



# PHIL 4352/5354 — ZOMBIES, CONSCIOUSNESS, & KNOWLEDGE

Thursday 4:30-7:20,

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**Course Description:** In *The Conscious Mind*, Dave Chalmers posed a challenge to the dominant functionalist theory of mind – a challenge he called The Hard Problem of Consciousness: “There is no great mystery about how a state might play some causal role,” he wrote. “What is mysterious is why that state should *feel* like something.” To highlight this point, Chalmers asked us to imagine a being that had the same physical, functional design as us, but which lacked phenomenal consciousness (the what-it-is-like part of experience) – a phenomenal zombie. While many cognitive scientists have agreed that such creatures are conceivable, there is a great deal of debate over what remains when consciousness is excluded. What *contribution* does phenomenal experience make to cognition and knowledge?

This class will be a serious attempt to understand “The Hard Problem”, with an emphasis on the role of phenomenology in knowledge. The class will begin by introducing the student to the background theories of the mind-body relationship that generate Chalmers’s discussion. We will then turn to a careful reading of (parts of) Chalmers’s work on the topic. Finally, we will close the semester by considering a variety of philosophical theories that posit an essential role for phenomenology in the acquisition and possession of knowledge as well as critical responses to those proposals.

**Course Objectives:** A significant objective of this course is to provide the students with a genuine sense of philosophy as a living discipline – not the mere study of ideas, but the production of novel contributions to the field. In addition,

**Materials:**

- Smithies, Declan. 2019. *The Epistemic Role of Consciousness*. New York: Oxford
- Course Packet of suggested background readings, available on the course site. Google Scholar is also your friend.

### Requirements and Expectations

This course is an upper division/graduate philosophy course. Students will be expected to have academic skills commensurate with its level including: the ability to read complex primary source material, the ability to write clear, well-constructed critical essays, and the ability to engage in articulate and respectful discourse. In addition, I expect all students to be prepared and attentive in class. This means coming to class having done reading assignments and having thought about

their significance, and while in class being an active listener and contributor. Although I will not take attendance, I do expect you to attend every class meeting. You are responsible for all material and announcements made in class, whether you are present or not. No late assignments will be allowed without a University excuse.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have or suspect you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services located in the Union Bldg East, room 106 (747-5148).

**Evaluation – PHIL 4352:**

- **Article Report 1 (10%)**
- **Article Report 2 (10%)**
- **Article Report 3 (10%)**
- **Critical Essay (50% of total grade):** ~3,000 words
- **Participation (20%)**

**Evaluation – PHIL 5354:**

- **Article Report 1 (10%)**
- **Article Report 2 (10%)**
- **Article Report 3 (10%)**
- **Critical Essay (50% of total grade):** ~5,000 words
- **Participation (20%) - 15 total classes. You must be counted as attending 10 for full credit.**

The grading scale for this class is given below:

A	B	C	D	F
>89.5%	>79.5%	>69.5%	>59.5%	≤59.5%

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a concern for everyone. By joining the UTEP community every student agrees to abide by the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable to another person.

**Cheating**

- Copying from the test paper of another student
- Communicating with another student during a test
- Giving or seeking aid from another student during a test
- Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during tests (i.e. Crib notes, class notes,

- books, etc)
- Substituting for another person to take a test
- Falsifying research data, reports, academic work offered for credit

**Plagiarism**

- Using someone's work in your assignments without the proper citations
- Submitting the same paper or assignment from a different course, without direct permission of instructors

**Collusion**

- Unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments.

**Course Schedule:** This is a schedule of topics for the semester. This material is designed to help you participate better in class discussion and give you direction for research papers. Class discussion will not be based exclusively on the listed readings. In general.

Section	Readings/Topics
Background Essentials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Descriptivism vs. Direct Theory of Reference</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frege, Gottlieb – On sense and reference</li> <li>• Kripke, Saul – <i>Naming and Necessity</i>, Lecture 2</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Type Identity Theory and Multiple Realizability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kripke, Saul – <i>Naming and Necessity</i>, Lecture 3, pages 144-155</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Logical Behaviorism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putnam, Hilary, “Brains and behavior”</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Functionalism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lewis, David – “How to define theoretical terms”</li> <li>• Shoemaker, Sydney – “Some Varieties of Functionalism”</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
The Hard Problem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5. Zombies &amp; The Hard Problem of Consciousness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jackson, Frank, Excerpt from <i>From Metaphysics to Ethics</i></li> <li>• Chalmers, David, Excerpts from <i>The Conscious Mind</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Phenomenology and Epistemology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>6. Epistemic Role of Consciousness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smithies, Declan, The Epistemic Role of Consciousness</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>7. Critical Responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bealer, George, “The self-consciousness argument”</li> <li>• Moffett, Marc, “In defense of non-phenomenal dogmatism”</li> <li>• More TBD time-permitting</li> </ul> </li> </ol>