Course Description:

This course will be concerned, broadly, with subjects of consciousness and the first-person way of representing or thinking about them. What makes something a first person content, as opposed to a content of some other kind? What is the nature of the subjects that are represented in this distinctive first person way? I aim to develop some new answers to these questions, and to consider their bearing on issues in the philosophy of mind, metaphysics, and epistemology. The answers to be developed cast some historic positions in an unfamiliar light, and I will apply the conclusions for which I will be arguing to the views of Descartes, Hume, Kant, and several twentieth-century thinkers, including Anscombe, Evans, Perry, Shoemaker, Peter Strawson, Sartre, Williams and Wittgenstein. I go on to develop accounts of the varieties of self-consciousness, amongst which I develop notions of perspectival self-consciousness, reflective self-consciousness, and interpersonal self-consciousness, and discuss their interrelations, and their significance for epistemology and for various topics in the philosophy of mind, including the emotions and interpersonal relations.

These issues cannot be discussed without drawing on theories of modes of presentation, of sense-reference relations, of reference and norms of justification. Some background introductory material on these various topics will be presented as and when needed; so the course can also serve as an introduction to some of these wider issues.

Bibliography:

Primitive Self-Representation


Further Reading:


R. Brandom, Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1994), Chapter 8, section V.2


A Positive Conception of Subjects


T. Nagel, 'What is it like to be a bat?', *Philosophical Review* 83 (1974) 435-50


L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 5.632-5.641

Comparisons: Contemporary Differences, Historical Affinities


J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book II Chapter XXVII


The First Person and its Nonconceptual Parent


Can the De Se be Explained in Other Terms?


F. Recanati, contribution to issue 'Le moi, le soi, the self', ed. B. Longuencesse, issue 4 (2010) of the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*

F. Recanati, 'De re and de se', *dialectica* 63 (2009) 249-269
R. Stalnaker, Ch. 3 'Locating Ourselves in the World', in *Our Knowledge of the Internal World* (Oxford: OUP, 2008)

Further Background Reading:


Descartes Defended


R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations*, especially Meditation Two and Second Set of Replies


Two Paralogisms: A Positive Alternative

I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, chapter 'The Paralogisms of Pure Reason'


P. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1966), section titled "Soul"
Further Reading:


Strawson's Neo-Kantian Conception


Further Reading:


Perspectival Self-Consciousness


J-P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* tr. H. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), esp. Part III, Chapter One, Section IV 'The Look'

S. Shoemaker, 'Embodiment and Behavior', repr. in his *Identity, Cause and Mind*

Reflective Self-Consciousness


C. Peacocke, "Relation-Based Thought, Objectivity, and Disagreement" *dialectica* 64 (2010) 35-56


S. Shoemaker, *The First Person Perspective and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Royce Lectures therein


A Response to Gopnik and Theory-Theory Conceptions

P. Bloom and T. German, 'Two reasons to abandon the false belief task as a test of theory of mind', *Cognition* 77 (2000) B25-B31

A. Gopnik, 'How we know our minds: The illusion of first-person knowledge of intentionality' *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16 (1993) 1-14


Interpersonal Self-Consciousness


Further Reading:

