

730 Philosophy 329 Sect 01 Minds, Machines and Persons

Instructor: Sidney Felder, e-mail: sf30@panix.com

Rutgers The State University of New Jersey, Fall 2021. Tu & Th 5:00-6:20

In this class, we will explore the range of ideas implicit in the following questions. What are the essential features of the mental? What is the relationship between mental states and physical (“brain”) states? Between mind and behavioral and more general causal patterns? What conditions need to be satisfied in order to justify the attribution of thought, belief, consciousness, and personhood to something? What does it mean for something to realize a computational process, and is the classification of something as a machine or exclusively computational process consistent with its identification as a mind or person? Under what conditions, and to what extent, can the artificer determine the properties of her artifact? What characteristics constitute personal identity? What does it mean to be the same person over time?

Weeks 1 and 2 The Nature of the Mental

Rene Descartes	<i>Meditations</i> (Meditations 1 and 2)
Bertrand Russell	<i>The Analysis of Mind</i> (chapters I and IV)

Weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 The “Mind-Body” Problem and “The Problem of Other Minds”

J.J.C. Smart	Sensations and Brain Processes
D.M. Armstrong	The Causal Theory of Mind
Norman Malcolm	Knowledge of Other Minds
A.J. Ayer	The Private Language Argument
P.F. Strawson	Persons
Edward Bellamy	To Whom This May Come

Weeks 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Machines and Thought

Alan Turing	Computing Machinery and Intelligence
John Searle	Minds, Brains and Programs
Samuel Butler	<i>Erewhon</i> (Darwin Among the Machines chs. 23-25)
Olaf Stapledon	<i>Last And First Men</i> (ch.XI, sections 1 and 2)
Isaac Asimov	<i>I, Robot</i> (‘Reason’, ‘Runaround’)
Hilary Putnam	Robots: Machines or Artificially Created Life?

Weeks 11, 12, 13, 14 Personal Identity

H.G. Wells	The Story of the Late Mr. Elvisham
John Locke	<i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> (ch. XXVII Identity and Diversity)
Thomas Reid	Of Memory (chapters 4 and 6)
David Hume	<i>Treatise of Human Nature</i> (Book I, Part IV, Section 6)
Bernard Williams	The Self and the Future
Daniel Dennett	Where Am I?
Derek Parfit	Personal Identity

There will be a take-home exam, to be submitted by e-mail to sf30@panix.com either in PDF or text format before the end of the Finals Period. Final grade will be determined by quality of both written work and class participation.