COURSE TITLE
Philosophy of Mind - Module: Mental Causation and Argumentative Types of Reasoning, graduate level
Class Code: 2000892, credits, 36 hours; beginning: 7th May 2019.
(Substituted by Theory of Argumentation – Main Approaches and Epistemological Elaboration, Class Code: 2000892)
Course topic: Mental Causation and Argumentative Types of Reasoning

TEACHING LANGUAGE
English

COURSE CONTENTS
TOPIC OF THE MODULE: Philosophy of Mind – Mental Causation and Argumentative Types of Reasoning
CONTENT: The module consists of two parts dealing with different topics within the philosophy of mind: 1. mental causation, 2. argumentative types of reasoning. The first part of the module is dedicated to an ancient topic of the metaphysics of the mind, the possibility of mental causation. In everyday life as well as in psychology we assume that not only the physical (through the neuropsychological states of our brain) causes certain mental contents, especially in the case of perception, but that also the mental can influence the physical, especially in the case of actions by our intentions. However, this second assumption is difficult to reconcile with a set of fairly plausible assumptions about the functioning of our brain and mind, such as: the irreducibility of the mental to the physical; the closure of physics; the influence of the mental qua mental on the physical; the properties of causal relationships (causal nexus and nomological character). Some explanations of mental causation are discussed in the course, which always make certain curtailments on at least one such assumption: anomalous monism, supervenience theory, reductive and non-reductive physicalism, epiphenomenalism. 2. The second part of the course, on argumentative types of reasoning, deals with a topic between epistemology and cognitive science: What types of reasoning are there? We can present the essential steps and results of our reasoning in the form of arguments and make them publicly accessible. This then enables a methodically simple access to the types of our reasoning. These products of our reasoning are examined in the course with the help of normative, epistemological argumentation theory: What good types of argumentation are there? Among others,
deductive, probabilistic, practical argumentations and various subtypes will be discussed.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**
With respect to the content, the first part of the course aims to give an overview of the main present-day approaches to mental causation, whereas the second part will focus on the epistemological approach to argumentation and on imparting knowledge of specific argument types as well as sub-theories relevant to the interpretation and assessment of arguments and their application to examples. With respect to critical reflection, the course seeks to stimulate critical reflection on the puzzle of mental causation and on good types of argumentation and justification. With respect to methodology, the course aims to further the faculty to understand and analyse texts as well as to analyse, reconstruct and evaluate simple and complex arguments. In particular, the class, with the help of inserted short kinds of tutorials, will impart skills of argument assessment as to answer the question: does the argument prove (or substantiate) its thesis?

**PREREQUISITES**
Some acquaintance with logic will be helpful.

**DIDACTIC METHODS**
The first main method used in the course will be reading, analysis and discussion of texts having the features listed with the aim to understand or reconstruct the structure of the text, of the theses or proposals and of the arguments in their favor in order to understand their spirit and to assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as to critically evaluate these arguments and possibly improve them or the proposals or the theses themselves. Students are invited to reflect, whether to possibly take one of the positions discussed. To realise this aim it is necessary that the attending students read the texts of each session before class. These texts will also be the subject of the final exam. The second main method is to provide specific knowledge 1. on the presuppositions of and solution proposals to the puzzle of mental causation and 2. for argument appraisal for being able to apply this knowledge in practical exercises of argument interpretation.

**MODALITIES OF ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING PROGRESS - EXAM**

**Programme of the final exam**
The final exam of the module is oral. To take the exam of the module (prova parziale) students must expound texts equivalent to 8 articles, viz. 4 from part 1.1 of the bibliography and 4 from part 1.2 of the references, but otherwise freely chosen from those discussed in the seminar (i.e. bibliography, part 1). The texts or (if specified) passages of a text listed of a particular author always count as equivalent to one article; if of one author several texts are listed each of them counts as one article. The examination will focus on the reconstruction of the theses and systematic arguments of the authors discussed. In addition, a practical exercise of argument interpretation may be required. – For getting the 12 credits of the course 'Philosophy of Mind' students have to pass also the exam of the other module (prova parziale) of this course; the results of the two exams of the two modules will then be aggregated and registered as exam in 'Philosophy of Mind'.

