

Professor Christopher Peacocke
Spring 2012

PHILG9567
Philosophy of Mind

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.

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