; psychological events and behaviour.
Knowledge and Reality	Summer 2016	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Tutorials, grading, student contact, invigilation	150	An introductory survey to epistemology and metaphysics. Topics include: skepticism, belief, justification, causality, identity across time, and time.
Reason and Truth	Fall 2009	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Tutorials, guest lecture, grading, student contact, invigilation	150	An introductory survey to epistemology and metaphysics. Topics include: skepticism, belief, justification, causality, identity across time, and time.
Introduction to Philosophy	2007-08	1 <sup>st</sup> year undergraduate two-semester course	Tutorials, grading, student contact, invigilation	200	An historical introduction to the seminal thinks in philosophy from the Western tradition.

## Grader

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Dates Taught</b>	<b>Course Level and Duration</b>	<b>Duties</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Course Description</b>
Freedom and Determinism	Fall 2017	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Grading, office hours.	50	An introduction to the nature of human action, freedom, and responsibility in light of contemporary knowledge concerning the causation of behaviour.
Topics in Philosophy of Mind	Winter 2014	3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Grading, office hours.	50	An intermediate level course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness, illusion, and perceptual belief.
Minds and Machines	Fall 2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Grading, office hours	50	A survey course on contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. Topics include consciousness and its relation to the body; personal identity and survival; knowledge of other minds; psychological events and behaviour.
Belief, Knowledge and Truth	Fall 2013	2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate one-semester course	Grading and exam prep. workshop	50	An introduction to epistemology. Topics include whether any of our beliefs can be certain, the problem of skepticism, the scope and limits of human knowledge, the nature of perception, rationality, and theories of truth.

## Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness as Course Instructor

### 3.1 Quantitative Summary of Student Evaluations

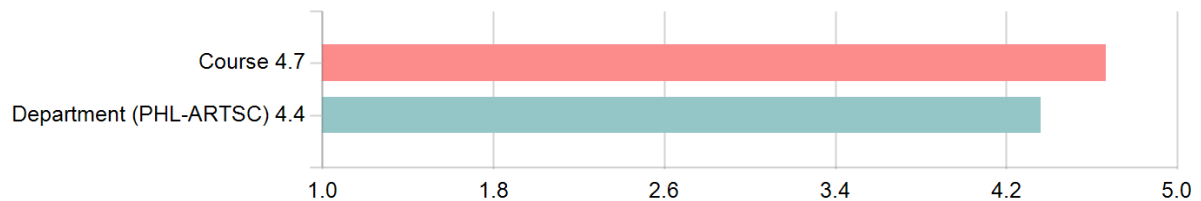
In this section, I present comparative quantitative summaries of my student evaluations for courses I have taught (ordered from most recent to less recent).

#### **PHL340H1S – Issues in Philosophy of Mind (Winter 2019).**

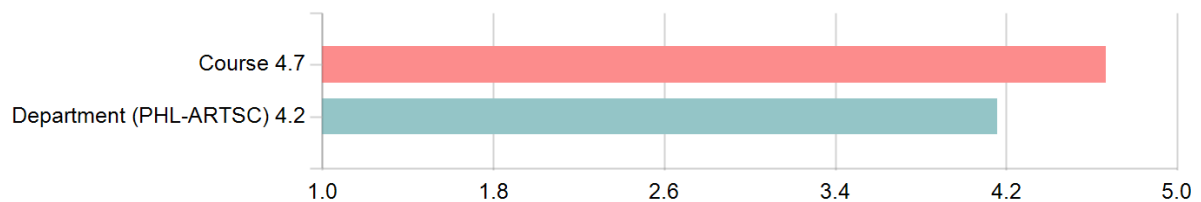
##### (a) Departmental Items

These are questions set by the Department of Philosophy. The graphs compare my average (“Course”) with the departmental average (“Department (PHL-ARTSC)”). Responses can range from 1 (“Not At All”) to 5 (“A Great Deal”).

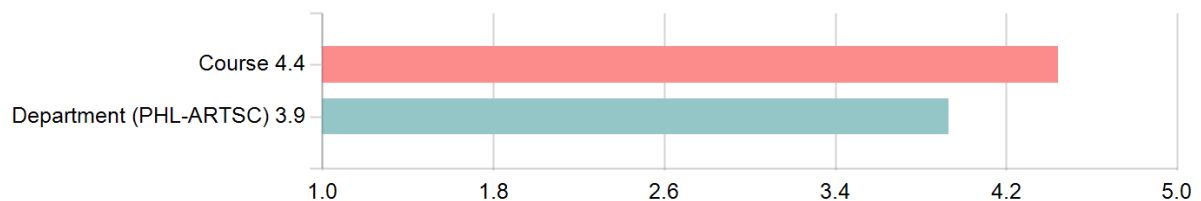
The course instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) was enthusiastic about the course material.



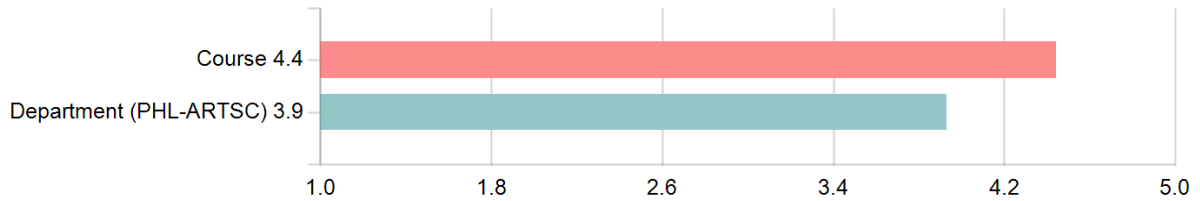
The course instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) explained concepts clearly.



The course material inspired me to learn more about the subject matter.



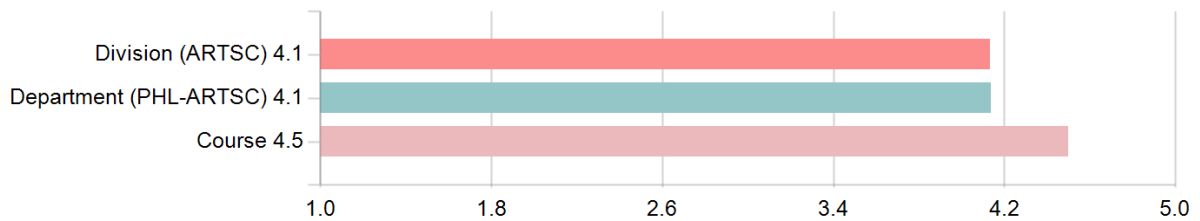
Overall, the quality of instruction provided by ([Aaron Henry](#)) in this course was:



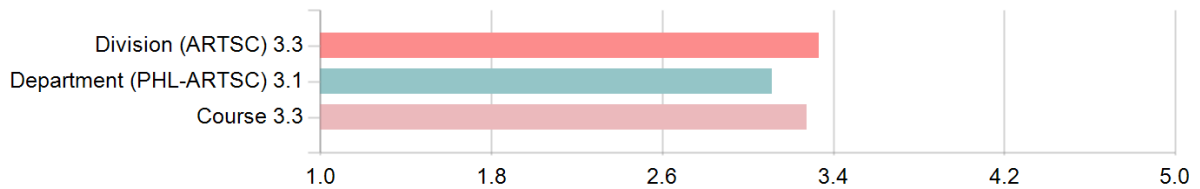
(b) Divisional Items

These are questions set by the Faculty for Arts and Science. The graphs compare my average (“Course”) with the division average (“ARTSC”) and the departmental average (“Department (PHL-ARTSC)”). Responses can range from 1 (“Not At All”) to 5 (“A Great Deal”).

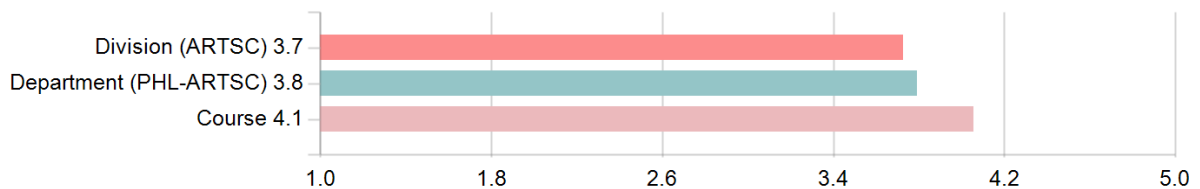
The instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) generated enthusiasm for learning in the course.



Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was...



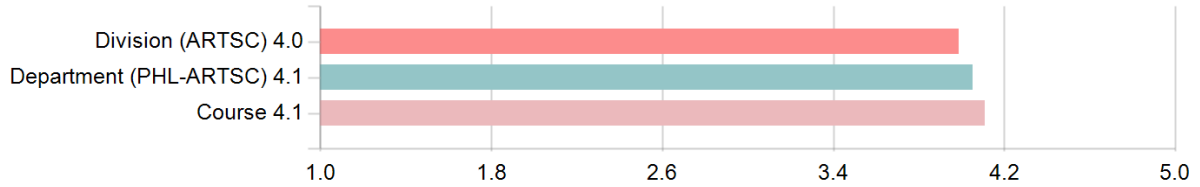
I would recommend this course to other students.



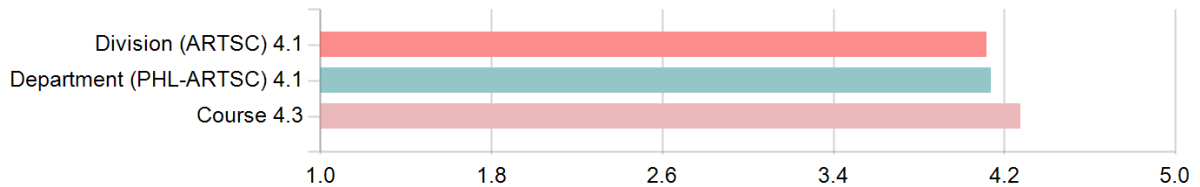
**(c) Institutional Items**

These are questions set by the University. The graphs compare my average (“Course”) with the division average (“ARTSC”) and the departmental average (“Department (PHL-ARTSC”). Responses can range from 1 (“Not At All”) to 5 (“A Great Deal”).

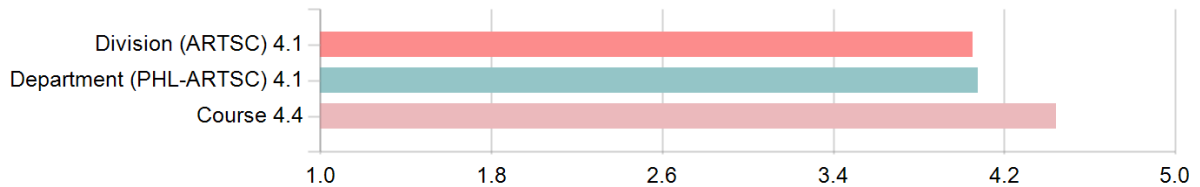
I found the course intellectually stimulating.



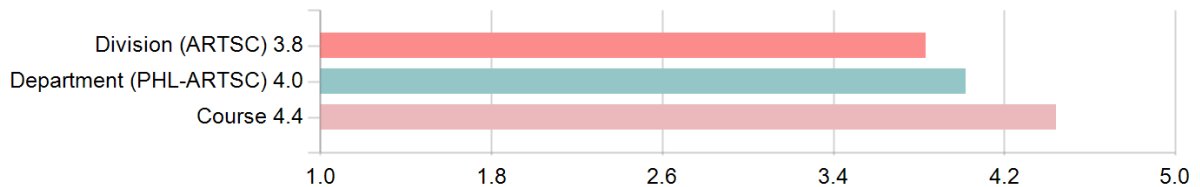
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.



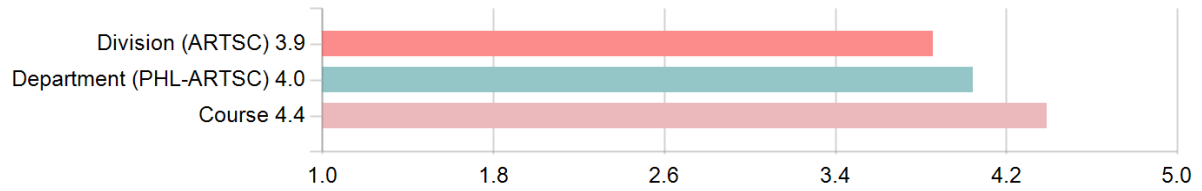
The instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) created a course atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.



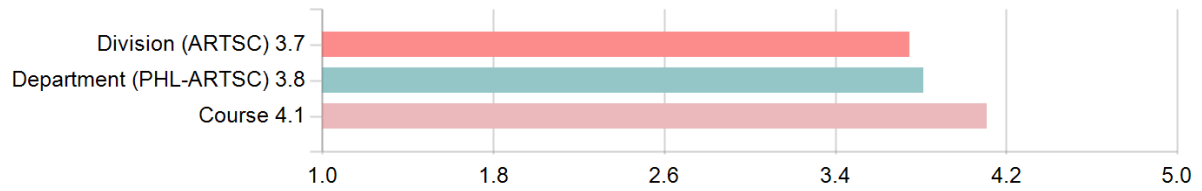
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.



Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.



Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....

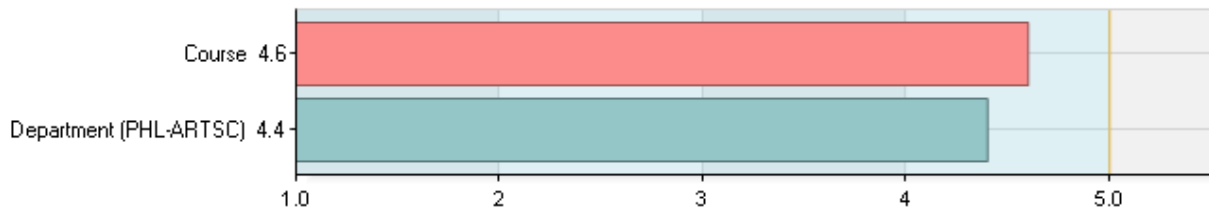


## PHL340H1S – Issues in Philosophy of Mind (Spring 2018)

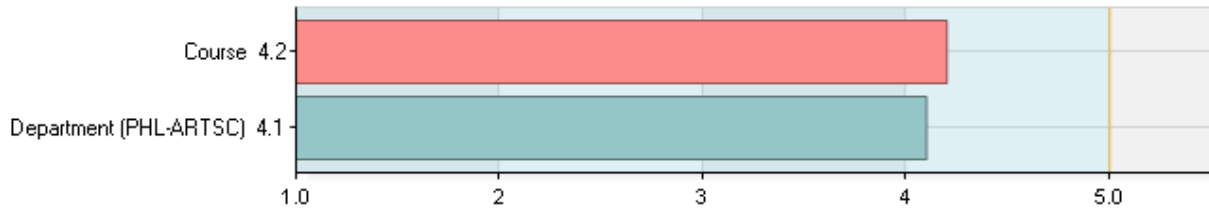
### (a) Department items

These are questions set by the Department of Philosophy. The graphs compare my average (“Course”) with the departmental average (“Department (PHL-ARTSC)”). Responses can range from 1 (“Not At All”) to 5 (“A Great Deal”). 21 of 29 students responded.

