

Course	PHIL60131
Title	Issues In The Philosophy of Mind and Epistemology: Perception
Tutor	Dr Phil Meadows

Course Content

Part of our common-sense picture of the world is that, as conscious minded creatures, we are capable of knowing about, liking, wanting, etc., objects that are part of a mind-independent reality. But these distinctive abilities depend on our capacity to perceive things: perception is the means by which our minds first come into contact with material objects in the world. In this course we will explore the nature of this perceptual contact. Is it direct or indirect? Does it involve standing in a relation to an object or not? Does the resulting picture of perception vindicate our common-sense view that we can have knowledge of mind-independent objects?

The course will consider a range of contemporary approaches to perception that aim to give an account of our awareness of the world, while also accommodating perceptual errors that can result from illusions or hallucinations. The theories that may be covered include the sense datum, adverbial, intentionalist and disjunctivist accounts. The course will be largely based on papers and book chapters.

Preliminary Reading

Tim Crane (ed) *The Contents of Experience* (Cambridge UP, 1992)

* William Fish *Philosophy of Perception: A Contemporary Introduction* (Routledge, 2010)

* David Smith *The Problem of Perception* (Harvard UP, 2001)

Alva Noe and Evan Thompson (eds) *Vision and Mind: Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception* (MIT Press, 2002)

Michael Tye *Ten Problems of Consciousness* (MIT Press, 1995)

* A good introductory text.

Information

Assessment

5000 word essay (100%)

Teaching Methods

1 x 1-hour introductory lecture, 7 x 2-hour seminars

Aims:

- To introduce students to an advanced topic in the philosophy of perception.
- To introduce students to the problems associated with explaining how perception affords knowledge of a mind-independent reality.
- To introduce students to recent 'direct realist' theories of perception.
- To introduce students to the seminal and recent literature in this area.
- To equip students with the advanced research skills needed for the MRes dissertation and doctoral research.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this unit successful students will be able to demonstrate:

- A broad knowledge of seminal and recent literature in the philosophy of perception.
- An understanding of the problems associated with explaining how perception affords knowledge of a mind-independent reality.
- A detailed understanding of recent 'direct realist' theories of perception.
- The ability to conduct independent research, under supervision by an expert supervisor.
- The ability to understand, critically assess, and respond to advanced philosophical writing.

Key Transferable Skills:

On successful completion of this course unit, participants should have developed:

- Problem solving skills.
- Analytic and critical skills.
- The ability to argue from evidence.
- The ability to communicate ideas effectively.
- The ability to set appropriate goals and to work independently and/or cooperatively.