

PHILOSOPHY 23401/33401
PHILOSOPHY OF MIND: THOUGHT, COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT
University of Chicago, autumn 2002

Course Instructor: Jason Bridges

Office hours: Wednesday, 10-12am, Wieboldt 125

DESCRIPTION

It seems natural to think of the mind as an autonomous object: subject to causal influence from the world outside, but possessed, like a clock or other physical mechanism, of its own self-standing internal constitution. Over the last half-century, however, a number of philosophers have articulated and defended views in radical conflict with that conception. According to such views, our minds are not merely in causal contact with the world; rather, the very existence and identity of our thoughts and beliefs are partially constituted by our relationships to the physical and social environment. In this course, we critically examine the most influential arguments of this kind in the analytic tradition, and consider the philosophical fall-out from the 'externalist' revolution for issues of self-knowledge, skepticism, and language. Readings will be drawn from Burge, Davidson, Dretske, McDowell, Putnam, and others.

Prerequisite: at least one previous course in philosophy or permission from the course instructor.

READINGS

The course readings are collected in a reading packet, available for purchase at the Humanities copy center (Classics 11).

As purchased, the packet is loose paper held together by a rubber band. You may find it convenient to have your copy bound, which can be done for a small charge at the copy center on the third floor of the University of Chicago Bookstore or at the Kinko's on 57th.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

First paper:	3 pages	due Nov. 5 th in class	worth 25% of course grade
Second paper:	5 pages	due Nov. 26 th in class	worth 35%
Final paper:	7 pages	due Dec. 10 th in teaching box (CL 17)	worth 40%

There is no final exam.

Late papers will be docked a grade per day (e.g., B+ to B) unless you have received approval ahead of time. No papers will be accepted after Dec. 10th.

Paper topics will be distributed in class 10-14 days before the due dates.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Introduction

<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
1	Course overview	
2	Setting the stage: linguistic meaning and mental content	Frege, excerpt from "Thoughts"

Part I: Two arguments for externalism

3	Putnam's argument, part one: the semantic case	Putnam, "Is Semantics Possible?"
4	Putnam's argument, part two: the twin-Earth thought experiment	Putnam, excerpt from "The Meaning of 'Meaning'"
5	Burge's twin-Earth thought experiment	Burge, excerpt from "Individualism and the Mental"

Part II: Externalism, causation and explanation

6	The question: Does externalism render content explanatorily irrelevant?	Dretske, "Minds, Machines and Money: What Really Explains Behavior"
7	Content as "constitutively duplex": for	McGinn, "The Structure of Content".
8	Content as constitutively duplex: against	Hornsby, "Semantic Innocence and Psychological Understanding"
9	The mind as organ	McDowell, "Putnam on Mind and Meaning"
10	Prime conditions	Williamson, excerpt from "Broadness" and all of "Primeness"

Part III: Externalism and self-knowledge

11	The question: Is externalism incompatible with our 'privileged access' to our thoughts?	Burge, "Individualism and Self-Knowledge"
12	Empty thoughts	Boghossian, "What the Externalist Can Know A Priori"
13	Introspection as the grasping of inner objects	Davidson, "Knowing One's Own Mind"

Part IV: Transcendental externalism—the self in the physical world

14 and 15	The threat of ‘massive reduplication’	Excerpt from Brewer, “Belief and Experience”.
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Part V: Transcendental externalism—the self in the social world

16	Social interaction as that which ‘fixes’ the objects of our thoughts	Davidson, “The Second Person”
17	The ‘private language argument’	Stroud, “Wittgenstein’s ‘Treatment’ of the Quest for...” and “Private Objects, Physical Objects, and Ostension”
18	(Slack)	