

**Philosophy of Animal Minds**  
**Kent State University, Spring 2025**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30-6:45**  
**Bowman Hall, Room 315**

**Course number: PHIL60191**  
**Instructor: David Pereplyotchik**

**dpereply@kent.edu**  
**917.667.5838**

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## **Course Texts**

Daniel Dennett, *Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness*  
Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition*  
Robert Lurz (ed.), *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*  
Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*  
Andrews and Beck (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Animal Minds*

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## **Course Description**

Philosophy of mind has generally been pursued by focusing on just one kind of mind — the human variety. There is even debate about whether other creatures have minds of their own. But, for those who accept that there are many kinds of minds, a large number of further issues open up, including what conceptual categories non-human minds employ, what communicative practices are involved in their lives, and whether they are able to attribute mental states to others, or even to themselves. Traditional philosophical questions about “the self”, consciousness, free will and moral responsibility are not far behind. These questions have clear implications for ethics and politics, but they are also fascinating in their own right. We explore them throughout the semester. In the final section, we explore our own animal nature and ask about what moral theory most naturally accommodates the natural facts about us.

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## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### Reading

Readings will be assigned for every class session. Some are required, while others are optional. I encourage everyone to read as much as time and interest permit.

I have selected the readings with an eye toward keeping them manageable, but please understand that the readings are often challenging and require serious effort. You will be expected to complete all readings for a class session *before* that session, so please prepare accordingly. Remember that philosophical writing often requires several readings before you fully grasp its meaning, and feel confident to evaluate it critically.

Six micro papers (12% each, for a total of 72% of the final grade)

You will be asked to submit 6 “micro” papers, each 1500 words minimum. The primary purpose of these assignments is make sure we’re all on the same page about what’s in the readings, but the micro papers can/should also serve as a venue for your critical responses to the readings. The micro papers will be graded on a 12-point scale. The only way to receive 0 points is to not submit a paper, or to submit one that is below the minimum word-count requirement (1500

words of content). A grade of 10 can only be awarded if the paper has critical responses to the texts. You will receive comments on some (but not all) of your micro papers. Those who include critical commentary will be given priority.

### Final Macro Essay (18% of the final grade)

The required minimum is 2500 words [~8 pages] and a reasonable maximum would be 3000 words [~10 pages]. You are encouraged to use a broad range of sources in preparing your paper—i.e., readings that go beyond the syllabus. Everyone should consult with me prior to writing their papers.

I will provide instructions for each paper, and we will take some class time to go over the requirements for philosophical essays, with a focus on constructing an effective thesis statement and organizing your ideas into a cogent argument.

In general, philosophical writing should be clear, focused, persuasive, and attentive to every detail. Please avoid using jargon and ‘-isms’; wherever possible and express your ideas in commonsense terms, though always with an eye for academic standards of diction. The biggest factor in determining the grade on a philosophical paper is the strength of the overall argument, and the author’s ability to anticipate and forestall challenges to his or her claims and inferences. Also important is the author’s care with factual claims, as well as his or her comprehension of the course material. The grade is never based on the thesis that the author has chosen to put forward. The goal of this course is to teach students to reason well about difficult abstract issues. Success in the course consists in learning to argue well for your conclusions, whatever they are.

### Class Participation (10% of the final grade)

Class participation consists in contributing to class discussion by asking questions or making comments that demonstrate both a grasp of the course material and an interest in the relevant topics. The elements of class participation are listed below. As I observe the class discussion, I will use these criteria in evaluating your contributions.

1. present in class, awake, and attentive
2. shows evidence of having done the reading, and thought about it in a sustained way
3. makes explicit reference to the text, and is good at choosing particularly relevant passages
4. helps classmates understand the passages/ideas/texts under discussion
5. engages in spirited but respectful debate
6. connects present readings/topics to ones discussed earlier in the semester
7. sheds new light on a particular reading or topic

To make the class participation grade as objective as possible, you will be asked to contribute to the discussion in the comments/messages throughout the class sessions. I will award participation points on the basis of the written contributions (as well as the spoken ones, obviously).

Although attendance is required, it does *not* count as class participation. I think of participation as a kind of intellectual investment, which goes beyond simply completing the reading and writing assignments. Public speaking is an essential aspect of the course, and also a requirement; no student can receive an A in the course without engaging actively in class

discussion. Limited class participation credit can also be earned by engaging with me by email or at office hours.

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## Attendance

Attendance is mandatory; excessive absences or lateness (more than 2) will negatively impact your final grade in the course. More than 5 absences will constitute grounds for a failing grade. All students are expected to attend class session, join the video/audio feed on time. Students who are absent from class for religious reasons or due to documented medical treatment will not incur any penalty on their final grade, but are nevertheless responsible for all required reading/writing assignments. If you require technological assistance in order to join the sessions, please let me know about your issue in advance. I will help you in whatever way I can to resolve it.

