Conscious experience is at once both completely familiar and utterly mysterious: how is it that electrical activity in a lump of grey matter – the brain – gives rise to the Technicolor phenomenology of our conscious experience? If human beings are just biological machines, then how is possible that we have a subjective point of view on the world? Why are we not just mindless robots, that produce behavior in light of stimulations from the environment, but lack any inner awareness or consciousness? In this class we will read, and bring together in conversation, cutting edge work from philosophy, psychology, and the neurosciences on the nature of consciousness.

Instructor Details

william.ratoff@yale.edu

Department of Philosophy
Yale University
344 College Street
New Haven, CT, 06511

Locations, Times, and Format

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday 1pm-4.15pm
Location: TBA

Office Hours: TBA
Location: Bass Library Foyer

Format: Each class will begin with the brief introductory lecture by the instructor. Then there will be a seminar style discussion until the last half hour or so of class. Normally, we will spend the last half hour of class discussing how to research, plan, and write your assigned papers.

Prerequisites

None. This class will presuppose no background in philosophy or cognitive science.

Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>July 11th, during class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>due July 15th at 5 pm in my inbox</td>
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The first paper will be 5 pages and a response to a prompt that I distribute. It will ask you to evaluate an argument and give one objection to the argument and then give a reply to that objection.

The second paper will be 7-10 pages. In this paper, you will be asked to evaluate an argument, or theory, and give an objection to that argument or theory, a reply, and a second objection (either to the initial argument or theory, or to the reply).

You will get lots of help from me, both in class and in office hours, in planning and writing your papers so don’t worry too much about all this now!

**Attendance and Academic Integrity**

Attendance is mandatory. No unexcused absences are allowed. All ideas and experimental findings reported in your papers must be appropriately cited. I will help you make sure that your paper is cited properly.

**Textbook and Readings**


We will be reading four chapters from Chalmers’ book. It will therefore serve as the unofficial textbook for the course. I will make sure it is available for purchase from the Yale Bookstore. There should also be a PDF version of it available online. The other readings will also be made available to you online.

**Part 1: The Philosophy of Consciousness**

**First Class: Two Concepts of Consciousness?**


**Second Class: Supervenience and Explanation**


**Third Class: The Hard Problem of Consciousness**


**Fourth Class: Dualism**


**Fifth Class: Physicalism**

*Part 2: The Cognitive Science of Consciousness*

**Sixth Class: The Global Workspace Theory of Consciousness**


**Seventh Class: Global Workspace Part 2**


**Eighth Class: Higher-Order Thought Theories of Consciousness**


**Ninth Class: Against Higher-Order Thought Theories**


**Tenth Class: Consciousness and Information**
