

University Name | Semester Year

COURSE CODE

Mind and Action: from the Individual to the Collective

Day Time | Classroom

INSTRUCTOR:

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Office | Office Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This an upper division/MA course. We will discuss theories about individual and group actions. The course is divided into two modules. In the first module, we cover fundamental theories about individual actions. We begin by distinguishing intentional from non-intentional actions. Then we will learn two of the main theories about what makes an action intentional: Davidson's and Anscombe's theories.

In the second module, we will cover readings about shared agency. We will talk about the distinction between actions of individuals that together constitute a shared action from those that are mere aggregation of actions, the nature of shared or group intentions, participatory intentions, among other related concepts. Lastly, we will read about a new topic on group agency which is agency associated and motivated by our social identities, such as when one behave in certain way because she identifies herself as a women, queer, Latina, etc. In particular, we will discuss how beliefs about social identities have to be like to motivate agents to perform certain actions. This part of the course will be based on Lea Saljé's recent paper.

Readings for this course include classical texts by Descartes, Hume, Davidson, Anscombe, Wittgenstein, John Perry, as well as recent work by Herman Cappelen and Josh Dever, Bratman, Sara Chant, Elisabeth Pacherie, Kirk Ludwig, among others.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	STUDENT OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage critically with selected important debates, positions, and methods in Western philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain debates and positions clearly and precisely in written and oral form. • Construct thought experiments and arguments against hypotheses presented in class.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand basic concepts and distinctions in the readings and theories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply theories and concepts in new contexts. • Use introduced concepts and distinctions in your own arguments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop original ideas on selected topics in philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically engage with positions and arguments put forth in readings. • Write and present clear, precise, and moderately original argument on self-chosen topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 30% Weekly Group Assignments
- 30% Midterm Paper – Individual Agency
- 30% Final Paper – Group Agency
- 10% Participation

Weekly Group Assignments – 30%

Students will be divided into groups of 3-4 to work on a worksheet with 3-4 questions about the reading of the week. Some worksheets will be done in-class and some will be take-home. There will be about 8-9 groups assignments throughout the course. The highest 6 grades will count towards the final grade. Each assignment is worth 5%. **Important!** Only students who show up for the class on the day that the groups are sorted out are eligible for this activity – see Course Schedule. Students not in class will not be able to do the worksheet for that week.

Midterm Paper – Individual Agency

Midterm Paper (5–7 pages) on a self-chosen topic (pending Instructor approval) is due on week 7

Final Paper – Group Agency

Final Paper (10 pages max.) on a self-chosen topic (pending Instructor approval) is due on Exam Week.

Participation

Participation grade will be based on student's engagement in lecture and participation on in class activities throughout the course. Attendance will be taken but do not expect a perfect grade merely for being an organic body.

NOTE: Things change – the Fates are fickle. Information found on this syllabus is subject to revision as we progress through the quarter: Readings and content may be added (or cut) depending on our rate of progress, and it may be necessary to amend the due date of the assignments. Revisions will be announced in lecture and posted online. It is each student's responsibility to keep informed of any changes.

MATERIALS

All readings will be available on online.
Students are expected to do the readings *before* lecture.

COURSE READINGS

Introduction (1 session)

- Introduction.
- Thought Experiments, “AITA, that if Jurassic Park were real, I would tell my husband that he cannot go.” https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/chzjl5/aita_that_if_jurassic_park_were_real_i_would_tell/.

WEEKS 1 – 5: Individual Agency (8 sessions)

- Intentional vs. Non Intentional
 - Stout, R. “Action”, Introduction, Chapter 1.
- Intentional/Descriptive Model
 - Anscombe, G. “Intention”.
 - Stout, R. “Action”, Chapter 2.
- The Causal Theory
 - Davidson, D. *Essays on Actions and Events*, selected essays.
 - Stout, R. “Action”, Chapter 3.

WEEK 5 - 11: Group Agency (13 sessions)

- Bratman, M. “Shared Cooperative Activity”.
- Tuomela, R. & Miller, K. “We-Intentions”.
- Ludwig, K. *From Individual to Plural Agency*, selected excerpts.
- Chant, S.R. “Unintentional Collective Action”.
- Pacherie, E. “Is collective intentionality really primitive?”.
- Bratman, M. “Shared Agency: Replies to Ludwig, Pacherie, Petersson, Roth, and Smith”.

WEEK 12 - 14: Social Identity & Agency (6 sessions)

- Perry, J. “The Essential Indexical”.
- Lewis, D. “Attitudes *de dicto* and *de se*”.
- Capellen, H. & Dever, J. *The Inessential Indexical*, chapter 3.
- Salje, L. “The Essential Non-Indexical”.