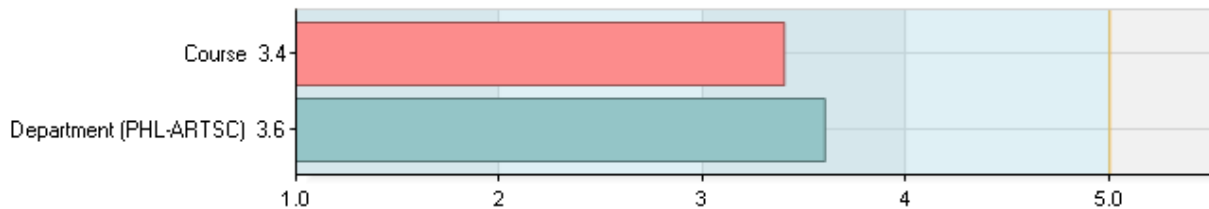
The course instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) was enthusiastic about the course material.



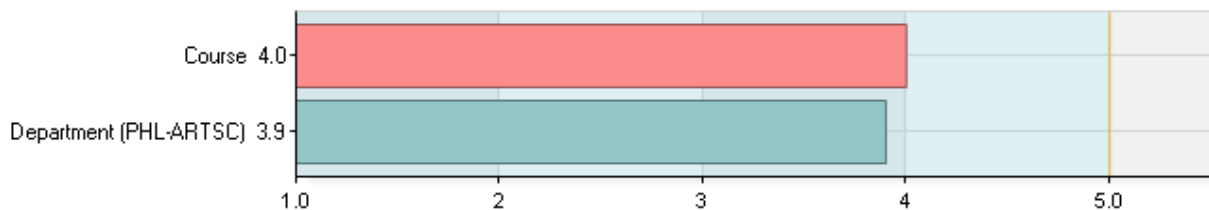
The course instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) explained concepts clearly.



The course material inspired me to learn more about the subject matter.



Overall, the quality of instruction provided by ([Aaron Henry](#)) in this course was:

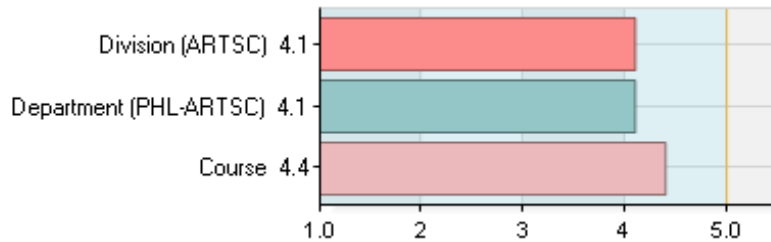


### (b) Divisional items

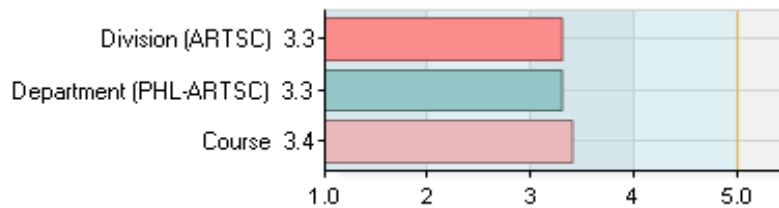
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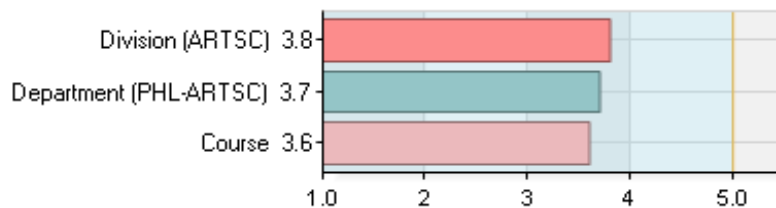
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Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was...



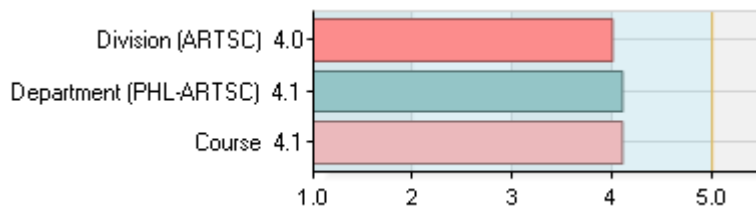
I would recommend this course to other students.



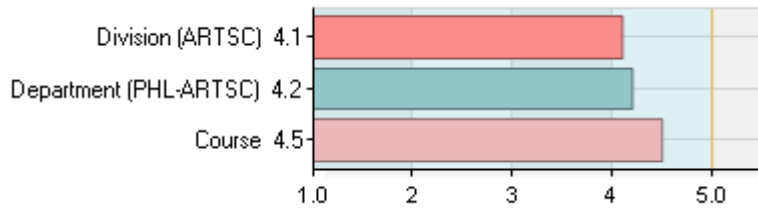
### (c) Institutional Items

These are questions set by the University. The graphs compare my average ("Course") with the division average ("ARTSC") and the departmental average ("Department (PHL-ARTSC)"). Responses can range from 1 ("Not At All") to 5 ("A Great Deal").

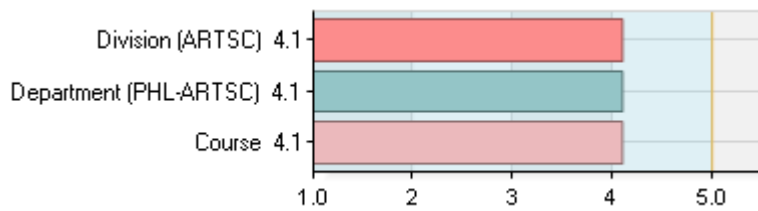
I found the course intellectually stimulating.



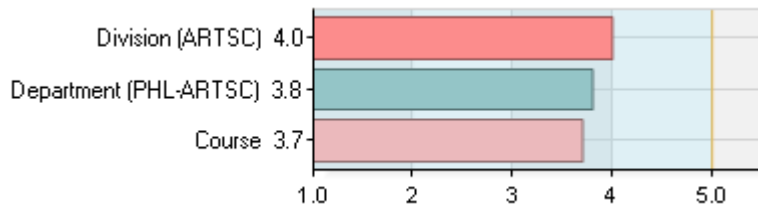
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.



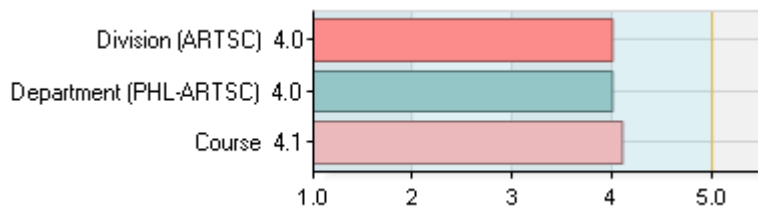
The instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) created a course atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.



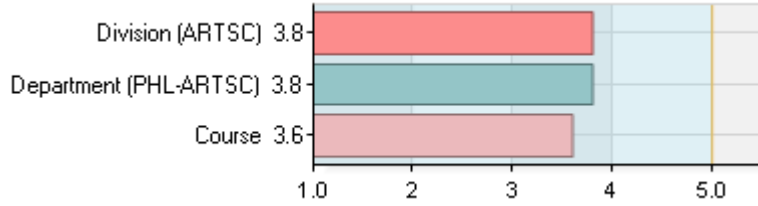
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.



Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.



Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....

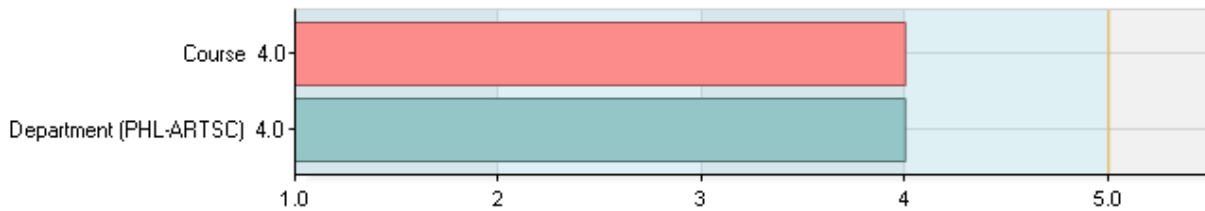


**PHL232H1- Knowledge and Reality (Summer 2016)**

(a) Departmental Items

These are questions set by the Department of Philosophy. The graphs compare my average (“Course”) with the departmental average (“Department (PHL-ARTSC)”). Responses can range from 1 (“Not At All”) to 5 (“A Great Deal”). 17 out of 39 students responded.

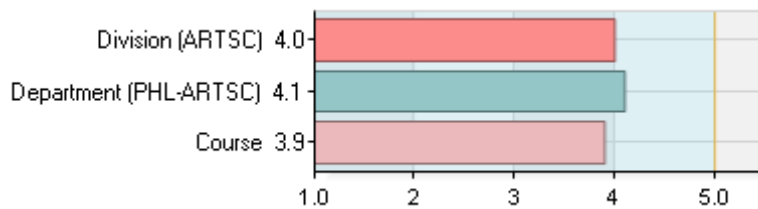
Overall, the quality of instruction provided by ([Aaron Henry](#)) in this course was



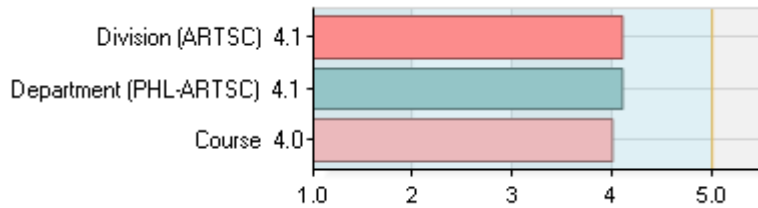
(b) Institutional Items

These are questions set by the University. The graphs compare my average (“Course”) with the division average (“ARTSC”) and the departmental average (“Department (PHL-ARTSC)”). Responses can range from 1 (“Not At All”) to 5 (“A Great Deal”).

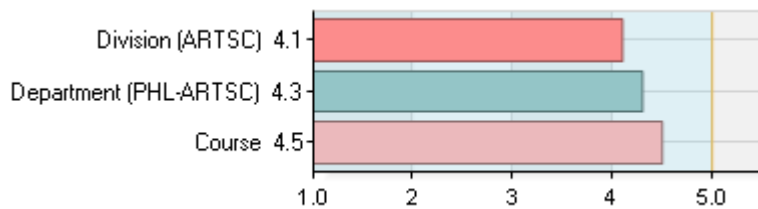
I found the course intellectually stimulating.



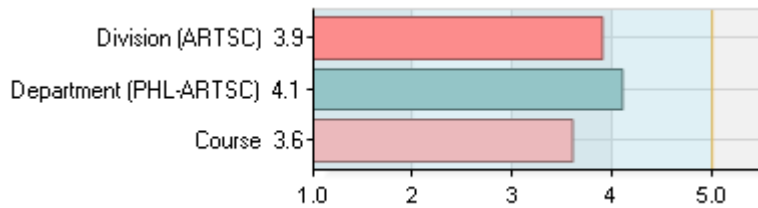
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.



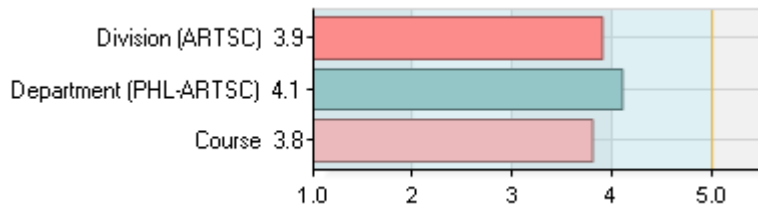
The instructor ([Aaron Henry](#)) created a course atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.



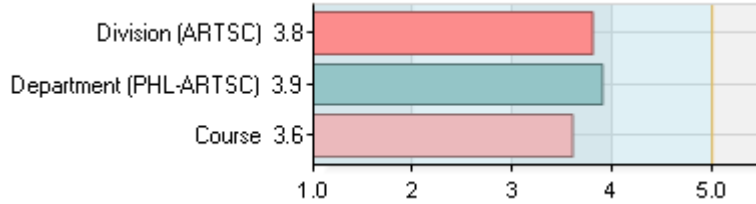
Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material.



Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.



Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was....



### 3.2 Qualitative Summary of Student Evaluations

In this section, I present a sample of the qualitative student evaluations for courses I have taught (ordered from most recent to less recent).

#### **PHL340H1 – Issues in Philosophy of Mind (Winter 2019)**

“Prof. Henry was a wonderful instructor. He was clear, open, and welcoming.”

“Dr. Henry is a fantastic lecturer and clearly conveys his passion for the course content through his teaching. He is extremely encouraging of in–class discussion and isn't afraid to really take the time to facilitate back–and–forth conversation which really aids the students engagement with the material.”

“This was the most eye-opening undergraduate course I've taken. Professor Henry holds a great balance between delivering material in an accessible, easily comprehensible manner without sacrificing the complexity or sophistication of the original ideas. He greatly encourages student participation, and the discussion in class was always meaningful and insightful. Great course that I cannot recommend enough!”

“Dr. Henry was a really awesome instructor. It was obvious that he was really genuinely interested in the course material and curious to hear our thoughts as well. He was also really helpful during office hours, giving great insight about assignments and expanding on topics he thought I might find interesting, as well as being curious about my scholarly interests in general. One thing I especially appreciated is the way he suggested pushing through the lessons when the same two or three people kept raising their hands again and again. He also made sure to see if anyone else had something to add before going to the people who constantly have their hands up. This happens in every course and I imagine it's difficult to deal with as an instructor, but Dr. Henry did so in a respectful way that I'm sure the whole class was grateful for. Thank you, Dr. Henry, for a great course!”

“Excellent instruction and comments on written work, I would recommend the course to anyone interested in the subject, and I truly enjoyed the course, thanks!”

“In my three years of university, this course — in addition to the second year version of this course PHL240 — was by far my favourite. The content of the course was challenging and incredibly stimulating. Aaron did an excellent job simplifying the material, challenging his students to take on challenging material, and moreover perpetuating a continual engagement from his class. An amazing course which I would take again.”

