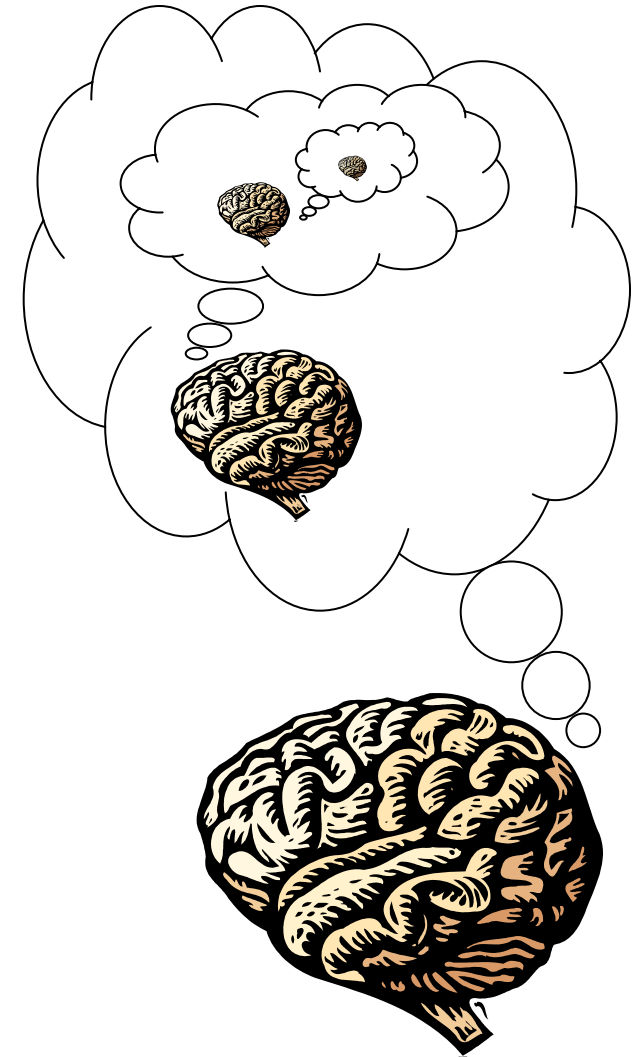


puzzles of the mind and brain

Our minds are very important to us. We use our minds for thinking, for choosing, and for experiencing the world. Our minds house our beliefs and desires, hopes and fears, and memories and regrets. They house our feelings of pain and pleasure, love and hate, joy and sadness. But our minds are not simple containers. We use them for thinking about the world and for figuring things out. Our minds play an active role in turning the stimulation of our sensory nerves into visual, auditory, and tactile experiences. It is no surprise, then, that many philosophers would say that your mind is *who you really are*.

Our minds also present a number of interesting problems for philosophy and the sciences. Science has shown in great detail how mental events—from infants learning to elders losing their memories to Alzheimer's disease—depend on what happens in the brain. Thus arises one of the most difficult problems for the philosophy of mind: What is the relationship between the mind and the physical brain? More precisely, are thought and feeling simply things that the brain does, just as cleaning the blood is something the kidneys do? Is the mind identical with the brain, or is it even a physical thing at all? If science tells us that the mind is the brain, then science tells us something very surprising indeed. After all, the brain is a purely physical thing, but how could a purely physical thing hate Brussels sprouts, understand the Theory of Relativity, or have an opinion about hip hop?

The mind also poses another set of fascinating puzzles. We use our minds to engage actively with the outside world, but there are better and worse ways of doing so. At our best, we do and think what is rational. At our worst, we are irrational. But what is the nature of rationality in thought and action? What is the difference between what it is rational to believe or do and what it is irrational to believe or do? In connection with these questions, further questions concerning the nature of knowledge also arise. A certain amount of knowledge might be necessary for rationality, but what does it take to really know something? Do we really know anything at all?



Mind and Brain Concentration

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University of Alabama
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<http://www.as.ua.edu/philos/programs/mind.php>

Mind and Brain

a specialized minor in philosophy
<http://www.as.ua.edu/philos/programs/mind.php>

the program

who should consider the mind and brain concentration?

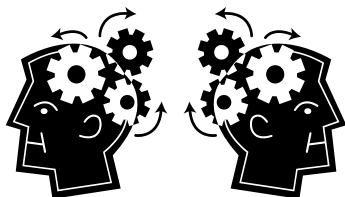
The Mind and Brain Concentration is designed for students who are interested in philosophical questions about thought, consciousness, knowledge, and the relationship between the mind and the physical world. Students in **psychology, communication, English, computer science and anthropology** will find that the Mind and Brain concentration makes philosophy an attractive minor or second major.

what are the mind and brain courses?

The concentration comprises the following courses, all of which are offered regularly:

PHL 101 or PHL 103	Introduction to Deductive Logic
PHL 252	Mind and Nature
PHL 380	Language, Mind and Reality
PHL 380	Knowledge, Error and Ignorance
PHL 354	Philosophy of Mind
PHL 380	Philosophy of Cognitive Science

Students who take these courses will have completed the requirements for a *minor in philosophy*.



what are the mind and brain courses about?

- **Introduction to Deductive Logic.**
This course surveys formal techniques of deductive logic, including symbolizing the logical forms of sentences, constructing proofs, and evaluating arguments for validity.
- **Mind and Nature**
This course surveys basic issues and concepts in the philosophy of mind and the theory of knowledge. Topics include the mind/body problem, the nature of thought and consciousness, and the nature and possibility of knowledge.
- **Philosophy of Mind**
This course examines central topics in the philosophy of mind. These include the mind/body problem, the nature of consciousness, the nature of mental representations, and the relationship between consciousness and representation.
- **Knowledge, Error and Ignorance**
This course explores some key issues in epistemology, the philosophical study of knowledge. Topics include the nature of knowledge, the nature of justified belief, the problem of skepticism, and the role of science in answering philosophical questions.
- **Language, Mind and Reality**
This course examines the nature of meaning and its connection to metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind. Central topics include theories of meaning and possibility, as well as their implications for the mind/body problem.
- **Philosophy of Cognitive Science**
This course examines the philosophical implications of recent scientific discoveries about the mind and brain, as well as special philosophical problems posed by cognitive science. Key issues include artificial intelligence, the nature of mental representations, and the role of the external world in helping us think.

what if I want to be a philosophy major?

Students who take the courses in the Mind and Brain concentration can complete a **major in philosophy** by taking PHL 201, PHL 251 and any two other philosophy courses.

additional information

For more information about the Mind and Brain concentration, contact any of these people.

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Contact Dr. Richards or Dr. Hestevold for information about majoring or minoring in philosophy.

