

SOUTHWESTERN

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

What you believe to be true will control you whether it's true or not.
—Jeremy LaBorde

Course Title: PHILO 7614; Philosophy of Mind and Neuroscience
Class Dates, Time, and Term: Monday afternoons, 2:00-4:00pm, Spring 2012
Room: F-208
Professor: William A. Dembski (F-215D, 817-923-1921 x4435)

COURSE DESCRIPTION This seminar seeks to make sense of the human mind in light of Christian faith. It examines attempts to undermine the Christian understanding of an immaterial mind as well as non-materialist responses. Four hours.

COURSE GOALS This seminar helps students understand key challenges to the Christian faith posed by materialist approaches to mind; moreover, it explores how non-materialist approaches effectively counter such challenges.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES In this course the student will:

- Achieve proficiency in thinking, speaking, and writing effectively and professionally on the relation between cognitive science and Christian faith.
- Know the main challenges to Christian faith stemming from materialist theories of mind as well as the most effective non-materialist responses.
- Understand the historical backdrop for materialist theories of mind, how materialist ideology resists non-materialist alternatives, and how a richer theology of nature can incorporate a non-materialist conception of mind.

COURSE TEXTS

Required

- [CARLZIMM] Carl Zimmer, *Soul Made Flesh: The Discovery of the Brain—and How It Changed the World* (New York: Free Press, 2004).
- [SCHW&BEG] Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Sharon Begley, *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* (New York: Harper, 2003).
- [STEV PINK] Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper, 2007).
- [GOR&DEM] Bruce Gordon and William A. Dembski, eds., *The Nature of Nature: Examining the Role of Naturalism in Science* (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2011).
- [OXFOHAND] Brian McLaughlin, Ansgar Beckermann, and Sven Walter, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[JOHNCOOP] John W. Cooper, *Body, Souls and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000).

Recommended

Mario Beauregard and Denyse O’Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist’s Case of the Existence of the Soul* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).

Michael S. Gazzaniga, *Who’s in Charge? Free Will and the Science of the Brain* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011).

Patrick Grim, ed., *Mind and Consciousness: 5 Questions* (United States: Automatic Press, 2009).

Michael O’Shea, *The Brain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York: Touchstone, 1998).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- (1) Active participation in class discussions — 20 percent.
- (2) 2,000- to 2,500-word critical review along with leading a class discussion based on it — 30 percent. Due at time of presentation. Critical reviews, rather than merely summarize a book, analyze it critically, evaluating its arguments, assessing the degree to which it succeeds and/or fails in meeting its objectives, and exploring how it could have been made better
- (3) 6,000- to 8,000-word research paper — 50 percent. Due last day of class. The paper can be on a topic of your choice, but it must be relevant to this course and argue a thesis. The word count excludes notes and bibliography. The paper needs to follow a consistent style and provide full references.
- (4) 200- to 300-word single-page one-sided executive summary of YOU (with clearly recognizable picture of yourself) — up to 5 percent negative if not turned in. Due by second class meeting.

GRADES

Grades will be determined by the following scale: 100-98 (A+); 97-93 = A; 92-90 (A-); 89-88 (B+); 87-83 (B); 82-80 (B-); 79-78 (C+); 77-73 (C); 72-70 (C-); 69-68 (D+); 67-63 (D); 62-60 (D-); Below 60 = F.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of another's work as one's own. When the professor concludes that a student has plagiarized an assignment, the student will receive the grade of zero for the assignment, and the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will be notified about the incident. The same actions apply to other acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating on examinations (see Ethical Conduct section in SWBTS catalog).

SPECIAL NEEDS

Individuals with documented impairments who may need special circumstances for exams, classroom participation, or assignments should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester in order for special arrangements to be considered.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(1) CARLZIMM, entire book

NOTE: (1) needs to be read before the first class meeting.

- (2) SCHW&BEG, chs. 1-5
- (3) SCHW&BEG, chs. 6-10, epilogue
- (4) STEVPINK, chs. 1-5
- (5) STEVPINK, chs. 6-10
- (6) STEVPINK, chs. 11-end
- (7) GOR&DEM, chs. 30, 31, 37, 38, 39
- (8) GOR&DEM, chs. 32-36
- (9) OXFOHAND, chs. 1-8
- (10) OXFOHAND, chs. 9-18
- (11) OXFOHAND, chs. 31-33, 41-45
- (12) JOHNCOOP, chs. 1-5
- (13) JOHNCOOP, chs. 6-10

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gaymon Bennett, Martinez J. Hewlett, Ted Peters, and Robert John Russell, eds., *The Evolution of Evil* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy, and H. Newton Malony, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998).

David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Keith Chandler, *The Mind Paradigm: A Unified Model of Mental and Physical Reality* (San Jose, Calif.: Authors Choice, 2001).

Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Penguin, 1994).

Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (Orlando, Fl.: Harcourt, 1999).

Eric L. Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007).

John Lyons, *Noam Chomsky: Penguin Modern Masters*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1977).

Angus Menuge, *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

Henry P. Stapp, *Mindful Universe: Quantum Mechanics and the Participating Observer* (Berlin: Springer, 2007).

Jerry Walls, *Heaven: The Logic of Eternal Joy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002).