“Great Prof. Clear, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the material. Approachable and a pleasure to learn from.”

“The instructor is very thorough with his explanations of concepts and always encourages in-class discussion among students. I have benefited from the input provided by students in terms of deepening my learning of the material. The instructor is also very kind and polite. It was clear that he enjoyed the material very much and was very interested in what students had to say.”

“Very clear instruction with helpful slides.”

“Well structured. Clear and to the point instruction. Stops for questions while still progressing through material. Cuts material when it's clear it won't be adequately covered.”

“The lecture discussions were very effective and gave me a deeper understanding of the readings.”

“Good class. Aaron demonstrated an excellent understanding of the material and knew how to answer questions really well. There was a lot of material to learn however which left me feeling confused sometimes. Overall a really interesting course”

“Well prepared, thoughtful, room for student collaboration/conversation.”

“Overall quality was excellent.”

### **PHL340H1 – Issues in Philosophy of Mind (Summer 2018)**

“Best course I've ever taken in my 7 years at U of T. The instructor was easy to listen to and learn from, he provided us with very helpful handouts every lecture. The instructor was very thorough and accessible.”

“The quality of instruction was amazing! The lectures were very well organized and followed a set plan which I found very helpful.”

“Aaron Henry is a great instructor, very kind and willing to help and answer questions from students. He is also very articulate and definitely knows what he is talking about.”

“I think professor Henry was a great professor. He was energetic and maintained enthusiasm throughout every class for 3 hours.”

“I think despite how in depth the material was, the summaries every beginning of class and the positive feedback to any questions in class made the quality of this course greater.”

“Aaron is great and intellectually stimulating but clear instructor.”

“Given the nature of the course content being sometimes very abstract, Aaron Henry made the content palatable and exciting.”

“Good and thorough. The material was very difficult and Aaron did a good job of making it clearer.”

### **PHL232H1 – Knowledge and Reality (Summer 2016)**

“Prof. Henry was VERY clear in explaining even the most difficult concepts. He made it easy to understand. Also, I really liked the way he presented us with a full set of notes at the beginning of each lecture because then I could listen to his explanations rather than furiously copy from the board. The handouts were a change for me (I am used to using my laptop) but I was able to highlight them and write in the margins which helped a lot when it came to essay writing. Overall, a very interesting class with a very good professor!”

“Good patience and help from the professor, really enjoy discussing subject with him.”

“Nice teacher, very approachable. Good at explaining and working with students to ask the right questions.”

“Lecture notes being provided was a big help – allowed for more focus on the lecture itself.”

“Good patience and help from the professor, really enjoy discussing [the] subject with him”

“Very engaging”

## 4. Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness as Teaching Assistant

### 4.1 Quantitative TA feedback

The following chart gives a quantitative summary for three philosophy courses for which I was a Teaching Assistant. The numbers refer to the average value students gave between 1 (for ‘poor’) and 7 (for ‘outstanding’). The rightmost column gives a sample average for all TA’s in the Philosophy Department. All data, except for PHL240 (2016), were collected using the U of T Philosophy Department’s official surveys, distributed at the last tutorial of the semester. For PHL240 (2016), I collected the data using an anonymous electronic online survey which I administered because I missed the opportunity to distribute the departmental surveys in tutorial. This accounts for the lower response rate for that class.

	AVG for PHL240 (2015) Resp: 36	AVG for PHL232 (2015) Resp: 40	AVG for PHL240 (2016) Resp: 22	AVG for all TA’s in 2015 Resp: 37
1. Effectively directs and encourages discussion in tutorials.	6.3	6.3	6.5	5.9
2. Presents material in an organized and well-planned manner.	6.0	6	6.5	5.9
3. Explains concepts clearly with appropriate use of examples.	6.0	6.1	6.5	6.1
4. Communicates enthusiasm and interest in the course material	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.2
5. Attends to students’ questions and answers them clearly and effectively.	6.2	6.2	6.5	6.2
6. Ensures that student work is graded fairly, with helpful comments and feedback where appropriate.	6.5	5.8	5.8	5.9

7. Ensures that student work is graded within a reasonable time.	6.5	6.4	6.0	6.1
8. All things considered, performs effectively as a teaching assistant.	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.2

## 4.2 Qualitative TA feedback

### PHL233—Philosophy for Scientists (Fall 2017) (as Lead ELL TA)

“I think they [the writing clinics and reading-writing support tutorials] were very helpful, and we could ask questions. Also I liked that we learned special tips and words to look for in an author’s argument that can guide us when deciding what their premises are. Also I liked that we got to practise (learn) how to understand/find an author’s argument in the text. And I thought that when we would go over the concepts we saw in class (and related them to the readings if applicable) was very helpful.”

“The strategies we practiced simplified the readings and assignments, and you can actually apply them anywhere (e.g., finding an author’s premises and how to structure an argument and paper). I also think his tutorials are the reason my grade in the class improved so much (C to B).”

“The exercises Aaron gave us were helpful to have and practice. I liked getting tips on how to paraphrase well, which I will use in the future. I also liked when we debated material from lecture, which was fun and a good opportunity for me to get a review.”

“Aaron’s tutorials helped a lot. He is very generous with his time, and provides us with useful exercises. I also learned a lot from him about philosophy in his tutorials – a good balance.”

“The writing clinics helped a lot! I really found the section on identifying arguments useful! Aaron is very generous with his time and provides useful exercises for approaching reading and writing. I also learned a lot of philosophy in his tutorials, so it was a nice balance (content vs. reading/writing)”.

“The times I went [to the reading-writing support tutorials] were really useful for making a difficult reading easier to grasp. It was also a good discussion of the material from that week. The smaller class size made it easy to ask questions, and Aaron is great to discuss philosophy with.”

“It [the writing clinic] was really good. Might have benefitted from being longer”.

“I thought the writing clinics were definitely good. They covered some basic but important points that were definitely valuable reminders for to approach writing. I went to all of them just to hear the discussion.”

[Referring to both the writing clinics and reading-writing support tutorials] “I believed that they helped to review, clarify, and add to the material.”



### **PHL240—Persons, Minds, and Bodies (winter 2016)<sup>1</sup>**

“Aaron is the best TA I've ever had! He engages students in a great deal of thoughtful discussions!”

“Aaron is a wonderful TA. I was able to ask him about any questions I had regarding the course.”

“Aaron is a great TA who is very knowledgeable and fair and he explains concepts very clearly!”

“Aaron is very passionate and engaging.”

“Helpful explanations. Conducive to discussions. Perfect amount of material to cover in depth.”

“Aaron is a very good TA. I like his smile, it feels really friendly.”

### **PHL232—Knowledge and Reality (Fall 2015)**

“Aaron was an overall great TA, [who] really seems to care about us and about the course and its content and tried to explain things as clearly as possible but often was so accommodating students' suggestions that we would waste time/not have time to go through everything I would have hoped that we would. He was always willing to help though if we needed it.”

“I liked that he answered all our questions and tried to elaborate as best as he could. He even discussed things, if we brought it up, that weren't related to course material. Very polite and an excellent TA.”

“very encouraging attitude, and tutorials greatly improved my understanding each week.”

“Aaron has been a very helpful TA. He is kind and approachable, which makes it easy to engage in the course. I appreciate how he treats all comments as though they deserve to be heard. Really good T.A.!”

“Aaron knows how to respond appropriately to questions and concerns. He is friendly and approachable which makes tutorial a comfortable place for discussion.”

“Good use of diagrams and examples outside of lecture and readings. Really attempts to answer tricky philosophical questions posed by students during discussions. Creates an open and comfortable environment to discuss confusion about course topics. Good reviews of lectures!”

“Enjoyed having [Aaron] as a TA. Thank you!”

“Good class! I liked that Aaron answered the best possible versions of our questions, and allowed focused debate on particular topics.”

“promotes a very open tutorial environment and encourages everyone to share ideas and questions”

“Aaron did very well this term as a teaching assistant. A particular strength was fielding the numerous questions and investigations we had while satisfying them, gesturing us in the direction for further inquiry when time required.”

“Aaron was a great TA. He was always very helpful and enthusiastic.”

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<sup>1</sup> This was a self-administered, anonymous survey, which I distributed electronically because I missed my opportunity to deliver the official departmental surveys in tutorial.

“Thank you, Aaron for a great experience. I wish you the best of luck in the future.”

“Awesome TA! I loved that he tried his best to answer all our questions with clear responses and allowed other students to also add to the response. Great job! Please become a professor. You would be perfect!”

“Aaron did a really good job at creating an encouraging and helpful tutorial environment”.

“He was wonderful!”

“Great job, Aaron!”

“Amazing TA – one of the best I’ve ever had. Please hire him as a prof if he ever applies!”

“Aaron was an amazing TA, I loved going to tutorials; he was very friendly and encouraged higher learning. Great TA!!”

“Aaron was a pleasure to learn from this year in philosophy. His knowledge of metaphysics was astounding. I have developed more in this course than in any other in my entire student career. Aaron has motivation, enthusiasm, and extreme passion in this area of study and was able to share it beautifully and easily with all of us. He was the best. He also made himself available for one on one help without hesitation, even during exam time and his desire and love to teach and watch others learn is remarkable.”

“Aaron is a great tutorial teacher and is really helpful and accommodating.”

### **Persons, Minds, and Bodies (PHL240) (Summer 2015)**

“Very good pedagogical style; very engaging and encouraging wrt generating student-based discussion. I would take a course taught by Aaron. Very knowledgeable of material, which helps guide discussions into productive directions.”

“... Great enthusiasm and work on at inspiring participation”.

“provides extremely clear answers to questions and concise explanations of course concepts”

“Always willing to answer any questions and take whatever time necessary to make sure it is answered”.

“Amazing tutorial leader ... will make a great teacher. Very helpful, clear in explaining things, and great overall! A+++”

“Aaron was very helpful in helping us understand the topics. This was a complex course, which he has immense knowledge about”.

“Very nice, enthusiastic TA”.

“Mr. Henry was very encouraging and supported debates and discussions which made the course content much more enjoyable. He was very passionate about the philosophers studied and successfully encouraged and created a positive learning environment in tutorial.”

“Aaron is a great TA. Is very clear, explains concepts well, is honest when he is confused and requires clarification. I would enjoy having him as my TA again in a future PHL course”.

“Aaron was a great TA and did a thorough job of explaining theory/concept and generally just material ...”

“Good teaching style. Lectures and dialogue is presented in a well organized and intuiting manner. The conversation aspect of philosophy is greatly encouraged and developed by Aaron Henry.”

“Many of the questions raised in class were effectively answered right away. Also if there was an outstanding question, Aaron provided the class with an answer afterwards or through the portal [i.e., course website]! Overall, really good!”

“Aaron has been an outstanding TA. The course material was very difficult and he was always able to clarify concepts in a helpful way”.

“Excellent TA, very clear. Very concise”.

“Aaron was great! Very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Was a joy to come to tutorials. He really helped me understand the course material on a deeper level”.

“Thank you for your understanding and all your help during the course. I couldn’t have done this without you.”

“I really enjoyed the tutorial sessions led by Aaron. He presents the structure of the tutorial at the start and monitors the time effectively to ensure that we can all cover important points as well as answer questions. I just hope that we had longer tutorial times to really discuss philosophical ideas more.”

“He’s really good at directing the how of a tutorial, gauging when he should step in and say something, or let somebody else speak up. Maybe a bit more by way of tutorial structure would help?”

“Gave back assignments really quick, and provided really great feedback. Always enthusiastic, and did not pressure individuals to speak (created a really comfortable environment).”

“Very easy to follow along. The limited words used on the board to tie in ideas was very helpful. The pace was great as well.”

## 5. Unsolicited feedback (as course instructor)

### 1. “Hi Aaron,

I wanted to send an email thanking you for all the time you put into PHL340 this year! Myself and a couple other students thought it was one of the best courses we’ve taken at U of T thus far. I was also wondering if you had any insight into or advice regarding summer opportunities related to philosophy. I know it’s late in the year, but I’ve been looking for ways to get more involved, especially concerning philosophy of mind. If you’re aware of anything that may be interesting or helpful I’d really appreciate the help! Even if that is just volunteering in some way!

Any help would be much appreciated!

Thanks!!”

[Name redacted]

### 2. Dear Aaron:

I am writing to say that I had a great learning experience in your PHL340 class this year. I loved the topic and the way you structured the lectures. I also appreciated how seriously you take our questions

in class and all the effort you put into helping me to improve as a writer. You are the BEST!



Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Thanks & Best Regards,

[Name redacted]

## 6. Sample Teaching Materials

In this section, I provide a collection of teaching materials. The first three syllabi are courses I have taught (“Knowledge and Reality”, “Issues in Philosophy of Mind”, and “Environmental Ethics”). The fourth is for a course I would like to teach. Following these are sample materials I’ve used in my courses, including a handout from one of my classes (§7.5) and one of my writing clinics (§7.6), sample assignments (§§7.7-8), a questionnaire soliciting student feedback (§7.9) test preparation materials (§7.10), and a final exam (§7.11).

### 6.1 Syllabus for Introductory Epistemology and Metaphysics

#### KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

##### 1. CONTACT

###### INSTRUCTOR

**Name:** Aaron Henry

**Office:** TBD

**Office Hours:** TBD

###### LECTURE

**Lecture Location:** TBD

**Lecture Time:**

**E-mail:** aaron.henry@mail.utoronto.ca

**E-mail policy:** E-mails must be sent from your university e-mail address and must include the course code in the subject line. E-mails are for administrative purposes only – questions about course material will be addressed during office hours. I normally reply to e-mails within one or two business days.

##### 2. THE COURSE

###### OVERVIEW

This is an introduction to central topics in contemporary epistemology (the study of the nature of *knowledge*) and metaphysics (the study of *the structure of reality*). Our discussion of epistemology will begin with examining a powerful argument for *skepticism* about the external world: the view that we cannot know anything at all about the world outside the mind. We will then consider some prominent theories of knowledge, each with its own distinctive strategy for resisting the skeptic’s challenge. Our discussion of metaphysics will focus on three inter-related phenomena: the nature of causation, the nature of persistence across time, and the nature of time itself. Questions to be considered include: is there causation in the world, and, if so, what is it for one event to cause another? Objects (including people) change over time, but what makes it the case that we still have the same object rather than an entirely new one? Can an object split into two without being destroyed? Is time travel logically possible? Might the future be pre-determined?

###### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A primary objective of any philosophy course is skill development. Some of the skills you will be developing in this course include:

- Grasp of some of the cutting-edge controversies in contemporary metaphysics and epistemology;
- The ability to read, analyze, and critically assess a philosophical text;

- The ability to write a well-argued philosophy paper;
- The ability to defend your views in conversation.