**Programme of the exam for working and not attending students**
To attend the course means to participate in at least three quarters of the sessions, that is at least 14 (of 18) sessions for 6 credits. Working and not attending students will have to expound the same texts studied by those attending, however, two more, i.e. texts equivalent to 10 (for 6 credits) articles, viz. 5 from section 1.1 of the bibliography and 5 from
section 1.2.; in addition they have to study the indicated sections of the introductory text of Feldman and Robb & Heil (bibliography, part 2).

Method and content of the exam
The final exam is oral. The examination will focus on the reconstruction of the theses and systematic arguments of the authors discussed. Furthermore, practical exercises of argument interpretation and assessment may be required. The additional faculty to provide a critical but justified assessment of the argument and of the theses of the discussed theories is an element of excellence.

Performance assessment
1. Expressing an organic and concise vision of the studied subjects with an in-depth understanding of the problems, of the theses and of the arguments
2. with a good mastery of the philosophical language
3. together with a general view of the main approaches on mental causation and in philosophical argumentation theory and
4. the capacity to critically analyze and assess examples of arguments with the help of the method taught in the course will be valued with excellent marks. Mnemonic knowledge of the subject together with the faculty of synthesis and articulate analysis in a correct language but not always adequate as well as the capacity to critically and methodically assess (though sometimes with minor errors) arguments lead to good to satisfactory marks. Knowledge gaps and / or an inadequate language – even if combined with minimal knowledge of the topic of the exam – and / or gross failures in assessing arguments will lead to marks not better than sufficient. Knowledge gaps, inadequate language, missing orientation in the literature under study in the course or incapacity to methodically assess arguments will be assessed negatively.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Discussed texts

1.1. Mental Causation
Kim, Jaegwon: Physicalism, or Something Near Enough. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2005. xiii; 186 pp. [Sects.: 2.0-2.3; 2.5; (2.6) (= pp. 32-46; 52-57; (57-69)).]

1.2. Analyzing Arguments with the Help of the Epistemological Approach – Validity Criteria and Other Tools


2. Introductions, Overviews, Textbooks


CALENDAR OF THE SESSIONS
PART I: INTRODUCTION
1. 7.5.19, 9-11h, Aula 349c: Formalia. Introduction argumentation theory.

PART II: MENTAL CAUSATION
2. 8.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 456: Introduction mental causation. Davidson.
3. 10.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 349b: Fodor.
5. 15.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 456: Jackson & Pettit.
6. 17.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 349b: Kim: Epiphenomenal and supervenient causation.
7. 21.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 401: Kim: Physicalism or something near enough.
8. 22.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 456: Robinson.

PART III: ARGUMENTATION THEORY – THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH: BASES, APPLICATIONS, TYPES OF ARGUMENTS ETC.
10. 28.5.19, 9-11h, Aula 349c: Lumer, Interpreting arguments
11. 29.5.19, 9-11h, Aula 349a: Lumer, Argument schemes
12. 3.6.19, 9-11h: Lumer, Practical arguments for prudential justifications… & Practical arguments for theoretical theses
13. 4.6.19, 9-11h, Aula 349c: Lumer, Probabilistic arguments
14. 5.6.19, 9-11h, Aula 349a: Lumer, Recognizing argument types ... & Exercises: Argument reconstruction and appraisal
15. 7.6.19, 9-11h, Aula 349c: Exercises: Argument reconstruction and appraisal
16. 11.6.19, 9-11h, Aula 349c: Hamblin, Ch. 1
17. 12.6.19, 9-11h, Aula 349a: Lumer, Reductionism in fallacy theory & Exercises: Fallacies