

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Schedule of Classes**

Philosophy 3450F: Philosophy of Neuroscience



Fall Term 2015

Time: M 2:30-4:30 p.m.; W 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Classroom: TC 201

Instructor: Jackie Sullivan

Office: Stevenson Hall 4151

Office Hours: M&W 1-2 p.m.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

During the past three decades neuroscience has made major strides in advancing our understanding of the brain and nervous system, consciousness, cognition and behavior. Such advances have prompted interest in neuroscience among philosophers of mind and philosophers of science, leading to the creation of two new philosophical research areas: “neurophilosophy” and “philosophy of neuroscience”. Neurophilosophers are interested in questions such as: Are mental states nothing over and above brain states? How does the brain enable subjective and emotional experiences, higher-order consciousness and cognition? What kinds of claims about traditional philosophical issues such as the mind-brain relationship, free will and human morality can be made on the basis of neuroscientific data? Philosophers of neuroscience, in contrast, are concerned with questions like: What is the nature of explanation in neuroscience? What kinds of assumptions inform neuroscientific research? What makes for a good or reliable neuroscientific experiment? What kinds of claims about the mind-brain relationship are supported by neuroscientific data? What is the relationship between different areas of neuroscience?

In this course we will address each of these questions. The course should be of interest to students majoring in philosophy, cognitive science or neuroscience.

TEXTS

A combination of philosophical and scientific (i.e., methodological, research and review papers/chapters) articles extracted from philosophical and scientific journals, books, textbooks, and anthologies will be made available to students as PDF files on OWL.

OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will have a basic understanding of specific aspects of neuroscience and a detailed understanding of the major philosophical issues that arise in philosophy of neuroscience. They will also have gained fundamental training in reading and interpreting seminal works in philosophy of neuroscience as well as the skills requisite to critically evaluate this work and formulate and defend their own arguments on topics that interest them.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Class participation (25%). Includes attendance and active participation in class discussions.
2. Three papers (75%).
 - Paper 1 (15%) (800-1000 words)
 - Paper 2 (25%) (800-1000 words)
 - Paper 3 (30%) (1000-1500 words)

Late papers are penalized at 5% per day, including weekends up to a maximum of 50% penalty. All papers are to be submitted via the “Turn It In” link on the OWL course website.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/proceduresappeals.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.