## EXPECTATIONS

What I expect from you:

- to attend lectures;
- to come to lecture on time and prepared to discuss assigned readings;
- to complete assignments on time and as per the instructions;
- to treat your peers with respect;
- to ask questions when you feel you don't understand something;
- to take responsibility for your own learning.

What you can expect from me:

- to come prepared for each lecture;
- to create a positive and stimulating learning environment;
- to provide support and constructive feedback throughout the term;
- to treat you with respect;
- to think carefully about your questions and make a serious effort to answer them.

## TEXTS

All readings will be available either through our course website or electronically through U of T library system. If you don't find a text on our website, then the library has it electronically.

### 3. ASSESSMENT

1. Weekly responses	5% of course grade (Due: weekly on Mondays)
2. Short Paper (3-4 pages)	20% of course grade (Due: TBD)
3. Long paper (5-7 pages)	30% of course grade (Due: last day of classes)
4. Class Participation	10% of course grade
4. Final exam	30% of course grade

Papers are to be submitted, and will be returned, via Quercus. You should upload your written assignment as an attachment on the submission page using .doc or .docx format.

### 4. POLICIES

#### COURSE WEBSITE

All announcements and course documents will be posted on Quercus. To access this site, go to [q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca) and login with your UTORid and password. PHL232H1 will appear under 'Courses' on the left side of the welcome page. Click on the link to access our site. You should check this site regularly for updates.

## LATENESS

Assignments will be penalized 1/3 a letter grade for each day that they are late. Extensions may be granted if extraordinary circumstances are documented, but students should contact me to request an extension before the due date. Assignments more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences [...] All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources. (from <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>)

## ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, do not hesitate to speak to me and please make sure to contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible (at <http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>).

Some other helpful support resources at St. George campus include:

- Students for Barrier-Free Access (<http://www.uoftsba.com>)
- Health & Wellness (<http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca>)
- The Hart House Accessibility Fund (<http://harthouse.ca/accessibility>)
- Library Services for People with Disabilities (<http://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/services-for-people-with-disabilities>)

## 5. SUPPORT

It's crucial to keep up with the readings and to attend as many lectures as you can. If you feel you need additional help with any of the course material, please don't wait to contact me.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

Here is a link to information about the University of Toronto's many writing resources: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>

Here are some links to information about how to write a good philosophy paper:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>

<http://catpages.nwmissouri.edu/m/rfield/guide.html>

Here is a link to information about the 'Cornell' note taking system:

<http://lifehacker.com/202418/geek-to-live--take-study+worthy-lecture-notes>

## 6. SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
<b>PART 1—EPISTEMOLOGY</b>		
05/09	An argument for skepticism from a skeptical hypothesis; some traditional responses	Fumerton, “Foundationalist theories of Epistemic Justification” (§§1-2); Haack “Foundationalism versus Coherentism: A Dichotomy Disclaimed”
05/11	Gettier’s challenge to tradition; epistemic externalism	Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”; Goldman, “What is Justified Belief?” Recommended: Goldman “A Causal Theory of Knowing”
05/16	Knowledge as tracking: Denying closure under known entailment	Nozick, excerpt from <i>Philosophical Explanations</i>
05/18	The semantic externalist response to skepticism	Putnam, “Brains in a Vat”
05/23	Victoria Day (no lecture)	
05/25	The contextualist response to skepticism	Lewis, “Elusive Knowledge” <b>(1<sup>st</sup> PAPER DUE)</b>
<b>PART 2—METAPHYSICS</b>		
05/30	Causation: Hume’s problem, anti-realism, and the regularity theory	Hume, excerpts from <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> (parts of §I, iii, 2; §I, iii, 6; §I, iii, 14) and <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> (part of §VII, ii); Paul & Hall, Excerpt from “Causation: A User’s Guide”
06/01	Causation: the counterfactual theory and a primitivist theory	Lewis, “Causation”; Strawson, “Causation and Explanation”
06/06	Identity: The puzzles of identity and a 4-dimensionalist solution	Sider, excerpt from <i>Four Dimensionalism</i> ; Lewis, “Survival and Identity” <b>(1<sup>st</sup> PAPER RETURNED; Drop Date)</b>
06/08	Identity: Problems for 4-dimensionalism; endurantism	Haslanger “Persistence across Time”; Ayers, “Substance: Prolegomena to a Realist Theory of Identity”
06/13	Time: The possibility of time travel	Lewis, “The Paradoxes of Time Travel”; Paul, “Experience and the Arrow”



## 6.2 Syllabus for a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year Philosophy of Mind course

### ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHY OF MIND:

#### 1. CONTACT

##### INSTRUCTOR

**Name:** Aaron Henry

**Office:** TBD

**Office Hours:** TBD

##### LECTURE

**Lecture Location:** FE 139

**Lecture Time:** Tues & Thurs 5-6:30

**E-mail:** aaron.henry@mail.utoronto.ca

**E-mail policy:** E-mails must be sent from your UTORmail e-mail address and must include the course code (PHL340) in the subject line. E-mails are for administrative purposes only – questions about course material will be addressed during office hours. I try to reply to e-mails within one or two business days.

#### 2. THE COURSE

##### OVERVIEW

This course will be an intensive study of the nature of perceptual experience. In the first half, we'll examine an old puzzle about perception that still sets the agenda for much research in the field. Briefly, the problem is that since it's possible for visual experiences to mislead us about the world, then visual experiences cannot be what they seem to be—namely, a direct or immediate awareness of the world outside us. We will consider the most influential theories of visual experience that have arisen in response to this problem, including the 'sense data theory', 'representationalism' or 'intentionalism', and 'naïve realism'.

With this background in place, we will turn in the second half of the course to other questions about perceptual experience. These include: whether visual experiences occupy time as *states* or as *processes* (what is the temporal structure of visual experience?); whether visual experience presents us with strictly 'low level' properties (e.g., being red and cubic) or also, through training and expertise, various 'high level' properties (e.g., being a pine tree); whether non-visual sense experiences, such as hearing and touching, have the same metaphysical structure as visual experiences have; and whether perception might be in some theoretically significant way 'active' rather than 'passive'.

##### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A primary objective of any philosophy course is skill development. Some of the skills you will be developing in this course include:

- Grasp of some of the cutting-edge controversies in contemporary philosophy of mind;
- The ability to read, analyze, and critically assess a philosophical text;
- The ability to write a well-argued philosophy paper;
- The ability to defend your views in conversation.

##### EXPECTATIONS

What I expect from you:

- to attend lectures;

- to come to lecture on time and prepared to discuss assigned readings;
- to complete assignments on time and as per the instructions;
- to treat your peers with respect;
- to ask questions when you feel you don't understand something;
- to take responsibility for your own learning.

What you can expect from me:

- to come prepared for each lecture;
- to create a positive and stimulating learning environment;
- to provide support and constructive feedback throughout the term;
- to treat you with respect;
- to think carefully about your questions and make a serious effort to answer them.

## TEXTS

All readings will be available either through our course website or electronically through U of T library system. If you don't find a text on our website, then the library has it electronically.

### 3. ASSESSMENT

1. Short Paper (1,000 words)	25% of course grade (Due: Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> )
2. Long Paper (2,500-3,000 words)	35% of course grade (Due: Last day of class)
3. Class Participation	10% of course grade
4. Final exam	30% of course grade

Papers are to be submitted, and will be returned, via Quercus. You should upload your written assignment as an attachment on the submission page using .doc or .docx format.

### 4. POLICIES

#### COURSE WEBSITE

All announcements and course documents will be posted on Quercus. To access this site, go to [q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca) and login with your UTORid and password. PHL340H will appear under 'Courses' on the left side of the welcome page. Click on the link to access our site. You should check this site regularly for updates.

#### LATENESS

Assignments will be penalized 1/3 a letter grade for each day that they are late. Extensions may be granted if extraordinary circumstances are documented, but students should contact me to request an extension before the due date. Assignments more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that

constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences [...] All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources. (from <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>)

#### ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, do not hesitate to speak to me and please make sure to contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible (at <http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>).

Some other helpful support resources at St. George campus include:

- Students for Barrier-Free Access (<http://www.uoftsba.com>)
- Health & Wellness (<http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca>)
- The Hart House Accessibility Fund (<http://harthouse.ca/accessibility>)
- Library Services for People with Disabilities (<http://onereach.library.utoronto.ca/services-for-people-with-disabilities>)

## 5. SUPPORT

It's crucial to keep up with the readings and to attend as many lectures as you can. If you feel you need additional help with any of the course material, please don't wait to contact me.

#### INTERNET RESOURCES

Here is a link to information about the University of Toronto's many writing resources:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>

Here are some links to information about how to write a good philosophy paper:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>

<http://catpages.nwmissouri.edu/m/rfield/guide.html>

Here is a link to information about the 'Cornell' note taking system:

<http://lifehacker.com/202418/geek-to-live--take-study+worthy-lecture-notes>

## 6. SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Week 1	The arguments from illusion and hallucination	Ayer, “The Argument from Illusion” (pp. 1-11) Crane & French, “The Problem of Perception” (§§ 1-2) <b>Optional:</b> Valberg, <i>The Puzzle of Experience</i> (Chapters 1-2); Fish, <i>Philosophy of Perception</i> (Ch. 1).
Week 2	Traditional responses to the arguments from illusion and hallucination	Price, “The Given”; Moore “Sense-Data” <b>Optional:</b> Huemer, “Sense Data” (SEP entry); Fish, <i>Philosophy of Perception</i> (Ch 2).
Week 3	The rise of ‘Representationalism’	Strawson, “Perception and its Objects” (pp. 91-97); Harman, “The Intrinsic Quality of Experience” (pp. 31-40) <b>Optional:</b> Anscombe “The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature” ( <b>difficult</b> )
Week 4	‘Strong’ vs. ‘Weak’ Representationalism: “the greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind”?	Chalmers, “The Representational Character of Experience”; Byrne, “Intentionalism Defended” <b>Optional:</b> Tye, <i>Consciousness, Color, and Content</i> (Ch. 3-4); Fish, <i>Philosophy of Perception</i> (Ch. 5).
Week 5	Naïve realism	Genone, “Recent Work on Naïve Realism”; Crane, “Is there a Perceptual Relation?” <b>Optional:</b> Kennedy, “Heirs of Nothing: The Implications of Transparency” (§§1-2); Travis “Silence of the Senses” ( <b>difficult</b> )
Week 6	The Naïve Realist view of hallucination: Disjunctivism	Soteriou “Disjunctivist Accounts of Illusion and Hallucination” (Ch. 6 of <i>Disjunctivism</i> ) <b>Optional:</b> Soteriou, Chapters 1-2; Fish, <i>Philosophy of Perception</i> (Ch. 6); Martin, “The Limits of Self-awareness” ( <b>difficult</b> )
Week 7	Reading Week – no classes	
Week 8	What is the temporal structure of perceptual experience?	Phillips, “Experience of and in time” <b>Optional:</b> Soteriou, <i>The Mind’s Construction</i> (Chapter 4; starting at §4.1); Hoerl “Transparency and Presence”
Week 9	What is the ‘reach’ of perceptual experience?	Siegel, “Which Properties are Represented in Perception?” <b>Optional:</b> Logue, “Visual experience of natural kind properties: is there any fact of the matter?”
Week 10	Beyond vision (I): Sounds and Audition	O’Callaghan “Lessons from Beyond Vision (Sounds and Audition)” <b>Optional:</b> Strawson “Sounds” (Ch. 2 of <i>Individuals</i> )
Week 11	Beyond vision (II): Touch	Fulkerson, <i>The First Sense: A Philosophical Study of Human Touch</i> (Chapters 2-3) <b>Optional:</b> Martin, “Sight and Touch”
Week 12	Is Perception essentially active?	Noe, <i>Action in Perception</i> (Chapters 2-3) Richardson, “Perceptual Activity and Bodily Awareness”
Week 13	Attention and Consciousness	Watzl, <i>Structuring Mind</i> (selections); Ganeri <i>Attention not Self</i> (selections)

## 6.3 Syllabus for 2<sup>nd</sup>-year Environmental Ethics

# ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Fall 2019

Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto (Mississauga campus)

### 1. CONTACT

#### INSTRUCTOR

**Name:** Aaron Henry

**Office:** NM6154

**Office Hours:** Thursday (2-3pm)

**Email:** [aaron.henry@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:aaron.henry@mail.utoronto.ca)

#### LECTURE

**Lecture Location:** IB150 & MN2190

**Lecture Time:** Mon 3-4 and Wed 3-5

**E-mail policy:** E-mails must be sent from your UTORmail e-mail address and must include the course code (PHL273) in the subject line. E-mails are for administrative purposes only – questions about course material will be addressed during office hours. I try to reply to e-mails within one or two business days.

### 2. THE COURSE

#### OVERVIEW

Intuitively, it doesn't matter how we treat inanimate objects, like a rock. But does it matter how we treat non-human organisms, like fish, pigs, cows, or chickens? If so, what gives these organisms their moral standing? Is it whether they are intelligent? Whether they can feel pain? Whether they are alive? Whether they are instrumental to the maintenance of an ecosystem? In the first part of the course, we will study the main answers that philosophers have offered in response to these questions and the relevance of each answer to the moral acceptability of common practices like meat-eating and animal experimentation (e.g., for designing cosmetic products). Assessing the arguments in this part of the course will help equip us to make informed decisions about these matters.

In the second part of the course, we will examine global environmental challenges confronting humanity today. We will begin by asking whether there are too many human beings for the planet to sustain everyone, and, if so, what should be done about it. We will then turn from the problem of overpopulation to the problem of climate change, focusing on who is primarily responsible for dealing with climate change. For example, should all countries equally shoulder the burden of reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, or are some countries more responsible than others? And is it exclusively the role of governments to fight climate change (e.g., through the introduction of legal regulations), or does each of us, as individual moral agents, also possess obligations to restrict our own carbon footprints (regardless of what our government may be doing to address the problem)? And what attitude should we take to people who deny that the climate is changing and accordingly recommend inaction? We will conclude by considering how the problem of climate change intersects with economics, including whether capitalism can be made environmentally sustainable and what it is to act virtuously in an age of consumerism.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A primary objective of any philosophy course is skill development. Some of the skills you will be developing in this course include:

- Understanding of some of the central controversies within environmental ethics.
- The ability to read, analyze, and critically assess an analytic philosophy paper;
- The ability to write a well-argued philosophy paper;
- The ability to defend your views in conversation.

## EXPECTATIONS

What I expect from you:

- to attend lectures;
- to come to lecture on time and prepared to discuss assigned readings;
- to complete assignments on time and as per the instructions;
- to treat your peers with respect;
- to ask questions when you feel you don't understand something;
- to take responsibility for your own learning.

