Rethinking the Mind

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MWF 11:50 – 1:05

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Office hours: MWF 3:00 – 4:00 and by appointment, except on Thursdays (unless there is an emergency)
Moodle: Find the course at https://moodle.kzoo.edu/ and log on
Email: I’ll send messages to class by your K email address
Readings and links to assigned videos posted on Moodle

Description:
This interdisciplinary, philosophy-based course – a pilot sophomore seminar – connects philosophy of mind with cutting-edge empirical work. The course is utterly contemporary: virtually all readings have been published within the last five years.

Pioneering research and writing in areas such as neuroscience, cognitive science, evolutionary biology, psychology, and “experimental philosophy” motivate a changing approach to minds. This innovative work will be joined to philosophical thinking to illuminate subjects like rationality, free will, religion, ethics, the nature of minds and selves, and knowledge of our own and others’ minds. Implications extend to controversial problems in artificial intelligence, punishment and justice, theism and atheism, treatment of mental disorders, and "neuroenhancement".

Our study will include implications of the "new mind" in a global context. Advances in philosophy and science of the mind can give us insight into different cultures’ approaches to minds and the mental. They can also help us think about issues in race, gender, sexuality, violence, tolerance, and identity. You are embarking on a voyage into a complex world, which calls for understanding of your own and others’ religious beliefs, self-identity, character and personality, prejudice and antagonism, empathy and compassion. That complex world, along with our understanding of it, is changing at lightning speed, which makes rethinking the mind in advance imperative.

Grade structure:
- Participation: Moodle forum posts, in-class participation, demonstrated preparedness: 30%
- First creative project: 10%
- Second creative project and project presentation: 15%
- Two oral exams: 20% each
- Guided class session: 5%

Week 1: Introduction
  Rethinking the Social Mind
Week 2: Rethinking the Social Mind
Week 3: Rethinking the Social Mind
Week 4: Rethinking the Evolved Mind
  Creative projects on “Rethinking the Social Mind” due
Week 5: Rethinking the Evolved Mind
Week 6: Rethinking the Evolved Mind
Week 7: Rethinking the Religious Mind
       Oral exams on Social Mind and Evolved Mind
Week 8: Rethinking the Future of Minds
       (2 days – DoGL placeholder)
Week 9: Rethinking the Future of Minds
       (2 days – Memorial Day holiday)
Week 10: Final creative project presentations

Exam week:
MTW: Oral exams on Religious Mind and Future of Minds
Thurs: Final creative projects due