

PHIL441 – PHILOSOPHY OF PERCEPTION

2022, Term 1

Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia

1. CONTACT

INSTRUCTOR

Name: Dr. Aaron Henry

Office: Over Zoom

Office Hours: TBD

Email: aaron.henry@ubc.ca

LECTURE

Lecture Location: GEO147

Lecture Time: Tues. & Thurs 9:30-11 am

E-mail policy: E-mails must be sent from your ubc e-mail address and must include the course code (PHIL441) 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. COURSE

OVERVIEW

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of perception. 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 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.

1. ASSESSMENT

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| 1 st paper (1,000 words) | (25% of final) | Due: Friday Feb. 15th |
| 2 nd paper (2,500 words) | (35% of final) | Due: Last day of classes |
| Final Exam | (30% of final) | TBD |
| Participation | (10% of final) | |

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.

2. 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. PHL441 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.

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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>

2. 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>

3. SCHEDULE

| DATE | TOPIC | READINGS |
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| Week 1 | The arguments from illusion and hallucination | Ayer, "The Argument from Illusion" (pp. 1-11) Crane & French, "The Problem of Perception" (§§ 1-2) Optional: 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" Optional: 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) Optional: Anscombe "The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature" (difficult) |
| Week 4 | 'Strong' vs. 'Weak' Representationalism: "the greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind"? | Chalmers, "The Representational Character of Experience"; Byrne, "Intentionalism Defended" |

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| | | Optional: 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?” Optional: Kennedy, “Heirs of Nothing: The Implications of Transparency” (§§1-2); Travis “Silence of the Senses” (difficult) |
| Week 6 | The Naïve Realist view of hallucination: Disjunctivism | Soteriou “Disjunctivist Accounts of Illusion and Hallucination” (Ch. 6 of <i>Disjunctivism</i>) Optional: Soteriou, Chapters 1-2; Fish, <i>Philosophy of Perception</i> (Ch. 6); Martin, “The Limits of Self-awareness” (difficult) |
| Week 7 | Reading Week – no classes | |
| Week 8 | What is the temporal structure of perceptual experience? | Phillips, “Experience of and in time” Optional: 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?”; 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)” Optional: 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) Optional: Martin, “Sight and Touch” |
| Week 12 | Is Perception essentially active? | Noe, <i>Action in Perception</i> (Chapter 3); Merleau Ponty, excerpts from the <i>Phenomenology of Perception</i> |
| Week 13 | Attention and Consciousness | Watzl, <i>Structuring Mind</i> (selections); Ganeri <i>Attention, Not Self</i> (selections) |