What you can expect from me:

- to come prepared for each lecture;
- to create a positive and stimulating learning environment;
- to provide support and constructive feedback throughout the term;
- to treat you with respect;
- to think carefully about your questions and make a serious effort to answer them.

## TEXTS

All readings will be available either through our course website or electronically through U of T library system. If you don't find a text on our website, then the library has it electronically.

## 3. ASSESSMENT

1 <sup>st</sup> paper (1,000 words)	(25% of final)	<b>Due: Fri. October 11<sup>th</sup></b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> paper (2,000 words)	(35% of final)	<b>Due: Last day of classes</b>
Final Exam	(30% of final)	<b>TBD</b>
Participation	(10% of final)	

Papers are to be submitted, and will be returned, via Quercus. You should upload your written assignment as an attachment on the submission page using .doc or .docx format.

## 4. POLICIES

### COURSE WEBSITE

All announcements and course documents will be posted on Quercus. To access this site, go to [q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca) and login with your UTORid and password. PHL273H5 will appear under 'Courses' on the left side of the welcome page. Click on the link to access our site. You should check this site regularly for updates.

### LATENESS

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### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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### ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

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- The Hart House Accessibility Fund (<http://harthouse.ca/accessibility>)
- Library Services for People with Disabilities (<http://onereach.library.utoronto.ca/services-for-people-with-disabilities>)

## 5. SUPPORT

It's crucial to keep up with the readings and to attend as many lectures as you can. If you feel you need additional help with any of the course material, please don't wait to contact me.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

Here is a link to information about the University of Toronto's many writing resources:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>

Here are some links to information about how to write a good philosophy paper:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>

<http://catpages.nwmissouri.edu/m/rfield/guide.html>

Here is a link to information about the ‘Cornell’ note taking system:

<http://lifehacker.com/202418/geek-to-live--take-study+worthy-lecture-notes>

## 6. SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Part I: Moral Standing		
Sep 9	Introduction to the course	No readings
Sep 11	Anthropocentrism	Descartes, selection from <i>Discourse on Method</i> (“Animals are Machines”); <b>Optional:</b> Regan “Animal Awareness” (pp. 1-12)
Sep 16	Animal intelligence and animal consciousness	<i>The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness</i> ; Rowlands, Ch. 1 of <i>Animals Like Us</i> (“Do Animals have Minds?”) <b>Optional:</b> Regan “Animal Awareness” (pp.12-33); Braithwaite, excerpt from <i>Do Fish Feel Pain?</i>
Sep 18	Utilitarianism and animal welfare #1	Singer, “All Animals are Equal”
Sep 23	Utilitarianism and animal welfare #2	Singer, selections from <i>Practical Ethics</i>
Sep 25	Deontology and animal welfare #1	Regan, “The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights”; Warren “A Critique of Regan’s Animal Rights Theory”
Sep 30	Factory farming	Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases” (stop at p. 235); Rowlands, <i>Animals like Us</i> (Chapters 3 and 5)
Oct 2	Rethinking animal welfare	Diamond, “Eating Meat and Eating People”; Taylor; Excerpt from <i>Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation</i>
Oct 7	Rethinking anthropocentrism	Szybel, “Taking Humanism Seriously: ‘Obligatory’ Anthropocentrism”
Oct 9	Biocentrism	Goodpaster, “On Being Morally Considerable”
Oct 14	Reading week - No classes	
Oct 16	Reading week - No classes	
Oct 21	Ecocentrism	Callicott, “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair”; Leopold “The Land Ethic”
Oct 23	Ecocentrism #2: Deep ecology	Naess “The shallow and the deep, long range ecology movement. A summary”
Oct 28	The value of species	Russow “Why do species matter?”
Part II: Global environmental challenges		
Oct 30	Overpopulation and the ‘tragedy of the commons’	Hardin, “The Ecological Necessity of Confronting the Problem of Human Overpopulation”; Commoner, “Poverty Breeds Overpopulation”
Nov 4	Climate change: an ethical overview	Gardiner, “Ethics and Global Climate Change”
Nov 6	Why is motivating widespread action against climate change so difficult?	Gardiner, “A Perfect Moral Storm”
Nov 11	Who is most responsible for ensuring action against climate change?	Shue, “Global Environment and International Inequality”
Nov 13	How should we distribute the right to emit greenhouse gases?	Caney, “Climate Change, Energy Rights, and Equality”
Nov 18	What, if any, moral obligations do individuals have to limit their greenhouse gas emissions?	Sinnott-Armstrong, ““It’s Not My Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations””; Avram Hiller, “Climate Change and Individual Responsibility” (stop at page 358)



Nov 20	An opposing 'virtue-theoretic' answer	Jamieson, "When Utilitarians Should Be Virtue Theorists"
Nov 25	How ought climate change to change our conception of the good life? Is living simply a virtue in our age?	Joshua Colt Gambrel and Philip Cafaro, "The Virtue of Simplicity"; Hill, "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments"
Nov 27	Should we extend tolerance toward the climate change denial movement?	McKinnon, "Should We Tolerate Climate Change Denial?"; Scanlon, "The Value of Tolerance"
Dec 2	Capitalism and sustainability	Desjardins, "Business and Environmental Sustainability"; The Leap Manifesto
Dec 4	Capitalism and sustainability cont'd	Schweickart "Is sustainable capitalism an oxymoron?"; Bookchin "Social Ecology"

## 6.4 Syllabus for Introduction to Philosophy of Mind

### PHIL250 – MINDS AND MACHINES (WINTER 2021)

#### CONTACT

##### INSTRUCTOR

**Name:** Dr. Aaron Henry

**Office:** BUCH E275

**Office Hours:** Mon. & Wed. 2:30-3:30pm (or by appointment).

**Lecture Location:** BUCH D218.

**Lecture Times:** Tues & Thurs 3:30-5:00 pm

**Email:** [aaron.henry@ubc.ca](mailto:aaron.henry@ubc.ca)

**E-mail policy:** E-mails must be sent from your UBC e-mail address and must include the course code (PHIL250) in the subject line. E-mails are for administrative purposes only – questions about course material will be addressed during office hours. I aim to reply to e-mails within one or two business days.

##### TEACHING ASSISTANT

**Name:** Jelena Markovic

**Email:** [markovj@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:markovj@mail.ubc.ca)

#### COURSE

##### Overview

This course will be an introduction to philosophical issues concerning the nature of the mind. Our discussion will begin with the ‘mind-body problem’: the question of how your mind is related to your body. For example, is your mind an immaterial soul that can (at least in principle) survive the death of your body, as René Descartes believed? If not, is your mind nothing more than your *brain*, or perhaps something more like a *computer program* running on the hardware of the brain? If your mind is a computer, does it follow that we can not only *simulate* intelligence artificially but create *genuine* artificial intelligence (or better: *synthetic* intelligence)? In this course, we will ask these and other questions, focusing on both the promise and hurdles confronting the computational theory of mind, including the prospects of a computational theory of subjective consciousness, the relevance of embodiment and know how for intelligence, and the ethical and political significance on artificial intelligence.

##### Learning Objectives

A primary objective of any philosophy course is skill development. Some of the skills you will be developing in this course include:

- ability to read, analyze, and critically assess a philosophical text;
- ability to defend your views, both in writing and in conversation.

In addition, you will acquire:

- grasp of some of the central problems and controversies in philosophy of mind and philosophy of cognitive science/artificial intelligence.

### Expectations

What I expect from you:

- to attend lectures;
- to come to lecture on time and prepared to discuss assigned readings;
- to complete assignments on time and according to the instructions;
- to treat your peers with respect;
- to ask questions and seek help when you don't understand something;
- to take responsibility for your own learning.

What you can expect from me:

- to come prepared for each lecture;
- to promote a positive and stimulating learning environment;
- to provide support throughout the term;
- to give constructive feedback on your written work;
- to treat you with respect;
- to think carefully about your questions and make a serious effort to answer them.

### Texts

All other readings will be available through the course website (see §4 for details)

## ASSESSMENT

Reading responses (10% of final grade)	Due: every other Thursdays at 3:00 pm
Short (1000 word) paper (20% of final grade)	Due: February 21 <sup>st</sup>
Long (2500 word) essay (30% of final grade)	Due: April 8 <sup>th</sup>
Final Exam (30% of final grade)	TBD
Class participation (10% of final grade)	Ongoing

The biweekly responses are 'low stakes' written responses to a question concerning an assigned reading which are intended to help you stay on top of the readings, and to help stimulate discussion in Thursday's lectures. A total of 6 will be assigned (on alternating weeks). You only need to respond to 5 to receive full marks. They will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

## POLICIES

### Course Website

All announcements and course documents will be posted on Canvas. To access this site, go to <https://canvas.ubc.ca/> and login with your CWLid and password. PHIL250H will appear under the

“courses” portion of the welcome page, on the left hand side. Click on the link to access our site. You should check this site regularly for updates.

### Lateness

Assignments will be penalized 1/3 a letter grade for each day that they are late. Extensions may be granted if extraordinary circumstances are documented, but students should contact me to request an extension before the due date. Any assignment that is more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of British Columbia is a strong signal of each student’s individual academic achievement. Accordingly, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person’s words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student’s own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic Misconduct:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

### Accessibility Needs

The University of British Columbia is committed to accessibility. If you have a disability that may interfere with your ability to successfully take this course, then please email me in the first few weeks. You must also register with Access and Diversity, so that they can help provide support (grant extra time on exam, note taker, etc.):

<https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/access-diversity>

## SUPPORT

### Advice

The term goes *very* quickly! It’s therefore important to keep up with the readings and to attend lectures. If you feel you need additional help with any of the course material, please don’t wait to contact me.

### Internet resources

Here is a link to information about the University of British Columbia’s writing resources:

<https://writing.library.ubc.ca/>

Here are links to information about how to write a good philosophy paper:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dportmor/tips.pdf>

<http://catpages.nwmissouri.edu/m/rfield/guide.html>

Here is a link to information about the 'Cornell' note taking system:

<http://lifehacker.com/202418/geek-to-live--take-study+worthy-lecture-notes>

## SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Please note that this schedule may change at the instructor's discretion to suit the pace of the course and the interests of the students. Please also note that all readings are to be read *before the class* that will take place on the date listed.

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1 (Jan 11/13)	Introduction to the course and the Mind-Body Problem	<b>Optional:</b> Louise Antony, "The mental and the physical"; (This is an advanced introduction to the metaphysical themes of the course. Don't expect to be able to understand all of it!); John Haugeland, <i>Artificial Intelligence: The Very Idea</i> (Chapter 1: The Saga of the Modern Mind); Barbara Montero, "The body problem" (esp. pp.183-188)
Week 2 (Jan 17/ Jan 20)	Substance Dualism and the problem of mental causation	René Descartes, Excerpts from <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (Med. VI); Jen McWeeny, "Princess Elisabeth and the Mind-Body Problem" <b>Optional:</b> Karen Bennett, "Mental causation" (esp. §1);
Week 3 (Jan 25/27)	Nonhuman minds	René Descartes, excerpt from <i>Discourse on Method</i> ("Animals are Machines"); Don Ross, "The elephant as a person" (an accessible recent essay on whether elephants may one day qualify as 'persons') <b>Optional:</b> Kristin Andrews, Chapter 3 of <i>The Animal Mind</i> ("Consciousness") Godfrey-Smith, excerpt from <i>Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness</i>
Week 4 (Feb 1/3)	The rise of Materialism ( <i>a.k.a.</i> Physicalism): the Identity Theory and Logical Behaviourism	J.J.C. Smart "Sensations and Brain Processes" (Note: this paper is difficult. Focus on pp. 141-142); Gilbert Ryle, excerpt from <i>Concept of Mind</i> . <b>Optional:</b> Julia Tanner, "Gilbert Ryle" §6 & §8 (though you are welcome to read the entire entry)
Week 5 (Feb 8/10)	Machine intelligence. 'Computational' or 'Machine Functionalism'	Alan Turing, "Computing machinery and intelligence" Janet Levin, "Functionalism" (§§1-3) <b>Optional:</b> Luciano Floridi, "Should we be afraid of AI?" (An accessible contemporary essay)
Week 6 (Feb 15/17)	Some troubles for the computational theory of mind: the 'Chinese Room'	John Searle, "Minds, Brains and Programs"; David Cole "The Chinese Room" (focus on §4, but you are welcome to read the entire entry) <b>FIRST PAPER DUE</b>
Week 7 (Feb 22/24)	Reading Week	
Week 8 (Mar 1/3)	Naturalizing intentionality?	Karen Neander, "Teleological Theories of Mental Content: Can Darwin Solve the Problem of Intentionality?" <b>Optional:</b>

		Kathleen Akins, “Of Sensory Systems and the “Aboutness” of Mental States”
Week 9 (Mar 8/10)	Can the objectivity of scientific explanation be reconciled with the subjectivity of consciousness?	Thomas Nagel, “What is it like to be a Bat?” <b>Optional:</b> Kathleen Akins, “What is it like to be Boring and Myopic?”
Week 10 (Mar15/17)	The ‘frame problem’ for strong AI	Daniel Dennett, “Cognitive Wheels: The Frame Problem for AI” Hubert Dreyfus, excerpt from <i>What Computers Can't Do</i>
Week 11 (Mar 22/24)	4E Cognitive Science: Embodied, Embedded, Extended, and Enactive	Michael Wheeler, “Cognition in Context: Phenomenology, Situated Robotics and the Frame Problem”; Evan Thompson, excerpt from <i>Mind in Life</i>
Week 12 (Mar 29/31)	The ethics of AI	Amanda Sharkey and Noel Sharkey, “Granny and The Robots - Ethical Issues in Robot Care for the Elderly”
Week 13 (Apr 5/7)	The ethics of AI cont'd	Meredith Whittaker et al., “Disability, Bias, and AI” <b>SECOND PAPER DUE</b>

## 6.5 Handout (Issues in Philosophy of Mind)

### Lecture 1: Introducing the problem of perception

Primary reading: A.J. Ayer *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (1940: pp. 1-11);

Secondary reading: Crane & French 'The Problem of Perception' (2017: §§1-2); Valberg, *The Puzzle of Experience* (Ch. 1-2)

#### 1. Outlining the project

The first part of this course will be devoted to the *problem of perception*. This is the problem “that if illusions and hallucinations are possible, then perception, as we ordinarily understand it, is impossible” (Crane & French 2017). Our goal today is to understand what this problem is and the impetus that it gives for a theory of the nature and structure of perceptual experience.

#### 2. Some useful terminology

Let us begin by acquiring some useful terminology that we will use throughout the course. The definitions below are presented for the case of vision, but can be adapted to other sense modalities, such as audition, touch, olfaction, etc.

