

PHL 340: Issues in Philosophy of Mind

Live meetings: Mon 3-5pm EST (on Zoom)

Instructor: Daniel Munro

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Office hours: Wed 3pm EST (on Zoom)

TA: Alice Huang

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Course Description

In this course, we'll explore work on *the imagination* in contemporary philosophy of mind. In doing so, we'll also touch on many foundational issues in other areas of philosophy of mind and philosophy more generally, such as philosophy of perception, philosophy of memory, and epistemology.

After being under-studied for some time in contemporary philosophy, there has been a resurgence of interest in the imagination in 21st century philosophy of mind. While there's widespread agreement that much of our conscious life is consumed by imaginative thought, various questions remain controversial: what, exactly, *is* the imagination? Which domains of human cognition involve imagination? And what kinds of epistemic and practical value does the imagination have, if any?

The course will be divided into two halves:

1. **Nature of imagination:** What is the imagination? And how does the imagination relate to other mental states, such as belief, memory, and dreaming?
2. **Epistemic and practical significance:** Questions about the imagination lying at the intersection of philosophy of mind and epistemology, as well as the intersection of philosophy of mind and ethics.

Course Delivery

By Monday of each week of the course, I will post a set of videos and recorded lectures related to the week's readings, which you should plan to watch by Friday of that week. So, for example, videos posted by Monday, July 5th will pertain to course readings for Week 1 of the course, July 5th-9th. To keep up with the pace of the course, you should plan to watch those videos by sometime on or around Friday, July 9th.

All course readings, videos, and assignments will be posted on Quercus in weekly modules (called "Week 1," "Week 2," etc.). Remember that, because of their compressed timeline, summer courses move at a fast pace; to keep up with everything you need to know for the course week-to-week, **make sure to check the appropriate module at the beginning of each week.**

Each Monday, there will be a live class session on Zoom from 3pm-5pm EST. This session will be discussion-based and informed by questions about course content which students submit by the end of each week (see Course Evaluation section below for more detail).

Course Evaluation

Weekly questions

Worth 12% of course grade. By the end of each week, submit a substantive question you have about something from the week's lecture material (via an assignment link in each weekly module, where you'll find more detailed instructions and grading criteria). **Due on Quercus by 11:59pm EST each Saturday of the class period** Six of these in total, worth 2% of your course grade each.

Topical Reflection

Worth 10% of course grade. At some point during the term, find a current event, recent news article, popular science article, film, artwork, etc. that's related to the imagination and raises philosophically interesting questions. Post it on the Quercus discussion board with a 300 word explanation of its relevance to the imagination and why it's philosophically interesting. **Due on Quercus discussion board by August 17**, but you're encouraged to submit it sometime earlier throughout the term.

Short papers

Short paper #1: 500 words, worth 18% of course grade. Will ask you to explain an argument from a course reading (more detailed instructions posted on Quercus before due date). **Due July 19**.

Short paper #2: 1,000 words, worth 25% of course grade. Will ask you to explain an argument from a course reading then raise an original objection to it (more detailed instructions posted on Quercus before due date). **Due Aug 4**.

Term paper or project

The final assignment for the course will be worth 35%. You can choose one of two options for this assignment. **Due Aug 20**.

Option 1: term paper

Complete a term paper of 2,000 words. Will ask you to take a stance on some debate we've covered in the course (more detailed instructions posted on Quercus before due date). To be submitted in Quercus.

Option 2: Public philosophy project

The majority of assignments you complete in university courses will be seen by you plus a TA or instructor, after which no one will ever look at them again. This option will instead allow you to prepare a piece of "public philosophy," philosophical work that is instead intended for consumption by a wider audience, thereby broadening the potential impact of your work in the course. Your project should be based on the topic of your "topical reflection" assignment (see above): it should somehow relate philosophical content about the imagination to some current event, recent news article, popular science article, film, artwork, etc. Otherwise, the exact design of the project is relatively open-ended: I encourage to exercise your creativity in coming up with an idea that personally excites you. Here are some examples of how this could look, though you're by no means limited to these ideas:

- Create a YouTube video or podcast.
- Propose a substantive edit to a Wikipedia article or propose an entirely new Wikipedia article.
- Write a philosophical op-ed or blog post.
- Conduct a philosophically substantive interview with someone whose work is related to course content (philosopher, academic, artist, journalist, etc.).

- Utilize another online medium or social media platform (Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, etc.), perhaps by designing some way to engage non-course participants in philosophical activity.

If you'd like to take advantage of this option, you should **email me by August 6th with a short description of your project idea**. As needed, I'll work with you to make sure the project is substantive enough to satisfy the assignment criteria while feasible to complete without taking up significantly more time and effort than a term paper would (but note that the open-endedness of this project may nevertheless result in slightly more work than a term paper). Once project details are figured out, I'll also make it clear exactly how your project will be submitted and evaluated (since this may vary a bit by student).