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## GRADING

Here is a summary of how your final grade will be calculated:

- 70% of the final grade for the 5-7 micro papers (~10% each)
- 20% of the final grade for the Macro Essay
- 10% of the final grade for class participation

A	96-100	B+	86-90	C+	71-75	D	55-60
A-	90-95	B	81-85	C	66-70	F	below 55
		B-	76-80	C-	61-65		

There is no “curve” for the course. This means that you are not in competition with your classmates for high grades. It is conceivable—though exceedingly unlikely—that everyone in the course will receive an A. Or, I suppose, a D. When you receive your final grade for the course, please note that it is non-negotiable. I will not change grades, unless I have made a demonstrable clerical error in my calculations.

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## OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY

My primary office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus. (This may change as the semester continues; I will announce any changes.) We can also have “virtual meetings” on Teams—whether in a group or one-on-one. In extreme emergencies, you can call/text me on my phone: 917.667.5838. Please do not abuse this mode of contact; act respectfully.

Needless to say, I can be reached by email at any time. I will do my best to respond to your emails as quickly as possible. Sometimes I will reply to your message immediately, but please do not assume that this is always possible. Occasionally, I will not have access to email or will not be able to answer your query for up to several days. In such cases, please be patient.

## **PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, USING AI, AND OTHER FORMS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Please note that I do not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form. I take a strict stance on this. Be aware that I will dole out maximum penalties for violations, including assigning failing grades and pushing for suspension and/or expulsion from Kent State. If you are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, make it your business to learn about this immediately. Ignorance of university policy will not be accepted as an excuse. University policy 3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at [www.kent.edu/plagiarism](http://www.kent.edu/plagiarism)

***Important:*** *If I detect the use of artificial intelligence (“large-language models”) such as Chat GPT in any part of your work, you will immediately fail the course. There are no exceptions to this policy.*

## **INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES**

Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible education experiences for all students. University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately.

Location: University Library, Suite 100

Email: [sas@kent.edu](mailto:sas@kent.edu)

Phone: 330-672-3391

Web: [www.kent.edu/sas](http://www.kent.edu/sas)

## **REGISTRATION AND WITHDRAWAL DEADLINES**

University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule, using Student Tools in FlashLine, prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to that deadline. Information about official registration and withdrawal deadlines is available here.

<https://www.kent.edu/registrar/fall-important-dates>

<https://www.kent.edu/registrar/how-withdraw>

## **RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS**

The University welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief, and supports their respective practices. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, the University permits students to request class absences for up to three (3) days, per term, in order to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Students will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences.

The request for excusal must be made, in writing, no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction in a particular course and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative religious accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire.

You will be notified by me if your request for accommodation is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement. For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the Student Ombuds ([ombuds@kent.edu](mailto:ombuds@kent.edu)).

# Course Schedule

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## Week 1

**Jan 14** introduction; no readings  
**Jan 16** introduction; no readings

## Week 2

**Jan 21** Daniel Dennett, *Kinds of Minds*, ch. 1-2  
**Jan 23** Daniel Dennett, *Kinds of Minds*, ch. 3-4

## Week 3

**Jan 28** Daniel Dennett, *Kinds of Minds*, ch. 5  
**Jan 30** Daniel Dennett, *Kinds of Minds*, ch. 6

→ **Assignment 1**

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## Week 4

**Feb 4** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 1  
**Feb 6** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 2

## Week 5

**Feb 11** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 3  
**Feb 13** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 4

→ **Assignment 2**

## Week 6

**Feb 18** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 5  
**Feb 20** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 6

## Week 7

**Feb 25** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 7  
**Feb 27** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 8

## Week 8

**Mar 4** Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 9  
**Mar 6** Mid-semester wrap-up

→ **Assignment 3**

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**Mar 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Spring Break, No Class**

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**PART III:** All readings are from Robert Lurz (ed.), *Philosophy of Animal Minds*

**Week 9**

**Mar 18** Dale Jamieson, "What do animals think?"  
**Mar 20** Elisabeth Camp, "A language of baboon thought?"

**Week 10**

**Mar 25** Michael Rescorla, "Chrysippus' dog as a case study in  
**Mar 27** non-linguistic cognition"

→ **Assignment 4**

**Week 11**

**Apr 1** José Luis Bermúdez, "Mindreading in the animal kingdom"  
**Apr 3** TBA

**Week 12**

**Apr 8** Rocco J. Gennaro, "Animals, consciousness, and I-thoughts"  
**Apr 10** Robert C. Roberts, "The sophistication of non-human emotion"

→ **Assignment 5**

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**PART III:** Animals and Virtue Ethics

**Week 13**

**Apr 15** Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, chs. 1-3  
**Apr 17** Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, chs. 4-5

**Week 14**

**Apr 22** Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, chs. 6-7  
**Apr 24** Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, chs. 8-9

→ **Assignment 6**

**Week 15**

**Apr 29** Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, chs. 10-11  
**May 1** Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, chs. 12-13

→ **Final paper due on Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 11:59pm**