‘veridical perception’: a fully successful instance of visual perception or seeing. In veridical perception, the world is the way that it visually seems to the subject. For example, if you veridically perceive a red, round tomato, then: (i) you see the tomato (i.e., are visually aware of the tomato), and (ii) you see it as it really is—e.g., as red and round.

‘illusion’ (‘illusory perceptual experience’): when one sees an object, but the object one sees appears to possess a property that it does not in fact possess. In such cases, the object that one sees *looks* otherwise than it is. For example, under abnormal lighting conditions, one might see a white wall as being red, or a red ball as being orange.

‘hallucination’ (‘hallucinatory perceptual experience’): when a subject seems to see an object, but in reality nothing is there in front of you. In such cases, your perceptual experience is wholly unsuccessful. To take a famous example, Macbeth hallucinates when he seems to see a dagger floating before him.

‘perceptual experience’: any perceptual state, event, or process that possesses a *phenomenology* or *phenomenal character*.

- According to most philosophers, one enjoys a perceptual experience whether or not one is perceiving successfully—i.e., even when one suffers an illusion or hallucination.

‘phenomenal character’: the property of an experience characterizing *what it’s like for the subject* to have or undergo the experience. (The phrase ‘what it’s like’ comes from Thomas Nagel 1974). For example, if I ask you ‘what’s it like to see Vesuvios?’, I’m asking you to describe the visual experiences you have or undergo when looking at Vesuvios.

We will encounter more terminology as we proceed, but this is enough to get us started.

### 3. Perceptual experience and the ordinary conception of perceptual experience

According to our ordinary understanding of perceptual experience, perceptual experience involves at least two central features: OPENNESS and AWARENESS (Crane & French 2017: §1).

Crane & French analyze OPENNESS into two sub-theses:

- (i) Presence: Introspectively, perceptual experience seems to consist, at least in part, in the presentation of various entities, and in such a way that its phenomenal character is immediately responsive to and (at least partly) determined by the properties of the presented entities. Such entities are *present* or *given* to the subject's conscious mind.
  - Contrast perception with intellectual thought.
- (ii) Mind-Independence: Introspectively, a perceptual experience seems to consist in the presentation of ordinary mind-independent objects—e.g., tables, chairs, etc.—as well as their properties and the events or processes in which they figure.
  - Cf. P.F. Strawson (p. 97) “Mature sensible experience (in general) presents itself as, in Kantian phrase, an immediate consciousness of the existence of things outside us”.

AWARENESS

It is also part of our ordinary conception of perceptual experience that at least sometimes experiences with the above phenomenology put us in *conscious contact* with the external world.

- Contrast perception with hallucination, where one plausibly possesses the phenomenology of OPENNESS, but where perceptual contact seems lacking.

A related thesis to OPENNESS and AWARENESS is that of ‘transparency’. We’ll return to transparency another time.

### 4. Challenging the ordinary conception (I): The ‘phenomenological’ argument from illusion

The phenomenological arguments from illusion and hallucination proceed in two ‘steps’ or stages. In the first step, one attempts to establish the claim that, in illusion or hallucination (depending on whether you are running the argument from illusion or the argument from hallucination), subjects are aware of something other than an ordinary, real-world object. In the second ‘spreading’ step, one attempts to use the conclusion established in the first stage to derive the same result for the case of veridical perceptual experience. From this, one infers that subjects are never aware of ordinary, real-world objects like tables and chairs. Let’s look at how the argument works for the case of illusion.

The ‘phenomenological’ argument from illusion

1. In an illusion, an ordinary, real-world object sensibly appears to one to possess a particular sensible quality, *F*, when in reality it does not possess *F*. [from the definition of ‘perceptual illusion’]



2. If there sensibly appears to a subject to be something which possesses a particular sensible quality, *F*, then there is something of which the subject is aware which does possess *F*. [‘Phenomenal Principle’, see Robinson (1993: 32)]
3. In the case described at line 1., the ordinary, real-world object is not the same as the *F*-thing of which one is aware. [from 1, 2, Leibniz’s Law]

So,

4. During an illusion, one is not, after all, aware of an ordinary, real-world object. [from 1, 3]

With 5., we have arrived at our ‘base case’. Next, the ‘spreading’ step ...

5. If a subject cannot distinguish introspectively between a veridical perceptual experience and an illusory one, then whatever the subject is aware of in a veridical perceptual experience must be the same as what one is aware of in an illusory experience. [The ‘Common Factor Principle’ or ‘Common Kind Assumption’]

But it’s plausible that,

6. For any veridical perceptual experience, there’s a corresponding illusory experience that the subject *cannot* distinguish introspectively from the veridical perceptual experience.

So,

7. Whatever one is aware of in veridical perceptual experience must be the same as what one is aware of in an illusory perceptual experience. [from 5, 6]

And, given what we now know about the objects of illusion, we must conclude that:

8. In veridical perceptual experience, one is not aware, after all, of an ordinary, real-world object. [4, 7]

A parallel argument to the one presented above can also be constructed for the case of hallucination. I leave it as an exercise for you to fill in the details for the argument.

## 5. Some comments on this argument

Let’s consider the argument’s premises and ask whether they really provide support for the argument’s conclusion. (Give this some thought before you turn over this page).

Premise (i) follows from the definition of perceptual illusion, so it’s uncontroversial.

Premise (ii)—the so-called ‘Phenomenal Principle’—might seem a little unobvious at first. Interestingly, philosophers have traditionally claimed that there is strong introspective evidence for this principle (e.g., Price 1932: p. 3). We’ll discuss the alleged evidence next lecture.

With Premises (i) and (ii) in place, Premise (iii) is simply an application of Leibniz’s Law (‘the Indiscernibility of Identicals’). Briefly and roughly, from the fact that objects, *x* and *y*, do not possess all the same properties, we can infer that *x* and *y* are distinct objects. In the case at hand, since the object you are aware of is *F* but the ordinary, real-world object before you is not-*F*, the *F*-thing you are aware of is different from the ordinary, real-world object.

What about the transition from (iii) to (iv)? Here, there may be room to object. Compare:

- (a) In illusion, the subject is aware of something that is not an ordinary object;

(b) In illusion, the subject is not aware of an ordinary object.

This isn't a valid inference, since, on the face of things, (a) could be true, yet (b) false. In particular, you might be aware of an ordinary object and, at the same time, aware of something that is *not* an ordinary object. Next class, we'll consider the suggestion that although subjects are *directly* aware of non-ordinary objects ('sense data'), subjects are nevertheless also aware *indirectly* of ordinary, real-world objects. (Spoiler: this is very likely not sufficient to salvage our ordinary conception of experience!)

Let's now turn to premise (v)—the 'Common Factor Principle' or 'Common Kind Assumption'. Many people think this assumption is obviously true. For example, Price (1932) thinks we can safely dismiss the possibility that two qualitatively identical experiences—a veridical perceptual experience and a qualitatively identical illusory experience—might consist in awareness of fundamentally different sorts of entity—presumably, an ordinary object in the case of successful seeing and a non-ordinary, mind-dependent object in the case of illusion. He writes:

Is it not incredible that two entities so similar in all these qualities should really be so utterly different: that the one should be a real constituent of a material object, wholly independent of the observer's mind and organism, while the other is merely the fleeting product of his cerebral processes? (1932: 31-2).

But is this as obvious as Price suggests? In a famous critical discussion of the above argument, J.L. Austin (1962) asked whether the *qualitative similarity* of two entities presents any reason to suppose they are similar in their metaphysical status or nature:

If I am told that a lemon is generically different from a piece of soap, do I 'expect' that no piece of soap could look just like a lemon? Why should I? [...] Why on earth should it not be the case that, in some few instances, perceiving one sort of thing is exactly like perceiving another? (1962: 50-52).

Austin is raising the possibility that in *good* cases of perception—i.e., when we successfully see what's really there—we are aware of an ordinary object, whereas in *bad* cases (e.g., an illusory or hallucinatory experience) we are aware of something else altogether: a non-ordinary object. The category of 'perceptual experience' might, therefore, be metaphysically 'disjunctive': *either* an awareness of an ordinary, real-world object (in 'good cases') *or* an awareness of non-ordinary object (in 'bad cases'). Qualitative similarity is not evidence, in other words, an underlying metaphysical similarity or sameness.

Question: is it convincing to respond to Austin by claiming that in the domain of perceptual experience, unlike in other domains, sameness of appearance ("qualitative similarity") *just is* metaphysical similarity? What might Austin say?

One strategy for defending the Common Factor Principle over Austin's rival 'Disjunctivist' hypothesis is to invoke considerations about the causal origin of perceptual experiences—specifically, about the brain's role in causally enabling experiences. This is where we'll pick up next time.

## 6.6 Writing Clinic Handout (Philosophy for Scientists)

Here is Susan Haack presenting an objection to coherentism about justification:

The fundamental problem with coherentism, according to this argument, lies precisely in the fact that it tries to make justification depend solely on relations among beliefs. The point is expressed vaguely but vividly by C.I. Lewis when he protests that the coherentist's claim that empirical beliefs can be justified by *nothing but* relations of mutual support is as absurd as suggesting that two drunken sailors could support each other by leaning back to back when neither was standing on anything!

To get this objection to coherentism in as strong a form as possible, it is desirable (though I shall continue to call it the **druken sailors argument**) to spell it out literally. The fundamental objection is this: that because coherentism allows no non-belief input – no role to experience or the world – it cannot be satisfactory; that unless it is acknowledged that the justification of an empirical belief requires such input, it could not be supposed that a belief's being justified could be an indication of its truth, of its correctly representing how the world is.

In the end, I believe, this argument really is fatal to coherentism. A theory couched in terms exclusively of relations among a subject's beliefs faces an insuperable difficulty about the connection between the concepts of justification and truth. How could the fact that a set of beliefs is coherent, to whatever degree and in however sophisticated a sense of 'coherent', be a guarantee, or even an indication, of truth? (Haack 1993: 27)

Here is an illegitimate paraphrase:

The basic problem with coherentism lies in the fact that it attempts to make justification depend only on a belief's relations to other beliefs. C.I. Lewis expresses the point well when he objects that the coherentist's claim that empirical beliefs can be justified by *nothing other than* relations of mutual support is as unacceptable as claiming that two drunken sailors can support each other by leaning on each other when neither of them is standing on anything.

The fundamental objection is that since coherentism allows no room for non-belief input – that is, no role to experience or to the world – it cannot be adequate. Unless it is acknowledged that the justification of an empirical belief requires such input we cannot suppose that a belief's being justified is an indication of its truth, of its accurately representing how the world is.

According to Haack, the above argument is fatal to coherentism. This is because she thinks that a theory couched in terms exclusively of relations among a subject's beliefs faces an unsurmountable difficulty about how the concepts of justification and truth relate. How could the fact that a set of beliefs is coherent, to whatever degree and in however sophisticated a sense of 'coherent', be an assurance, or even a reflection, of its truth? (Haack 1993)

Discussion question: what makes this a poor example of paraphrasing?

Here is a legitimate paraphrase:

According to Haack (1993), coherentism about justification is refuted by what she calls "the drunken sailors argument". Originating with C.I. Lewis, the objection is that by making justification exclusively a matter of how beliefs relate to one another, coherentism makes justification analogous to two sailors managing to remain upright by leaning on each other, even though there is nothing

to support them from below—a situation that is obviously impossible. Because coherentism makes epistemic justification impossible for much the same reason, the objection continues, we have reason to reject that theory.

While Haack regards the drunken sailors argument as decisive against coherentism, she also thinks we can put the argument more precisely than formulated above, and she offers the following reconstruction (27). According to coherentism, a belief's justification doesn't depend on any "non-belief input"—that is, any epistemic factor that contributes to a belief's justification but which is not itself a belief (e.g., a perceptual experience). Haack then asserts that if a belief's justification doesn't depend on non-belief input, then we aren't entitled to regard a belief's justification as evidence for its truth. But since we *are* entitled to regard a belief's justification as evidence for truth, it follows that a belief's justification must depend on non-belief input and so coherentism must be rejected. What the drunken sailors argument ultimately succeeds at showing, in Haack's view, is that coherentism cannot explain how justification and truth are related.

An informal summary:

Haack objects that if, as coherentism maintains, the only epistemic factor contributing to a belief's justification is relations of mutual support with other beliefs, then we aren't entitled to regard a belief's justification as evidence for its truth. Since we are entitled to regard a belief's justification as evidence for its truth, Haack concludes that we should reject coherentism (1993: 26-27).

A more formal summary:

1. If coherentism is true, then a belief's justification doesn't depend on non-belief input. (from definition of 'coherentism')
2. Either a belief's justification depends on non-belief input or a belief's justification is no indication of its truth. (premise)
3. A belief's justification is an indication of its truth. (premise)

So,

4. A belief's justification depends on non-belief input. (from 2,3)

So,

5. Coherentism is false. (from 1,4)

Here is Peter Godfrey-Smith presenting an argument against the 'two-concepts' view of causation.

If it were really the case that people had two concepts, then actual usage should contain certain kinds of evidence of this. We should not merely see attempts to *clarify* causal claims, but attempts to *switch* the hearer from one sense of 'cause' to another. A good model would be provided by words such as 'mad' and 'funny' which have two senses, related to each other but distinct, and which work in ways that sometimes make disambiguation requests appropriate. ("Did you mean it was funny as in *weird*, or as in *baba*?") But this switching does not seem visible in causal discourse; there the situation seems more disorderly. (Godfrey Smith 2009: 331)

The following is an illegitimate paraphrase:

If it were true that people had two concepts, then we should expect actual usage to contain certain kinds of evidence of this fact. We should not only see people attempting to *clarify* causal claims, but also attempting to *switch* the listener from one meaning of ‘cause’ to a different one. A good paradigm is provided by words like ‘mad’ and ‘funny’. These words have two senses, which are related to each other but distinct, and they work in ways that can make disambiguation requests seem justified. For example, we ask ‘Did you mean it was funny as in *weird*, or as in *haha*?’ But this switching does not seem to occur in causal discourse. The situation seems more chaotic (Godfrey Smith 2009: 331).

As an exercise, try your own paraphrase.

## 6.7 Sample Short Essay Assignment (for 3<sup>rd</sup> year Philosophy of Mind)

### Short Essay Instructions

In first few weeks of classes, we have considered numerous arguments concerning the ‘problem of perception’. These include the arguments that purportedly give rise to the problem in the first place (arguments from illusion and hallucination), arguments that defend a specific solution to the problem (e.g., indirect realism, representationalism, naïve realism), and arguments that purport to explain why a certain proposed solution doesn’t actually succeed. The passages listed below each contain arguments that fall into one of or another of these categories.

#### Passage #1: Ayer (1940)

Beginning on p. 5 with “In the first place it is pointed out that” and ending on p. 7 with “not possible to tell whether it is veridical or delusive [non-veridical]”.