Reading Schedule

All readings will be posted on Quercus. It's recommended that you read them in the order they appear below. Some students find it more effective to do course readings prior to watching lectures while some prefer to do readings after. Lecture content will not assume prior familiarity with course readings, so you can choose which option is most effective for your learning.

Reading list subject to slight modifications, with advanced notice, throughout the term.

Part 1: Nature of Imagination

Week 1 (July 5th-9th): What is the imagination? Part I

- Amy Kind, "Putting the Image Back in Imagination"
- Neil Van Leeuwen, "The Meanings of 'Imagine' Part I: Constructive Imagination"

Week 2 (July 12th-16th): What is the imagination? Part II

- Gregory Currie and Ian Ravenscroft, *Recreative Minds* (excerpts)
- Margherita Arcangeli, "The Two Faces of Mental Imagery"
- Peter Langland-Hassan, *Explaining Imagination* (excerpts)

Week 3 (July 19th-23rd): Imagination's relations to other mental states

- Nevil Van Leeuwen, "The Meanings of 'Imagine' Part II: Attitude and Action"
- Dorothea Debus, "Mental Time Travel"
- Jonathan Ichikawa, "Dreaming and Imagination"

Part 2: Epistemic and Practical Significance

Week 4 (July 26th-30th): Epistemology Part I: optimistic views

- Magdalena Balcerak Jackson, "Justification by Imagination"
- Amy Kind, "How Imagination Gives Rise to Knowledge"
- Fabian Dorsch, "Knowledge by Imagination"

Week 5 (August 2nd-6th): Epistemology Part II: skeptical views

- Shannon Spaulding, "Imagination through Knowledge"

- Jonathan Egeland, “Imagination cannot Justify Empirical Belief”

Week 6 (August 9th-13th): Practical and social dimensions

- James Young, “Literary Fiction and the Cultivation of Virtue”
- Ema Sullivan-Bissett, “Biased by our Imaginings”

Other Course Business

Course-related communications

All emails to Daniel or Alice should include “PHL 340” in the subject line and be sent from a UofT email address. Emails which do not conform to below guidelines for course-related communications may not receive a response. You should expect to receive a reply to all other emails within 48 hours (so try not to send questions about assignments less than 48 hours before due dates). If you don’t hear back by then, send a follow up.

When to email Alice:

- Prior to paper due dates with **brief** clarificatory questions that can be answered in a few sentences and which are not already answered on assignment sheets or in the syllabus.
- After a graded paper is returned to you with **brief** questions about grading that can be answered in a few sentences (e.g., asking for brief clarification about 1 or 2 comments you received).

When to email Daniel:

- With questions regarding non-philosophical course business which are not already answered on assignment sheets or in the syllabus.
- To request extensions on assignments (see “late and missed work” below for guidelines).
- With more substantive questions or requests about assignments that have already been graded, including more detailed concerns about comments you’ve received on a paper and requests to have assignments re-graded. Re-grade requests must be accompanied by a valid explanation of why you think a re-grade is warranted. (Note: ‘I need a better grade in this course to [bring up my average/get into a program/apply to grad school]’ is not an example of a valid explanation).

When to visit Daniel’s office hours instead of emailing:

- To ask any questions you prefer not to ask over email.
- To discuss philosophical issues and questions arising from course material.
- Prior to due dates to ask more substantive questions about assignments.

Late and missed work

Late papers will be assessed a penalty of 1/3 letter grade per day. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from completing a paper on time, please get in touch as far in advance as possible to make alternative arrangements. Missed weekly questions will receive a 0 unless you get in touch about extenuating circumstances; in that case, your completed assignments will be weighted to offset the missed one.

Turnitin

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the [Turnitin.com web site](#). Use of Turnitin.com is optional, but please email me well before the due date of an assignment if you'd like to make alternative submission arrangements.

Accessibility and accommodations

If you have any disability or health related concerns that require accommodation, please get in touch as soon as possible to figure out how we can best make this course a fruitful learning experience for you. Please also get in touch with [Accessibility Services](#).

If you require accommodation for course conflicts with religious holidays, please also get in touch as soon as possible to make arrangements.

You may also be interested in resources for [mental health support](#), in the [philosophy essay clinic](#) if you're looking for help with philosophical writing, or in UofT's [English language learning supports](#).

Academic integrity

It's your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty. If you're feeling overwhelmed with coursework, worried about meeting a deadline, or having trouble understanding what's expected of you on an assignment, please get in touch with me instead of resorting to academic dishonesty. For information about academic integrity at UofT, visit [the University's academic integrity page](#).