

# PHIL 111: Philosophy of Mind

Fall Semester, 2021  
MWF 3:30 – 4:20  
Room L107, Lafayette Hall

Philosophy of mind attempts to unravel the nature of the mind, both what a mind is and how creatures with minds can have thoughts and feelings. Are minds simply masses of interconnected neurons we call brains? If not, how are the mind and the brain related? If so, does that mean that a computer can't think since computers have no neurons? Or, if computers can think, can they have experiences like we do, feeling the pain of a pin prick or the tickle of a feather? People and computers use languages; but are languages required for thinking? Is the mind truly 'inside the head'? This is a small sample of some of the questions addressed in philosophy of mind.

The several essays we will read, almost entirely by contemporary philosophers, trace the evolution of views on these questions. Much of the course will be devoted to the ontology of the mind, or to the mind-body problem, i.e., trying to understand if or how mental things (minds, beliefs, feelings) are physical things. We then take up the issue of whether computers can think and puzzles about mental causation and about the location of the mind.

Instructor: Mark Moyer

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(802) 656-3140

Hours: Mondays 1:05-2:05, Fridays 2:10-3:10, and by appointment (feel free to ask after class or by email for a time that better fits your schedule or if you'd like to meet on Teams)

Email: [Mark.Moyer@uvm.edu](mailto:Mark.Moyer@uvm.edu)

Texts: Course pack available at the bookstore.

Web Site: [http://www.uvm.edu/~mmmoyer/phil\\_111\\_f21/](http://www.uvm.edu/~mmmoyer/phil_111_f21/)  
The course syllabus (this sheet), the schedule of reading assignments, homework assignments, etc. will all be posted on this web page.

Grading: Grades will be based on mini-assignments, surprise quizzes and Blackboard Discussion Board interactions (10% total), homework assignments (40% total), a midterm exam (20%), and a final exam (30%).

Final Exam: The final exam will be given on Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 4:30-6:30

Late assignments will be counted down one sixth grade per calendar day (e.g., a B+ becomes a B if two days late, a C+ if six days late). Please see or email me as soon as possible (preferably ahead of time) if, due to some emergency, you will miss an assignment or need an extension.

Academic Honesty: You are responsible for knowing UVM's [Code of Academic Integrity](#).