

Università degli Studi di Siena, a.a. 2018/19

Class in the master degree course (Corso di Laurea Magistrale, CdLM) "Language and Mind – Linguistics and Cognitive Studies" (D006):

2000905 - Philosophy of Mind (M-Fil/01)

**Module: Mental Causation and Argumentative Types of Reasoning
(substituted by: 2000892 – Theory of Argumentation (M-Fil/03))**

(fourth bimester, beginning: 7th May 2019)

Teacher: **Prof. Christoph Lumer**

Course programme, version of 1 May 2019



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

Davidson, Donald: Mental Events. In: L. Foster; J. W. Swanson (eds.): *Experience and Theory*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press 1970: 79-101. – Reprinted in: *Idem: Essays on Actions and Events*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1980: 207-225.

Dretske, Fred: Mental Events as Structuring Causes of Behavior. In: John Heil; Alfred Mele (eds.): *Mental Causation*. Oxford: Clarendon 1993: 121-136.

Fodor, Jerry A.: Making Mind Matter More. In: *Philosophical Topics* 17 (1989): 59-80.

Jackson, Frank; Philip Pettit: Program Explanation. A General Perspective. In: *Analysis* 50 (1990): 107-117.

Kim, Jaegwon: Epiphenomenal and Supervenient Causation. In: *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 9 (1984): 257-270. – Reprinted in: *Idem: Supervenience and Mind. Selected Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. 1993: 92-108.

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)).]

Robinson, William S.: Evolution and Epiphenomenalism. In: *The Journal of Consciousness Studies* 14 (2007): 27-42.

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

Hamblin, C[harles] L[eonard]: *Fallacies*. London: Methuen 1970. 326 pp. Reprinted with a preface by John Plecnik and John Hoagland. Newport News, Virginia 1986. [Ch. 1 (= pp. 9-49).]

Lumer, Christoph: The Epistemological Theory of Argument - How and Why? In: *Informal Logic* 25,3 (2005): 213-243.

- Lumer, Christoph: Argument Schemes – An Epistemological Approach. In: Frank Zenker (ed.): Argumentation. Cognition and Community. Proceedings of the 9th International Conference of the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation (OSSA), May 18-22, 2011. Windsor, Kanada: University of Windsor 2011. 32 pp. CD-ROM, ISBN 978-0-920233-66-5. Online: URL: <<http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=ossaarchive>>.
- Lumer, Christoph: Interpreting Arguments. In: Frans H. van Eemeren; J. Anthony Blair; Charles A. Willard; A. Francisca Snoeck Henkemans (eds.): Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation. Amsterdam: SIC SAT 2003: 715-719.
- Lumer, Christoph: Practical Arguments for Prudential Justifications of Actions. In: Dima Mohammed; Marcin Lewiński (eds.): Virtues of Argumentation. Proceedings of the 10th International Conference of the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation (OSSA). Windsor, Ontario, May 22-26, 2013. Windsor, Canada: Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation (OSSA) 2014. 16 pp. CD-rom, ISBN: 978-0-920233-66-5. Additional web publication, URL: <<http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2077&context=ossaarchive>>.
- Lumer, Christoph: Practical Arguments for Theoretical Theses. *Argumentation* 11 (1997): 329-340.
- Lumer, Christoph: Probabilistic Arguments in the Epistemological Approach to Argumentation. In: Frans H. van Eemeren; Bart Garssen; David Godden; Gordon Mitchell (eds.): Proceedings of the 7th Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation. [Amsterdam, June 29 - July 2, 2010.] Amsterdam: Rozenberg; Sic Sat 2011: 1141-1154. (CD-rom.)
- Lumer, Christoph: Recognizing Argument Types and Adding Missing Reasons. In: Bart J. Garssen; David Godden; Gordon Mitchell; Jean H.M. Wagemans (eds.): Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (ISSA). [Amsterdam, July 3-6, 2018.] Amsterdam: Sic Sat 2019: 769-777. Web publication, URL = <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/issa/ISSA_2018_proceedings.pdf>.
- Lumer, Christoph: Recognizing Argument Types and Adding Missing Reasons. Working paper 2018.
- Lumer, Christoph: The Disputation. A Special Type of Cooperative Argumentative Dialogue. In: *Argumentation* 2 (1988): 441-464.
- Lumer, Christoph: Reductionism in Fallacy Theory. In: *Argumentation* 14 (2000): 405-423.
- 2. Introductions, Overviews, Textbooks*
- Feldman, Richard: Reason and Argument. 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall ¹1993; ²1999. xv; 462 pp. [Chs. 1-4; 7-9; Appendices A-C (= pp. 1-112; 167-276; 411-446).]
- Lumer, Christoph: The Epistemological Approach to Argumentation – A Map. In: *Informal Logic* 25,3 (2005): 189-212.
- Pirie, Madsen: How to Win Every Argument: The Use and Abuse of Logic. Bloomsbury Academic ¹2007; ²2015. 193 pp.
- Robb, David; John Heil: Mental Causation. In: Edward N. Zalta (ed.): The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2018 Edition). Web-publication; URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/mental-causation/>>.
- Warburton, Nigel: Thinking from A to Z. London; New York: Routledge 1996. New edition: ³2007. 192 pp.

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.

4. 14.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 401: Dretske.

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.

9. 24.5.19, 11-13h, Aula 349b: Lumer, The epistemological theory of argumentation – How and why?

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

18. 14.6.19, 9-11h, Aula 349c: Lumer, The disputation