

# Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition - Video course

## COURSE OUTLINE

We human beings are minded beings with several intrinsic features such as rationality, feelings, intentionality, subjectivity, freedom, etc. which make this conscious life significant.

It is philosophically essential to reflect on these human features and also reflect on other creatures and things that share the world with us. They also display intelligence and consciousness in their behaviour.

This course analyses how human mind is unique in comparison to chimpanzees or robots? Can mind be completely explained in scientific terms?

The contemporary issues in philosophy of mind and cognition focus on these questions with reference to the ontological, epistemological and ethical dimensions of human life.

It shows how traditional problems like dualism, reductionism and determinism have taken a new turn in the philosophical discourse of theorization of mind and cognition.

The structure of this course is interdisciplinary in nature. It discusses the current issues in cognitive science, artificial intelligence and consciousness.

## COURSE DETAIL

| Module | Topics and Content  | No. of lectures |
|--------|---|-----------------|
| 1      | <b>Chapter One: Introduction<br/>The Transcendent Mind:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revising the traditional notion of Consciousness.</li> <li>2. The nature of soul in Plato and Aristotle.</li> <li>3. Cartesian Dualism: <i>res cogitans</i> vs. <i>res extensa</i>, <i>Cogito</i> - the thinking self.</li> <li>4. Immaterialism: Idealism, Parallelism.</li> </ol> | 6               |
| 2      | <b>Chapter Two: A Materialistic Conception of Mind.</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Behaviourism: Methodological Behaviourism and Philosophical Behaviourism;</li> <li>2. Ryle's Category Mistake.</li> <li>3. Mind-Body Identity theory : Sensations and Brain Processes.</li> <li>4. Functionalism: the nature of mental events, Brains and Behaviour.</li> </ol>         | 6               |
| 3      | <b>Chapter Three: Minds and Machines</b>  | 10              |



# NPTEL

<http://nptel.iitm.ac.in>

## Humanities and Social Sciences

### Additional Reading:

#### Journal articles and book chapters:

1. Rene Descartes, "Minds and Bodies as distinct Substances", (edited extracts from Meditations II and VI) in *Philosophy of Mind: A guide and Anthology*, ed. John Heil, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004.
2. A. M. Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," *Mind*, 1950.
3. Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 83, 1974.
4. Paul Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism and Propositional Attitude" *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 78, 1981.
5. Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 32, 1982.
6. Hilary Putnam, "Brains in a Vat", *Reason, Truth and History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.
7. Collin McGinn, "Can we Solve the Mind-Body Problem," *Mind*, Vol. 98, 1989.
8. Tyler Burge, "Individualism and Self-Knowledge," *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 85, 1988.
9. Donald Davidson, "Mental Events", in *Philosophy of Mind: A guide and Anthology*, ed. John Heil, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004.

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|--------------|---|-----------|
|              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Functionalism revisited</li> <li>2. Computationalism: Can Computer Think?</li> <li>3. Dennett's Multiple Draft Model</li> <li>4. Chomsky and Fodor: The Language of Mind</li> <li>5. Connectionism and Folk-psychology,</li> <li>6. Cognitive Psychology,</li> <li>7. Eliminative Materialism,</li> <li>8. Artificial Intelligence</li> </ol> |           |
| 4            | <b>Chapter Four: Rediscovering Consciousness</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biological Naturalism: locating the mind in nature</li> <li>2. The structure of experience: the traditional problem revisited.</li> <li>3. Intentionality: Phenomenological or Naturalistic</li> <li>4. Phenomenal Consciousness: Qualia and Quining Qualia</li> </ol>                       | 6         |
| 5            | <b>Chapter Five: Language, Representation and Meaning</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language of the Mind</li> <li>2. Representation: Mental and Semantic</li> <li>3. Intention Based Semantics</li> </ol>   | 6         |
| 6            | <b>Chapter Six: The Non-computational/non-mechanical Mind</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cartesian theory of mind Revisited,</li> <li>2. Emergentism and Supervenience: Addressing the notion of Parallelism.</li> <li>3. Subjectivity</li> <li>4. Argument against Private Sensation and Thought</li> </ol>   | 4         |
| 7            | <b>Chapter Seven: Consciousness, Experience and Values</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Identity</li> <li>2. Free-will and Moral Agency</li> <li>3. Creativity: Human Vs Mechanical</li> </ol>  | 4         |
| <b>Total</b> |   | <b>42</b> |

10. Rudi Krejci, "Re-Emergence of the concept of Consciousness in Twentieth Century Science and Philosophy", *The Proceedings of 9th International Wittgenstein Symposium*, Vienna, 1984.

**Hyperlinks:**

<http://consc.net/online>

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**References:**

1. Chalmers, David. J., *The Conscious Mind*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996.

2. Chomsky, N., *Language and Mind*, The MIT Press, Mass., 2006.
3. Dennett, D. C., *Consciousness Explained*, Penguin Books, New York and London, 1991.
4. Fodor, J. A., *Representations: Philosophical Essay on the Foundation of Cognitive Science*, The Harvester University Press, Sussex, 1981.
5. Haugeland, John C., *Artificial Intelligence: The Very Idea*, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1985,
6. Searle, John, R., *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1994.
7. Stainton, Robert J., *Contemporary Debates in Cognitive Science*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Mass., 2006.