#### Passage #3: Price (1932)

Beginning on p.16 with “The third confusion in the minds of those ...”, and ending on p.17 with “... those unfortunate entities which do not happen to get attended to.”

#### Passage #4: Strawson (1979/2002)

Beginning on p. 93 with “Two things will be required” and ending on p. 94 with “initially and unreflectively took such concepts to have application in the world.”

#### Passage #5: Harman (1990)

Beginning on p. 35 with “It is very important to distinguish...”, and ending on p. 37 with “but that is to say merely that she sees† something brown and green, not that she sees\* anything at all.”

#### Passage #6: Byrne (2001)

Beginning on p. 210 with “Now to the second premise...” and ending on p. 211 with “which is to say that (B) is true”.

#### Passage #7: Genone (2016)

Beginning on p.12 “The final argument in favor of naïve realism ...” and ending on p. 14 with “is not an advantage of the view”.

Your task is to select one of the above passages and write a critical essay on the argument contained therein. More specifically, the assignment has two parts:

**Part A:** Write a summary of the relevant argument, as given in the assigned extract, clearly identifying what conclusion it seeks to establish, what premises it relies on, and how those premises are supposed to support that conclusion.

**Part B:** Write a single objection that might be raised to this argument, clearly identifying which aspect of the argument it targets (a premise or a step in reasoning), what assumptions it needs to make, and how those assumptions serve to undermine the targeted part of the argument.

In addition to these two parts, you may write a concluding paragraph evaluating how far the objection(s) laid out in Part B succeeds in undermining the argument laid out in Part A. Finally, write a brief

introductory paragraph, concisely summarizing the argument you will consider and the objection you will raise.

Note: if you begin to work on a passage before we have had the opportunity to discuss it in lecture, please ensure that you read the passage very closely.

Essays will be submitted electronically via Quercus by 11:59pm on Friday February 15<sup>th</sup>. It should be double-spaced and must be in a word document (.doc or .docx).

#### Citation policy:

You should provide in-text citations (Author last name, year, page number) for all references and quotations in your essay, with bibliographic references provided at the end of the paper. Any consistent format of references (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) is fine.

#### Some further notes and pointers:

- You are not required to cite the classes themselves.
- It is perfectly acceptable to cite extra sources, beyond those assigned for the course, such as the optional readings or any others you might find. However, try not to let these other sources distract you from your primary task, which is to engage closely with the line of argument found in the selected passage.
- If the idea for your objection or response is drawn directly from a text, cite that text.
- Use direct quotations sparingly. The more quotations, the less is said in your own words, and so the less evidence there is of your own understanding.
- In particular, do not repeat the lectures notes verbatim; say things in your own words. Do not quote the handouts, do not write things that are identical to the handouts, or that have been changed in one or two irrelevant words.
- Don't expect the answers to be obvious from a quick reading of the text. Expect to have to read it several times. Expect to change your mind several times about exactly what your answers will be.
- 1000 words is the word limit, but you must decide for yourself how much of this space you devote to Part A, how much to Part B, and how much to the introduction and conclusion. Sometimes it is possible to explain an argument very quickly, in which case you'll have a lot of room to consider objections. Sometimes it will be the other way around.
- In some cases, the passage presents a relatively self-contained argument. In others, the argument presented in the passage depends on claims that the author makes elsewhere in the text, so that rendering his or her reasoning explicit will require explaining those other claims. In all cases, however, understanding the passage and the material well enough to answer the question require will require you to look at the whole reading.
- When working on Part A—which you should do before you begin to work on Part B—start by trying to identify the argument's conclusion. Then, ask yourself whether the author is attempting to present a deductively valid argument, or whether the argument has some other form, such as an inference to the best explanation. If it's intended to be a deductively valid argument, you should be able to identify the argument's premises, and see why the author thinks the conclusion follows.

- When working on Part B, try to find the weak points in the argument: ask yourself, where is an opponent most likely to resist the argument? If you've decided that the author is attempting a deductively valid argument, ask yourself whether it really is valid. If it is valid, ask yourself whether its premises are all true and well-supported. If it's not valid, ask yourself whether there is an obvious extra premise that would be needed to make it valid, and whether that premise is true. If it's an inference to the best explanation, ask yourself whether the phenomenon that allegedly needs explanation is a genuine phenomenon, whether the proposal we're being asked to accept is a good explanation, and whether there are other explanations equally good to the author's own that the author hasn't ruled out.
- If you attempt to offer a response to the objection that you have raised, you should ask yourself not only whether your response on behalf of the original argument renders the argument immune to that objection (though you should ask yourself that). Also ask yourself whether your proposed response substantially preserves the spirit of the original argument. It may be helpful, here, to try putting yourself in the shoes of the person providing the original argument, and consider whether what you are offering them as a solution to the problem you've raised is something they are apt to want or accept.
- Try to have fun with it and don't hesitate to come speak with me at my office hours if you feel you require additional guidance.



## 6.8 Sample Long Essay Question (from “Knowledge and Reality”)

### PHL232 Final Essay Questions

Your essay should be 4-6 pages long (double-spaced) and submitted in tutorial on June 15<sup>th</sup> (our last day of class). It should respond to one of the following questions.

- 1) How should Hume go about making sense of the seemingly objective nature of scientific laws, theories, etc., given his anti-realism about causation? Would he ultimately be able to succeed in doing this?
- 2) Mackie and Lewis each put forward theories of causation which are aimed, in part, at solving various puzzle cases. Please compare the relative merits of Mackie’s and Lewis’s theories of causation by discussing either causal pre-emption or epiphenomena. (Whichever type of case you choose to discuss, your paper should include a carefully considered example). In your view, which of the two views fares better on this score? Should a choice between theories be justified on the basis of which deals with such cases more effectively?
- 3) ‘We see the boulder flatten the hut. The outcome is the state of the hut, the state of being flattened. We see the man pick up the suitcase and lift it on to the rack. That is the explanation of the suitcase’s being on the rack; that is how it got there.’ (Strawson ‘Causation and Explanation’, p. 118)

In this and other passages Strawson claims that we directly experience causation: we perceive objects interact with each other, and (even more fundamentally, in Strawson’s view) we are aware of entering into such interactions in our own case. By contrast, Hume argues that we perceive at most the ‘constant conjunction’ of events and never causation itself. Which author do you agree with and why?

- 4) Near the beginning of his article on causation, Lewis notes that one might be uncomfortable with an analysis of causation that is based on counterfactuals (p. 557). Why do you think one would prefer an account that, say, only uses the simpler notions of necessity and sufficiency, over one, like Lewis’s, that uses counterfactual conditionals? Do you think these worries ultimately outweigh the benefits of Lewis’s account? (It might be helpful to consider too how counterfactuals help Nozick give his theory of knowledge.)  
*(It is important that you feel comfortable discussing Lewis’s technical apparatus—namely, his possible worlds semantics for counterfactuals—if you choose to answer this question.)*
- 5) Do you think that the benefits of four dimensionalism about identity across time outweigh the costs? Explain your answer.
- 6) Strawson claims that a right account of causation will be framed in terms of the actions of substances (i.e. ordinary things like rocks and tables), rather than in terms of sequences of events. Do Strawson’s views on causation commit him to a particular view about the nature

of identity across time? Your answer should take into consideration Ayers' discussion of the role of substance in explaining the nature of 'activity' (Ayers Prolegomena, pp. 85-89).

7) Critically assess Lewis's case for the logical possibility of time travel.

### Citation policy

You should provide in-text citations (Author last name, year, page number) for all references and quotations in your essay, with bibliographic references provided at the end of the paper. Any consistent format of references (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) is fine.

Some further notes:

-You are not required to cite the classes themselves.

-It is perfectly acceptable, but not required, to cite sources beyond those assigned for the course.

-If the idea for your objection or response is drawn directly from a text, do cite that text.

-Use direct quotations sparingly - the more quotations, the less is said in your own words, and so the less evidence there is of your own understanding.

-In particular, do not repeat the in-class handouts verbatim; say things in your own words. Do not quote the handouts, do not write things that are identical to the handouts, or that have been changed in one or two irrelevant words. You will be marked down for doing so.

## 6.9 ELL Questionnaire (Philosophy for Scientists)

End of Term Student Survey, PHL233 Fall 2017

Please circle:

Year: 1 2 3 4

PHL minor/major/specialist: Yes No

Instruction and practice related to academic reading and writing were built into PHL233 this term. Please complete this anonymous survey to help the course designers understand what students regard as most useful in these areas.

For those that attended one or both of the 'drop in' writing clinics for bonus credit:

Rate how helpful you found these sessions (1 very unhelpful; 5 very helpful):

1 2 3 4 5

Check which of the following exercises you found helpful for your course work this term:

- Exercise on effective and ineffective paraphrase/summary
- Exercise on thesis statements
- Exercise on paragraph structure

Did you attend any of the reading/writing support tutorials on Wednesday afternoon?

YES

NO

If yes, how many times?

1-3

3-6

6+

For those that have attended the reading/writing support tutorials on Wednesday afternoon:

Rate whether you found attending these sessions helpful (1 very unhelpful; 5 very helpful):

1 2 3 4 5

Check which of the following exercises or strategies you found helpful for your course work this term. You may check as many as you wish.

- Discussion of reading strategy handouts (e.g., identifying an author's opinion, vocabulary)
- Practice summaries of passages from readings
- Practice summaries of arguments from lecture

How would you describe your academic reading ability?

Excellent    Very Good    Good    Adequate    Poor

Overall, was this course helpful for the development of your academic reading ability?

YES    NO

How would you describe your academic writing ability?

Excellent    Very Good    Good    Adequate    Poor

Overall, was this course helpful for the development of your academic writing ability?

YES    NO

Did your grade improve over the course of the term?

YES    NO

If yes, by how much?

For those that attended the drop in writing clinics, would you add to or change anything about the instruction?

For those that attended the reading/writing support tutorial sections, would you add to or change anything about the tutorial instruction?

## 6.10 Final Exam Study Aid (for Introduction to Epistemology and Metaphysics)

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PART 1 (EPISTEMOLOGY)

#### QUESTION 1

- 'Skeptics about our knowledge of the external world believe that we are brains in vats.' Is this statement true? Explain your answer. [1 mark]
- Fill in the gaps to produce an argument for skepticism from a skeptical hypothesis:

There are FIVE gaps – 1 mark each.

- I ..... (i) that if I am looking at a piece of paper then I am not a brain in a vat.
  - I do not know ..... (ii)
  - If ..... (iii) then if I know that I am looking at a piece of paper, I know that ..... (iv)
  - If I know that .....(v) [Consequence of 1 and 3]
  - I do not know that I am looking at a piece of paper. [Consequence of 2 and 4]
- c) Here is the truth table for the ' $\rightarrow$ ' operator ('if...then...'):

P	Q	$p \rightarrow q$
True	True	True
True	False	False
False	True	True
False	False	True

- Use this truth table to explain why 4 follows from 1 and 3. [1 mark]
- Use the truth table to explain why 5 follows from 2 and 4. [1 mark]
- Explain in terms of this truth table why the statement 'If Oswald hadn't killed Kennedy someone else would have' is not a statement of form ' $p \rightarrow q$ '. [2 marks]

#### QUESTION 2

- Explain the difference between foundationalism and coherentism about justification. [3 marks]
- Explain how the following premises generate an argument for foundationalism about justification: [5 marks]

Premise 1: S knows that p iff S has a justified true belief that p.

Premise 2: An argument can justify belief in its conclusion for a subject only if the subject already (prior to the argument) has justification for believing its premises.

Premise 3: All justification is justification on the basis of arguments.

- c) Which element of the argument you provide in (b) would a coherentist about justification reject? Explain your answer. [2 marks]

### QUESTION 3

Consider the following conversation:

Person A (speaking while A and B are standing at the zebra enclosure): ‘Do you know that that is a Zebra?’

Person B: ‘Yes’

Person A: ‘Do you know that it is not a cleverly painted mule’

Person B: ‘Well, no’

Person A: ‘Well, in that case you don’t know that it’s a zebra, so you should be more careful what you say!’

- a) Fill in the gaps to produce Nozick’s counterfactual account of the conditions for knowledge [1 mark for each gap]:

S knows that p iff

1. p is true S
2. S believes that p
3. .... (i)
4. .... (ii)

- b) Explain what a proponent of Nozick’s account of knowledge would say about the conversation between Person A and Person B. [4 marks]
- c) Fill in the gaps to give Lewis’s contextualism about knowledge:

S knows that p iff p is true in every ..... (i) world left unexcluded by .....(ii) [2 marks – 1 for each gap]

- d) Explain how the conversation between Person A and Person B can be used to raise an objection to Lewis’s contextualism. [4 marks]
- e) What would a reliabilist about knowledge say about this case [3 marks]

### QUESTION 4

- a) What is semantic externalism? [1 mark]
- b) Consider the following thought experiment:

Suppose that we go to another planet, Twin Earth, which is just like our own Earth except that on Twin Earth there is not H<sub>2</sub>O in the lakes and rivers and H<sub>2</sub>O does not fall from the sky when it rains – on Twin Earth, what falls from the sky and is in lakes and rivers and so on is some other colourless odourless liquid, XYZ. We walk around on Twin Earth saying things like ‘There’s some water over there’, ‘This is (pointing at a container we have just filled) is water’, and so on.

Explain how Putnam uses this thought experiment to argue for semantic externalism. [3 marks]

c) Fill in the gaps to produce a version of Putnam's response to skepticism from semantic externalism. There are FIVE gaps – 1 mark each.

