

Graduate Course – Dept. of Philosophy – University of São Paulo

2nd semester, 2019

Philosophy and History of MindBrain Science

(Filosofia e História da Ciência do Mentencéfalo)

(in English)

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The next large-scale revolution in science might take place within what is sometimes called “MindBrain science”, encompassing approaches from neuroscience, cognitive science, and philosophy of mind. What is the nature of consciousness and how does it arise in the brain? Are the immediate brain correlates of consciousness located somewhere in the cortex or in subcortical regions, or does consciousness emerge globally? What clues are given by altered states of consciousness? The course will start with an introduction to the philosophy of mind, emphasizing thought-experiments and definitions, from a materialist perspective. Twentieth-century neuroscience will be explored historically, and contemporary views from neuroscientists and neurophilosophers will be studied.

- (1) Introduction. Can machines have consciousness? Functionalism. Nineteenth century physiology and British dualism.
- (2) Materialism x spiritualism. Parallelism & supervenience. Rise and fall of psychophysical parallelism in Germany.
- (3) The doctrine of primary properties. Qualia and inverted spectra. Penfield: centrencephalic hypothesis.
- (4) The hard problem and the explanatory gap. Qualia and Mary’s room thought experiment. Molyneux’s problem. Du Bois-Reymond’s unsolvable problems.
- (5) Mind-brain identity theory. Köhler’s psychophysical isomorphism.
- (6) Panpsychism & panprotopsychism. Rise and fall of research on the reticular formation.
- (7) Intentionality. Sperry: split-brain experiments. The rise of cognitive science.
- (8) Reduction x emergence. The neural correlates of consciousness (Koch, etc.)
- (9) Libet: antedating. Neuroscience of time perception.
- (10) Epiphenomenism. Freedom of action and of will. Libet’s experiments on free-will.
- (11) Brenda Milner and memory.
- (12) Dreams: Hobson’s research program.

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