

MIND-BODY PROBLEM

Course Syllabus
Winter, 2020

Course: Psych 213
Code: 68840

Lecture: TuTh 3:30-4:50
Room: SBSG 2200

TEXT: Blackmore *Consciousness: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition
TEXT: Hoffman, *The Case Against Reality*

PROFESSOR: Don Hoffman
Office: SBSG 2566
Phone: 824-6795
Office Hrs: Tu 2:30 – 3:20

SECRETARY: Justine Sarashid
Office: SSPA 2135
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GENERAL INFORMATION

In this class we will read and discuss current literature on the classic mind-body problem. Some questions we will consider are these: What is consciousness and what is matter and how are the two related? How can brains have minds? How can neural activity cause my sensation of red or my feeling of pain? The course will be multidisciplinary, drawing on information from the fields of computer vision, artificial intelligence, cognition, neurophysiology, philosophy, and psychophysics. During the first three weeks I will provide a general introduction to the subject. Students will then choose book chapters on the mind/body problem (from the books by Blackmore and Hoffman), present these to the class, and lead discussions. The goal is for all involved to know the state of the field and the open problems by the end of the quarter. To learn about your professor's research in this area, you can see his [TED Talk](#), his [TSC Talk](#), his [webpage](#), his [publications](#), his paper on [consciousness](#), his [PBS videos](#), his [SAND video](#), his [Sages & Scientists video](#).

GRADING

Your grade will be based on three measures: (1) Your oral presentations, (2) your participation in discussions, and (3) a paper. Your grade for the oral presentations will be based on how well you master the material you present, how clearly you present its essence, and how penetratingly you critique its strengths and weaknesses. You are, of course, expected to have read whatever material is the subject for discussion in each session, whether or not you are the primary presenter. Come prepared with questions for the discussion leader, critiques of the material, and general comments. To make sure that we all read the material, at the beginning of each class we will put all our names in a hat and draw one out at random. The person whose name is drawn will open the class with a two minute summary of the material for that day. The paper will be 10 pages on any aspect of the mind-body problem you wish to explore. You might choose to discuss how research you are conducting bears on some aspect of the mind-body problem. You might propose your own new solution to the problem. You might critique a position discussed in class or that you have read about elsewhere. You might propose new experiments that would give empirical data relevant to the mind-body problem. The paper will count for half of your grade. Your oral presentations will count for 40%, and your participation in discussions 10%.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

<i>Lecture</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>
1	Tu 1/7	Overview	Interface Theory
2	Th 1/9	Overview	Interface Theory
3	Tu 1/14	Overview	Interface Theory
4	Th 1/16	Overview	Spectrum Inversion
5	Tu 1/21	Overview	Conscious Agents
6	Th 1/23	Overview	Conscious Agents
7	Tu 1/28	Blackmore	1
8	Th 1/30	Blackmore	2
9	Tu 2/4	Blackmore	3
10	Th 2/6	Blackmore	4
11	Tu 2/11	Blackmore	5
12	Th 2/13	Blackmore	6
13	Tu 2/18	Blackmore	7
14	Th 2/20	Blackmore	8
15	Tu 2/25	Blackmore	9
16	Th 2/27	Hoffman	1,2
17	Tu 3/3	Hoffman	3,4
18	Th 3/5	Hoffman	5,6
19	Tu 3/10	Hoffman	7,8
20	Th 3/12	Hoffman	9,10

— [Tu 3/17](#) — [FINAL — 4:00 – 6:00pm](#)