1. Semantic externalism.

2. Suppose that I am a brain in a vat and always have been. In that case:

3. My uses of 'brain' stand for brain\*'s, my uses of 'vat' stand for vat\*'s, and my uses of 'in' stand for some relation that object\*'s can stand in to one another. So:

4. If I say 'I am a brain in a vat', what I have said is true if and only if..... (i) but:

5. Given 2, I am not a ..... (ii), I am a ..... (iii) so:

6. Even in a world in which I am a brain in a vat, my utterances of 'I am a brain in a vat' are ..... (iv)

So:

7. There are no possible worlds in which I can say ..... (v) truly. so

8. I know that I am not a brain in a vat.

d) 'The above argument fails because the move from 7 to 8 is a fallacy!' Explain why this is a plausible objection. [3 marks]

## MODEL ANSWERS

*(Note that in some cases I have provided answers that are more thorough than it is possible to produce in an exam setting. I have aimed for thoroughness in the interest of making this a valuable study aid, and you should be aiming to capture the main points given here.)*

### Question 1

a) No. Skeptics about the external world believe that we do not know that we are not brains in vats.

b)

- (i) know
- (ii) that I am not a brain in a vat (BIV)
- (iii) I know that if I am looking at a piece of paper, then I am not a brain in a vat
- (iv) I am not a brain in a vat
- (v) I am looking at a piece of paper, then I know that I am not a brain in a vat

c) 3. is a ' $p \rightarrow q$ ' statement, with antecedent 'I know that if I am looking at a piece of paper then I am not a brain in a vat' and consequent 'If I know I am looking at a piece of paper, I know that I am not a brain in a vat'. 1. is the antecedent of this conditional, and 4. is the consequent. The first line one of the truth table for the material conditional tells us that if a conditional and its antecedent are both true, then the consequent is also true. So given 1 and 3 we can infer 4.

d) 4. is a ' $p \rightarrow q$ ' statement with antecedent 'I know that I am looking at a piece of paper' and consequent 'I know that I am not a brain in a vat'. 2. is the negation of the consequent of this conditional. The table tells us that the only way for a conditional with a false consequent to be true is if its antecedent is false as well. So, if the conditional is true (4) and the consequent is false (2), the antecedent is false as well (5). Hence, the inference to 5 is justified.

e) If this were equivalent to a ' $p \rightarrow q$ ' statement it would be equivalent to the statement "if Oswald didn't kill Kennedy, then someone other than Oswald did" (equivalently: 'Oswald didn't kill Kennedy  $\rightarrow$  somebody other than Oswald killed Kennedy'). This statement is true iff either Oswald didn't kill Kennedy and someone else did (compare row 1 of the table) or Oswald did kill Kennedy (rows 3 and 4). So, if the initial statement is read as having the suggested form, then the fact (if it is a fact) that Oswald did kill Kennedy is enough to make the statement true. (A material conditional with a false antecedent is automatically true). But this is not what we would normally understand the initial statement as saying: supposing that Oswald actually did kill Kennedy, whether the counterfactual statement is true depends on what the world would have been like if he hadn't, and this is a factor to which the formulation in terms of ' $\rightarrow$ ' is blind.

### Question 2

a) Foundationalism about justification is the view that a belief is justified iff it is either a basic (self-justifying) belief or is derivable from a basic belief by means which confer justification. Coherentism about justification is the view that a belief is justified iff accepting it would add to the coherence of one's system of beliefs.



b) Suppose Premise 3: All justification is justification on the basis of arguments. 3 combines with 2 to generate an infinite regress: if I am justified in believing that p, I must have some argument for p. Suppose that p\* is a premise in this argument. If the argument is to confer justification, I must already be justified in believing p\*. But in that case I must also have an argument for p\*. And the same line of reasoning establishes that I must also have justification for the premises in the argument for p\*. So given 2 and 3, the search for justification will have no end. But in that case, none of my beliefs will ever really be justified, so 3 and 2 entail (Subconclusion) 4: None of our beliefs are justified. And 4 combines with 1 to give (Subconclusion) 5: We do not know anything. 5 is absurd. So we need to reject one of the premises that generates it. The best candidate is 3. But rejection of 3 requires that we propose an alternative account of justification. The best alternative is:

6. A belief is justified iff it is a basic belief (a belief that does not require inferential justification) or is derived from basic beliefs by justification-conferring inferences.

And 6 is (inferentialist) foundationalism.

c) A coherentist would reject Premise 2. On a coherentist view, an inference justifies its conclusion iff acceptance of the conclusion on the basis of the inference raises the overall coherence of the system.

### QUESTION 3

a)

(i) If p were false, S would not believe p/ in every nearest not-p world, S does not believe p.

(ii) if p were true, S would (still) believe p/in every nearest p world, S believes p.

[Order not important. Full marks require acknowledgement that the conditionals are subjunctive]

b) Person A reaches his/her conclusion as follows:

(1) You know that (if it's a zebra it's not a painted mule).

(2) You don't know it's not a painted mule.

(3) If you know that (if it's a zebra then it's not painted mule), then (if you know it's a zebra, then you know not painted mule).

So,

4) If you know it's a zebra, then you know it's not painted mule. (from 1, 3)

So,

5) You don't know zebra. (from 2, 4)

A proponent of Nozick's view would say that this argument is unsound because premise 3 is false. 3 is an instance of the closure principle ( $K(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow (Kp \rightarrow Kq)$ ). Nozick rejects this principle. In terms of the zebra/mule case, his point is that

(i) the nearest worlds where you're not looking at zebras are NOT 'painted mule' worlds. Rather, the nearest worlds where you're not looking at zebras are worlds where you are looking at the next

enclosure along, or the zebra pen is being used for (ordinary, unpainted) donkeys instead. In these worlds, you wouldn't believe that you were looking at a zebra.

(ii) in the nearest worlds where you are still looking at zebras, you still believe you are.

So you DO know that it's a zebra.

BUT

(iii) in the nearest 'painted mule' worlds, you wouldn't realize that it was a painted mule – you would still believe that it's a zebra.

SO

You DON'T know that it's not a painted mule.

So on Nozick's view you do know (zebra → not mule), you know it's a zebra, but you don't know it's not a mule. This is denial of closure under known entailment.

c)

(i) relevant

(ii) S's evidence [also acceptable: 'S's evidence for p' / 'S's evidence against not p' / 'S's justification' / 'possible relevant']

d) The case can be used to raise an objection to Lewis's view on the ground that Lewis's view makes knowledge too fragile. Lewis thinks that a very, very unlikely situation is irrelevant unless it is (a) actual, or (b) attended. The painted mule situation is very unlikely (zoos don't do that kind of thing). So early in the conversation, before the 'mule' possibility has been mentioned, the 'mule' possibility is not relevant, and the fact that B has no evidence to rule it out is not relevant to whether S knows that s/he is looking at a zebra. However, as soon as this possibility is mentioned it becomes relevant. But B still has no evidence that rules out this possibility. And in that case B lacks evidence that excludes a relevant 'not zebra' situation, so, on Lewis's view, B does not know that the animal is a zebra. So on Lewis's view, just mentioning the 'mule' possibility is enough to make a difference with respect to what B knows. But (we might object) whether you know something should depend just on your beliefs, the truth, and your evidence. Lewis is making whether our beliefs count as knowledge depend on the wrong kind of factor.

e) Reliabilism about knowledge is the view that S knows that p iff S has a true belief that p caused by a reliable method. A reliabilist would say (assuming that it actually is a zebra):

- B does know it's a zebra because B has a true belief that it's a zebra caused by a reliable method (perception, combined with B's true belief about what zebras look like)

- The status of this belief as knowledge is independent of whether B knows that it's not a painted mule (because whether or not B's belief that it's a zebra is caused by a reliable method does not depend on whether B believes or knows that it's not a painted mule.

- In addition, B can still claim to know that it's not a painted mule on the ground that the likelihood of its being a painted mule is very very low, and believing p when not-p is very, very unlikely is a reliable method of belief formation.

#### QUESTION 4

##### Question 4

a) semantic externalism is the view that the meanings of words/contents of beliefs depend partly on relations holding between us and our environment.

b) Consider whether my statement 'There's some water over there' made while pointing at some XYZ on Twin Earth is true. Ordinary speaker intuition declares that it is not. It follows that the meanings of terms like 'water' are not determined by the apparent/surface properties we associate with them. If they were, what we meant by 'water' would be 'colourless odourless liquid found in puddles, lakes, rivers, which falls from the sky' and so on. And in that case my claim (on Twin Earth) 'There's some water' would be true. The best explanation for the intuition that my utterance made on Twin Earth would be false is that by 'water' we mean 'the stuff having the underlying chemical composition which generates *these* surface properties', which is to say, by 'water' we mean H<sub>2</sub>O. This hypothesis explains the datum because if by 'water' I mean H<sub>2</sub>O, my utterance on Twin Earth would be true iff I were pointing at some H<sub>2</sub>O, which I am not.

c)

i) I am a brain\* in\* a vat\*

ii) brain\* in\* a vat\*

iii) brain in a vat

iv) false

v) 'I am a brain in a vat'

d) Putnam is moving from 'I know that there is no world in which "I am a brain in a vat" can be said truly' to 'I know that I am not a brain in a vat'. He is also claiming (see 1 in his argument) that what our words mean depend on which world we are in. Now suppose that I am in fact an ordinary person, not a brain in a vat. Then I can use Putnam's argument to get as far as 7. But all 7 tells me is that regardless of what world I am in what I say when I say 'I am a brain in a vat' is false. And this does not put me in a position to conclude that I am not a brain in a vat unless I already know that the actual world is not a vat world.

OR

The parallel with 'I am here'.

## 6.11 Sample Final Exam (for 3<sup>rd</sup> year Philosophy of Mind)

### QUESTION 1 [13 marks]

(a) There are **SEVEN** gaps [1 mark each]

1. In an illusion, an ordinary, real-world object sensibly appears to one to possess a particular sensible quality, *F*, when in reality ..... [definition of ‘perceptual illusion’]
2. If there sensibly appears to a subject to be something which possesses a particular sensible quality, *F*, then ..... [‘Phenomenal Principle’]
3. In the cases described at 1., the ordinary, real-world object is not ..... [from 1, 2, Leibniz’s Law]

So,

4. During an illusion, one is not, after all, aware of..... [from 1, 3]
5. If a subject cannot distinguish introspectively between a veridical perceptual experience and a corresponding illusory one, then whatever the subject is aware of in a veridical perceptual experience must be ..... [The ‘Common Factor Principle’ or ‘Common Kind Assumption’]

But it’s plausible that,

6. For any veridical perceptual experience, there’s a corresponding illusory experience that the subject *cannot* .....

So,

7. Whatever one is aware of in veridical perceptual experience must be the same as what one is aware of in an illusory perceptual experience. [from 5, 6]

And, in particular, we must conclude that:

8. In veridical perceptual experience, one is not, after all, aware of ..... [from 4, 7]

(b) What conclusion would an **Idealist** most likely draw from the above argument? [1 mark]

(c) Indirect Realists can point out that the above argument, as stated, is formally invalid. What is ‘Indirect Realism’, which step in the argument do they find objectionable, and why do they find it problematic? [3 marks]

(d) Early ‘Disjunctivists’ (e.g., J. L. Austin) objected to the argument from illusion by drawing an analogy with ordinary objects that visually resemble each other (e.g., a piece of soap that visually resembles a lemon). What is the purpose of Austin’s analogy and which premise or premises did Austin use the analogy in order to challenge? [2 marks]

### QUESTION 2 [10 marks]

There are **TWO** gaps [1 mark each]

(a) According to (pure) sense datum theory, a subject, S, has a visual experience as of something *F* if and only if S ..... The phenomenal character of S's visual experience is determined by .....

(b) What are some properties traditionally associated with 'sense data'? [2 marks]

(c) Some philosophers have wished to avoid sense data because they regard them as metaphysically peculiar, including because of their potential indeterminacy. Give an example of a visual experience that illustrates this possibility and explain how it has been used to construct an objection to the sense datum theory. [3 marks]

(d) Present one other reason that philosophers have had for wanting to resist the sense datum theory. Please explain your answer. [3 marks]

### QUESTION 3 [11 marks]

(a) According to contemporary representationalists, what does a perceptual experience consist in? [2 marks]

(b) Representationalism suggests a natural strategy for objecting to the argument from illusion (outlined in Question 1). What is that strategy? Your answer should identify the premise, premises, or inferences that representationalists reject and their grounds for doing so. [3 marks]

(c) What is the disagreement that divides 'strong' representationalists and 'weak' representationalists (*a.k.a.* 'qualia theorists'). [2 marks]

(d) Weak representationalists typically attack strong representationalism by citing counterexamples to their position. Please describe such a purported counterexample. [2 marks]

(e) How might a strong representationalist try to accommodate the case outlined at 3(d). [2 marks]

### QUESTION 4 [10 marks]

There are **FOUR** gaps [½ mark each]

(a) According to Naïve Realism, perceptual experience is a ..... between ....., ....., and .....

(b) All Naïve Realists are Direct Realists, but not all Direct Realists are Naïve Realists. Explain. [3 marks]

(c) Recent Naïve Realists have typically defended their position by displaying its virtues over its main theoretical rival: representationalism. Please describe one such argument. [3 marks]

(d) Do you find the argument you that you outlined at 4(c) compelling reason for adopting naïve realism? Explain your answer [2 marks]

### QUESTION 5 [10 marks]

(a) Below is Siegel's argument for 'Thesis K' (i.e., Liberalism). 'E1' and 'E2' refer to the sensory aspects of two phenomenally contrasting overall experiences. There are **THREE** gaps [1 mark each]

1. The overall experience of which E1 is an aspect differs phenomenologically from the overall experience of which E2 is an aspect.
2. If these two overall experiences differ phenomenologically, then E1 and E2 differ phenomenologically.
3. If E1 and E2 differ phenomenologically, they differ in .....
4. If E1 and E2 differ in ....., there is a difference with respect to the ..... represented by these experiences.

(b) Whereas premise 1 in the above argument is an introspective claim about a phenomenal contrast, Siegel defends premises 2-4 using a form of argument called ..... [1 mark]

(c) ‘Conservatives’ and ‘Liberals’ about the contents of perceptual experience give different verdicts about the circumstances under which subjects suffer perceptual illusion. Explain this difference with the use of an example. [2 marks]

(d) Explain one way a Conservative could try to resist Siegel’s argument for Thesis K. [2 mark]

(e) How does (or would) Siegel respond to this attempt to resist her argument? [2 marks]

#### QUESTION 6 [13 marks]

(a) Describe two ways that philosophers have hoped to distinguish (or ‘individuate’) the senses (e.g., vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch). [2 marks]

(b) On O’Callaghan’s view, vision and audition differ in the directness with which they make us perceptually aware of material objects. Please explain his position. [3 marks]

(c) ‘We do not experience sounds as occupying space, and consequently they appear as private occurrences.’ How would O’Callaghan respond to this statement? [3 marks]

(d) According to Martin, just as visual experience essentially involves a ‘visual field’, touch experiences involve a tactual spatial field. Please explain the main differences Martin finds between these spatial fields and how they make us aware of objects’ spatial features. [3 marks]

(e) In your own view, what is the most theoretically significant difference that you have encountered between vision, on the one hand, and some other sense modality, on the other? [2 marks]

#### QUESTION 7 [8 marks]

(a) On Fulkerson’s view, what role (or roles) do ‘exploratory procedures’ play in haptic tactual experience, and how does this qualify touch as a unified sense modality? [3 marks]

(b) What role does Noë attribute to exploratory activity in vision, and what puzzle about perceptual experience does he think this, in turn, helps us to solve? Please illustrate the puzzle with an example and show how Noë would try to accommodate it with exploratory activity. [3 marks]

(c) Describe how an opponent might try to object to Noë’s proposal. [2 marks]

**END**

**Total Marks = 75**