# Philosophy of Mind and Psychology

## Prof. Antonella Morandi Corradini

COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Course aims*: The objective of the course is to introduce students to the discipline entitled Philosophy of Mind. It is an investigation into the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body which seeks to answer a variety of questions, such as: can science explain consciousness? Is the mind reducible to the brain? Do the qualia of experience exist? If so, what characteristics do they exhibit? Is there an essential difference between man and machine? Can there be conscious robots? Is the human being free in his volitions and decisions? In what sense is a human being a person?

*Knowledge and understanding*: At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the fundamental concepts of the philosophy of mind and to discuss the main concepts concerning the philosophical notion of mind, the relationship between mind and body, and the problem of freedom of will and action.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*: at the end of the course, students will be able to critically present the contents learned, intertwine them with their general psychological knowledge, grasp the differences and peculiarities of the concepts studied, and know how to argue for or against them. This will equip them with a wide-ranging perspective of psychology and will hone their critical and reflective skills for their professional future.

COURSE CONTENT

MODULE 1: Introduction: dualism vs. materialism

Unit 1: Perception

Unit 2: Arguments in favour of dualism

Unit 2: Arguments in favour of materialism

Unit 3: Dualism vs. materialism: which conception bears the burden of proof?

MODULE 2: The qualia of experience

Unit 1: The inverted spectrum argument. Theses and objections

Unit 2: The Chinese nation argument. Theses and objections

Unit 3: The zombie argument. Theses and objections

Unit 4: The knowledge argument. Theses and objections

Unit 5: Subjectivity

Unit 6: Dualism of properties

MODULE 3: Consciousness

Unit 1: Eliminativist approach to consciousness. Theses and objections

Unit 2: Representationalism and higher order theories. Theses and objections

Unit 3: Russellian theory of identity and neutral monism. Theses and objections

Unit 4: Unity of consciousness

MODULE 4: Thinking

Unit 1: The computational / representational theory of thought

Unit 2: Against the mechanizability of thought 1: the argument of reason. Theses and objections

Unit 3: Against the mechanizability of thought 2: The Chinese room argument. Theses and objections

Unit 4: Dependence of computation on the mind

Unit 5: The connection principle

MODULE 5: Intentionality

Unit 1: Conceptual role theories. Theses and objections

Unit 2: Causal theories of meaning. Theses and objections

Unit 3: Biological theories of meaning. Theses and objections

Unit 4: Instrumentalist theories of meaning. Theses and objections

Unit 5: Eliminativist approach to intentionality. Theses and objections

Unit 6: The indeterminacy of the physical

MODULE 6:

Concluding remarks: what it means to be a person

READING LIST

Feser, E., Philosophy of Mind. A Beginner's Guide, Oneworld, London, 2015.

TEACHING METHOD

Lectures.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

A written exam consisting of 3 open-ended questions. At the discretion of the Examination Committee, students may be granted an oral exam to supplement their written exam. This consists of a question covering the whole course programme, which may increase the student's written exam mark by a maximum of three marks but won't reduce it. The exam is aimed at assessing the degree of understanding of the course contents, the ability to present and elaborate them critically, the quality of argumentation, and the critical penetration of problems. We will also consider the student's ability to draw links between the epistemological topics addressed and the general framework of psychological knowledge acquired.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites. The course is held in Italian.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.