Topics in History of Philosophy
Relationship of the Mind and Body in Early Modern Philosophy
Philosophy C119
UCLA
Summer session C, 2019

Instructor
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Lectures:

Sections:

Description
In this course, you will learn how Descartes and Spinoza thought about the mind-body relationship. Their approach to the mind–body problem is fascinatingly different from the 20th / 21st century discussion which has focused largely on the problem of qualitative consciousness. In contrast, Descartes and Spinoza struggled with the question of what it is for the mind and body act together. It seems that my body is capable of acting independently of my mind, but also that my mind’s life must be somehow specially related to my body. We are going to investigate their answers to questions including: Is my mind distinct from my body? What is it for my mind to be united to this body and not to other bodies? Can the mind interact with the body? How do emotions and feelings depend on the mind-body relationship? How does mental agency and self-control involve having a body? We will examine two systematic answers to these questions by Descartes and Spinoza. You will improve your skills in interpreting difficult and interesting texts. Finally, you will learn how to work in a philosophical framework which might be very different from the one you are used to.

Readings
Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings
ISBN: 978-0521358125

The Essential Spinoza: Ethics and Related Writings
ISBN: 978-0872208032

Those two you should buy. The rest of the readings will be posted on our CCLE page as PDFs.
Requirements
10% Quizzes
40% Midterm Paper (4 to 6 pages)
50% Final Paper (5 to 7 pages)

Quizzes
There will be 4 quizzes in sections, one per week, which test you on a few questions about the main points in either the assigned reading for that week or the previous lecture. Individual questions are scored on a scale from 0 to 2, interpreted as follows: 0 clearly incorrect, 1 partially correct, 2 clearly correct. These scores are summed up to a point total which determines the grade for the quiz part of the course grade.

Papers
The papers must be submitted via Turnitin through a link posted on the main page of our CCLE course website.

Lateness policy
A late submission of a paper without a prior request for extension or a medical reason can only receive a grade of B+ or lower. Both of the papers must be submitted in order to pass the course.

Academic Integrity
I expect students to be familiar with UCLA Student Code of Conduct. Any suspected case of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean of Students. To prevent that, cite all sources you are using, and indicate clearly to which extent you have collaborated with other students.

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310)825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu.

Schedule
(Changes to readings and lectures are possible)

Week 1

1st
Introduction. Setting up the question and distinguishing it from the 20th/21st Century discussion. Background for Descartes.

2nd
The mind as an agent distinct from the body (Descartes)
Reading: 2nd Meditation, pp. 80–86 (in Selected Philosophical Writings)
Part of 2nd Meditation, pp. 86–95
Part of 4th Meditation, pp. 101–103
Week 2

1st
The body as a self-directed automaton. The metaphysical and explanatory status of the mind-body union. (Descartes)

**Reading:**
Principles of Philosophy, pp. 160–163
6th Meditation, pp. 110–116
Letter to Princess Elizabeth May 21st 1643
Letter to Princess Elizabeth, June 28th 1643
Letter to Chanut, February 1st 1647

2nd
Communication between the mind and body (pain, pleasure, hunger, thirst) The roles of the mental agency and the body in behavior (Descartes)

**Reading:**
6th Meditation, pp. 116–122
Passions of the Soul, Part 1, pp. 218–238

Week 3

1st
Emotions and their origin in the mind–body union (Descartes)

**Reading:**
Passions of the Soul, Part 2 (PDF)
Re-read Part 1

2nd
Review/Catch-up

**Reading:**
Re-read 6th Meditation and Passions of the Soul Part 1 and 2

Week 4

Midterm paper due at 3pm

1st
Elizabeth’s and Spinoza’s critique of Cartesian mind–body union, preview of Spinoza’s philosophy

**Reading:**
Letter to Elizabeth May 21st 1643 (Descartes)
Letter to Elizabeth, June 28th 1643 (Descartes)
Letter to Descartes June 10th 1643 (Elizabeth of Bohemia)
Ethics (Part III Proposition 2, Preface to Part V) (Spinoza)
Principles of Cartesian Philosophy (Part 1, Proposition 21) (Spinoza)

2nd
Mind as a thoroughly cognitive system. Mind-body union as a cognitive union.

**Reading:**
Selections from Ethics:
General background in metaphysics: (Preface to Part 3, 2p3, 2p7)
Part 2: 2p11, 2p12, 2p13,
Part 3: 3p2, 3p7, 3p10, 3p11, 3p12
General Definition of Emotions in Part 3 (p.101 in the Spinoza collection)
**Week 5**

1st  
Body as a dynamic, self-regulative system. Body cognition as the basis of other cognition.  
**Reading:** Selections from *Ethics* (2p13, 2p14, 2p17, 3p2, 3p3, 3p10)

2nd  
Feelings and mental agency as body cognition. (Spinoza)  
**Reading:** Selections from *Ethics* (3p2, 3p7, 3p9, 3p10, 3p11, 3p57, 3p56, 2p48, 2p49)

**Week 6**

1st  
The role of imagination and affects in social life. The possibility of self-regulation  
**Reading:** Selections from *Ethics* (3p53, 3p54, 3p55, 4p52)

2nd  
Review/Catch-up

**Final paper due at 11:59pm**