

Topics in Metaphysics: Mind & Embodiment

Preliminary Syllabus
Version 1.0 (Day 0)

Philosophy 612, Spring 2008

Catalog #xxxx
Wed 2:45-5:35, AS 14
<http://phi612.profron.net>

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Course Description: An advanced seminar in the philosophy of mind, focusing on topics arising from the consideration of mind as essentially embedded in the world. Topics will include intentionality and externalism about meaning, direct perception and ecological psychology, and causal and phenomenological views of the mind as embedded in the environment.

Readings: The actual readings for the seminar will be determined partially on the fly, in a react-and-improvise way. The readings that aren't in books to be bought will be supplied as PDF files on the course EReserves page. As of right now, there are 2 books that I'll commit to spending at least some time on:

- R. McClamrock, *Existential Cognition* (UChicago Press, 1995)
- A. Noe, *Action in Perception* (MIT Press, 2004)

Requirements: Overall, the grade for the course will come from a term paper or two shorter papers (60%), weekly "Thoughts of the Week" (10%), and class participation including approximately two seminar presentations (30%). In more detail, there are four things that count:

- **Short Papers:** Two short papers paper (2000-2500 words, or about 8 old-fashioned pages) will be assigned; one toward the middle of the semester, one toward the end. Everyone is to turn in the first short paper. *Late papers are graded down one full letter grade for every 24 hours or portion thereof they are late.* If you choose to do a second short paper, each of your short papers will count for 30% of your total grade. I'll give out some topic suggestions; if you do a topic other than one of the suggested ones, you should check with me on it first.
- **Long Papers:** Instead of doing a second short paper, you can do a longer final paper (about 4000-5000 words, or about 15 old-fashioned pages), which should normally be a rewrite and expansion of your first short paper. If you do a long paper, your first short paper grade is dropped, and the long paper grade counts for 60% of your total grade. You should meet with me before starting in on your rewrite. If you want to do a long paper on a topic other than the topic of your first short paper, discuss it with me first; I'll probably ask for a first draft well before the due date.
- **Weekly thoughts:** Each week you will be asked to submit "thoughts of the week" (ToWs) as posts to the class discussion board. These ToWs will be responses to some particular question I'll send you ahead of time, and they should run about 200 words or two paragraphs. 2 ToWs will be dropped; the average for the rest of them will count for 10% of your final grade.
- **Seminar presentations and participation:** All students will do approximately two seminar presentations; you'll do more if there's time. A typical presentation will consist in presenting some material for about 20 minutes and running a discussion on that material for another 20 minutes. Along with your class participation, presentations will count for 30% of your course grade.

Course outline, v.0.5: (still very very loose)

- **Week 1:** Mostly organizational meeting, plus a little overview
- **Week 2:** Background: Philosophy of mind, and a little phenomenology
- **Week 3-4:** Qualia, internalism, and the Cartesian theatre
- **Weeks 5-14:** By this time, we'll have worked out a schedule for covering the advanced topics here in more detail, including at least some of the Noe book.