

PHIL 2522 What am I?

Instructor: YF

Summer 2024

E-mail: yx331@georgetown.edu

Location: TBD

Class Hours: MTWR 1-3:15pm

Course Description

This course pays attention to questions surrounding “the I” (or “the self”) - such as “What am I?”, “Does the self exist?”, “What’s the relation between me and my body?”, “Are there other selves other than me, and how can I know?”, “Are animals, or even AIs, selves like me?”, etc. We will explore approaches to those questions by different schools - the contemporary phenomenologists and philosophers, the cognitive scientists and psychologists, the Buddhists, the modern/early-modern philosophers, and the psychoanalysts. We will also look at some films and TV series in which those questions are embedded.

Required Materials

All course materials are available on Canvas.

Prerequisites

This is a bridge-level philosophy course. Students are required to have taken at least one intro-level philosophy course.

Communication Expectations

This class is discussion-based instead of lecture-based, so everyone is not only welcome but encouraged to talk. Each participant is asked to respect the thoughts and views of others. We should always be learning to understand what others are saying with our best efforts and be open-minded. If you want to persuade another to think in a certain way, try to do so in a way about which you would feel comfortable yourself. Please never interrupt another - if you want to make a quick correction or follow-up, notify me in a quiet way.

Accessibility and Disabilities

Your well-being and success in this course are very important to me, so please feel free to communicate with me about what you think can make this classroom a better place, including but not limited to, e.g., the structure of the course and how each meeting can be designed. If any course content makes you feel uncomfortable or offended, please inform me either directly in class or via email. If you need special accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the course.

Students with disabilities can communicate their needs to the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>) before the beginning of the course. For the most up-to-date policy information, please refer to the Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website.

Sexual Misconduct

Georgetown University and its faculty and staff are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor or staff member in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty or staff member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator and no action will be taken without the student's awareness. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website:

<https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/resourcecenter>.

If you would prefer to speak to someone confidentially, Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources that can provide support and assistance. These resources include: Health Education Services: Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: sarp@georgetown.edu
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): 202.687.6985

Additional resources are included below:

Georgetown Self-Care Resource Guide:

<https://studenthealth.georgetown.edu/health-promotion/self-care/>

Georgetown Wellness Wheel:

<https://studenthealth.georgetown.edu/hoya-wellness-wheel/>

Georgetown Guide to Recognizing Students in Distress:

<https://studentaffairs.georgetown.edu/studentoutreach/facultystaffresources/>

Pregnancy Modifications and Adjustments

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant students. At any point throughout their pregnancy students may request adjust-

ments/modifications based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication or medical need. Students may also request accommodations following labor and delivery based on a complication or medical need.

To request pregnancy modifications, please complete the SCS Pregnancy Modification Request Form:

<https://forms.gle/ZBfASxui7u13A8TU6>

More information about pregnancy modifications can be found on the Title IX Georgetown University Website:

<https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/>

Privacy

All participants should be guaranteed to engage in class discussions freely. Therefore, recording or reporting on the course discussions is not allowed without all participants' consent.

Integrity and Honesty

Don't steal ideas from others. If you are not sure about how to cite your sources properly, please find me.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. The summer schedule is short and intense, but many issues only become clear and intelligible if we discuss them in class, and philosophy is always much more enjoyable if done through dialogue. I understand that life is complicated. So each of you is allowed for **two** unexcused absences as long as you notify me ahead of time. Beyond that, however, further justification will be required, so that we could figure out a plan allowing you to succeed in this course.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments

One shorter paper (1.5k-3k words)

OR

one presentation on one of the supplementary materials (20-30min) (30%)

AND

One longer paper (2.5k-4k words) (40%)

AND

5 discussion posts (one or two paragraphs each) (15%)

Grade

Each of your assignments will be assigned a letter grade and a numeric grade. Your final grade will be the sum of your assignment grades plus a participation grade (15%). The conversion of numeric grades and letter grades is shown in the table below.

Letter grade	Numeric grade
A	93%+
A-	90-93%
B+	87-90%
B	83-87%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-80%
C	73-77%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-70%
D	63-67%
D-	60-63%
F	60-%

Provisional Schedule

(The schedule is tentative and subject to change.)

Theme	Topic	Main materials (Please read them all)	Supplementary materials (Optional)
	Intro	Daniel Dennett: "Where am I?"	Douglas Hofstadter and Daniel Dennett: <i>The Mind's I</i>
The non-material I	The mind-body distinction	Descartes: <i>Meditations On First Philosophy</i>	Patricia Kitcher: <i>The Self</i>
			[Series episode] <i>Black Mirror</i> (s4e6)
	The phenomenology of the self	Barry Dainton: <i>Self</i>	Barry Dainton: <i>The Phenomenal Self</i>
		Daniel Dennett: "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity"	Galen Strawson: "Against Narrativity"
		Galen Strawson: " I am not a story "	Galen Strawson: "The Self and the SESMET"
		[Film] <i>The Fly</i> (1986)	YF: "The Necklace View of the Self"
			YF: "From the Phenomenology of Temporal Experience to the Reality of Time"
			[Film] <i>Infinity Pool</i> (2023)

The embodied I	Embodiment	Catriona Mackenzie: "Personal Identity, Narrative Integration, and Embodiment"	Quassim Cassam: "The Embodied Self"
	Bodily self-consciousness	Manos Tsakiris: " Politics is visceral "	Manos Tsakiris: "The sense of body ownership"
		Sally Davies: " Women's minds matter "	[Short Video] "The Rubber Hand Illusion"
		[Series Episode] <i>Black Mirror</i> (s5e1)	[Series Episode] <i>Black Mirror</i> (s5e1)
			Lenggenhager et al.: "Video Ergo Sum: Manipulating Bodily Self-Consciousness"
			YF: "The Moralistic Approach to Embodiment"
No self	<i>Anatta</i>	Siderits: "Non-Self: Empty Persons" (From <i>Buddhism as Philosophy</i> , 32 – 68)	Douglas Harding: <i>On Having No Head</i>
		David Velleman: "So it goes"	Jonardon Ganeri: <i>Attention, Not Self</i>
			Jay Garfield: <i>Losing Ourselves</i>
			Monima Chadha: <i>Selfless Minds</i>
The Situated Selves	Recognition	Hegel: "Independence and dependence of self-consciousness: Lordship and Bondage" (From <i>PhoS</i>)	Fichte: <i>Foundations of Natural Right</i>
		Lacan: "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function"	J.M. Bernstein: "Recognition and Embodiment (Fichte's Materialism)"
			Terry Pinkard: "Who gets to play recognitional tag?"
	Non-human selves	Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"	Thomas Metzinger: <i>The Ego Tunnel</i>
		Don Ross: " The elephant as a person "	Kate Nicole Hoffman: "Subjective Experience in Explanations of Animal PTSD Behavior"
		Kristin Andrews: " Rats are us "	G.A. Bradshaw: Orcas: "Sense of Self and Moral Evolution"
			YF: "Is Deep Learning Algorithm Echo Chamber at its Purest?"

Syllabus Thankyous

I would love to thank B Huebner, Yizhi Li, Howard Mu and Yiting Tang for their suggestions on the content and design of this syllabus. And my special thanks go to Naixin Zhang for her help with debugging the \LaTeX code from which this file is recompiled.