

**Philosophy of mind:
Imagination**

Professor: Dr. Dustin Stokes
Section: PHIL 5450/6450 001
Thurs 5:30-8:30PM Tanner Library-CTIHB 4th floor
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Office Hours: Thursday 11-1:00PM/and by appointment
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Course description

The first half of the course will concern so-called 'propositional imagination'. On this line of thought, imagination is understood as a special form of more traditional propositional attitudes—like belief and/or desire—or as a distinctive propositional attitude. We will discuss different theories about the nature and functioning of imagination understood in this broad way. For example, how is the imagination like and different from belief? Are there different characters of imagining (e.g. something like both a make-belief and a make-desire)? How does (or can) the imagination motivate action? We will also spend a few weeks on relevant epistemological questions. First, is the imagination a rational guide to forming beliefs about necessity and possibility and, thus, a mode of acquiring modal knowledge? Relatedly, what is the proper role of the imaginative development of thought experiments in philosophy and science? And finally, are there limits on the voluntariness of imagining; can we imagine anything we choose?

The second half of the course will concern mental imagery, or sensory imagination, as it is sometimes called. This is in fact the more traditional way to think about the imagination, but it has been recently overshadowed by propositional approaches to the (or a related) phenomenon. Here again we will spend some time looking at theories about the nature and functioning of imagination understood this way. For example, perhaps sensory imagination is fundamental to all imagination (contrary to current orthodoxy, which apparently takes propositional forms to be primary). Second, the so-called imagery debate concerns the structure of mental images: are they formatted more like pictures, or more like sentences? We will also spend some time on questions concerning relations between imagery and perception, imagery and memory, and imagery/perception in distinct sensory modalities.

Text

All readings will be online, on the CANVAS course webpage.

Assignments/Requirements:

For 5450 Students

20%	Short paper 1	Due: See below*
20%	Short paper 2	Due: See below*
10%	Participation	
50%	Final term paper	Due: TBA

The short papers might also be thought of as take-home exams. You will be given a short list of questions, from which you will choose and respond to one. The questions will be distributed one week, and the papers are to be submitted the following week (dates below). Your responses should be concise and to the point, and should be 1000-1500 words (or 4-6 pages). You are required to write **two** short essays over the term, and can choose from the following three papers/due dates, as your interests and schedule dictate:

- *PAPER OPTION 1: **DUE FRIDAY 4 October** (Questions assigned 09/27)
- *PAPER OPTION 2: **DUE FRIDAY 1 November** (Questions assigned 10/25)
- *PAPER OPTION 3: **DUE FRIDAY 6 December** (Questions assigned 11/29)

The participation component is composed of regular participation in class discussion, and in discussion group sessions, held in class. Unless I announce otherwise, the discussion sessions will take place on the dates specified below in the reading schedule.

Undergraduate students will write a short term paper (8-10 pages). This will be on a topic of the student's choosing, but to be first cleared with me in the form of an outline. **Term paper outlines are due to me no later than: Monday 1 December. Outlines will also be posted on the CANVAS course page, and open to peer commentary.** Term papers will be due on the final exam day (as designated by the University).

For 6450 Students

5%	Short paper 1	Due: See above*
5%	Short paper 2	Due: See above*
10%	Participation	
5%	Term paper presentation	In class 12/12
75%	Final term paper	Due: TBA

Short papers for graduate students will be on the same topics/due dates as for undergraduates, (see above) *except* that for graduate students the expectations for quality of exegesis and analysis will be appropriately higher.

Graduate students will be expected to participate regularly, and indeed play a leading role, in class discussion and discussion group sessions (see above).

Term paper presentations will take place on the final day of class, and consist of a 10-15 presentation of the student's term paper plan and outline. This will be followed by discussion with the class, which should provide an opportunity for helpful feedback to be utilized in preparing the final term paper.

Term papers (15-20 pages) will be on a topic of the student's choosing. The student will submit a 1-2 page outline and then be required to meet with me to discuss the term paper plan. **Term paper outlines are due to me no later than: Monday 1 December. Outlines will also be posted on the CANVAS course page, and open to peer commentary.** Term papers will be due on the final exam day (as designated by the University).

General:

This is a writing intensive course. All of the work/examinations will be written. Your papers will be graded not only on content, but also on grammar, writing mechanics, style, etc.

All paper/exam dates are listed on this syllabus. Therefore, late work/exams are allowed only if arranged at least one week prior to the scheduled due date/exam date, and with appropriate documentation. Unexcused late work will not be accepted.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty of any kind will be treated with zero tolerance. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the university guidelines and policies on academic integrity, see the Student Code, section V (“Student Academic Conduct”), Part B (“Academic Misconduct”), online here:

<http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>

If you require special test-taking or note-taking accommodations, please see me.

(Tentative) Reading/discussion schedule:

TH 08/29 *Introduction/history/basic concepts and questions*

PROPOSITIONAL IMAGINATION

TH 09/05 *Imagination, representation, and make-believe*
Walton-Excerpts from *Mimesis as Make-Believe*
Harris-Excerpts from *The Work of the Imagination*

TH 09/12 NO CLASS

TH 09/19 *Imagination as simulation*
Goldman, ‘Interpretation Psychologized’
Currie and Ravenscroft, excerpts from *Recreative Minds* (Ch. 1 & 3)

Discussion groups 1

TH 09/26 *Imagination as unique mental capacity*
Nichols and Stich, ‘A cognitive theory of pretence’
Nichols, ‘Just the imagination: Why imagining doesn’t behave just like believing’

*TH 10/03 *Imagination and action*
Currie, ‘Imagination as motivation’
Funkhouser and Spaulding, ‘Imagination and Other Scripts’

IMAGINATION AND EPISTEMOLOGY

TH 10/10 *Imagination and modal epistemology*
Yablo, ‘Is Conceivability a Guide to Possibility?’
Chalmers, ‘Does Conceivability Entail Possibility?’
<http://consc.net/papers/conceivability.html>

TH 10/17 NO CLASS-FALL BREAK

