

## Topics in Metaphysics:

Day 1 Almost-a-syllabus

# Consciousness Experience

Philosophy 612, Fall 2020 (Class #9208)

Wednesday 3:00-5:50pm, on Zoom

<https://albany.zoom.us/j/96773279837>, passcode 262205

<https://profron.net/phi612>

Prof. Ron McClamrock

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**Course Description:** A seminar in some advanced topics in philosophy of mind focusing on current theorizing about conscious experience. Topics will include illusionism about consciousness, as well as some of others to be determined by us as a group. Some background in general philosophy of mind or philosophy of psychology will be helpful; a bit of psychology and/or phenomenology wouldn't hurt either.

**Course Delivery:** This seminar will be held on Zoom during the scheduled hours. There are no in-person meetings, but otherwise, will be run like a normal seminar. Everyone will attend by Zoom. You'll need to log into your UAlbany-provided Zoom account (via [albany.zoom.us](https://albany.zoom.us) or your MyUAlbany page). I encourage you to leave a camera on when you can, and remain unmuted when you can. These aren't requirements, but the more we all do it, the closer to a regular seminar I think we can make this.

**Readings:** The actual readings for the seminar will be determined partially on the fly, in a react-and-improvise way. All readings except for the whole books will be made available as PDFs on the course web page. Starting in about the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, I expect to start a significant run of weeks focusing on the readings in *Illusionism as a Theory of Consciousness* (Keith Frankish, Ed.)

**Requirements:** Overall, the grade for the course will come from a term paper or two shorter papers (60%), weekly "Thoughts of the Week" (10%), and class participation including approximately two seminar presentations (30%). In more detail, there are four things that count:

- **Short Papers:** I'll ask for a short paper (2000-2500 words, or about 8 old-fashioned pages) to be turned in about 60% of the way through the course; I encourage everyone to do this, but you can opt out by sending me an opt-out request in place of the short paper. If you do the short paper, it will be graded and returned, and you'll then have the option of writing either a second short paper on a different topic, or rewriting and expanding the graded short paper into a long paper; if you opt out of the first short paper, you'll just do the long paper at the end. If you do the two short papers, each of your short papers will count for 30% of your total grade. Topics need to be discussed with me at least one week before any short paper is due.
- **Long Papers:** Instead of doing two short papers, you can do a longer final paper (about 4000-5000 words, or about 15 old-fashioned pages); if you did the first short paper, the long paper can be a rewrite and expansion of your short paper. If you do a long paper, any short paper grade you have is dropped, and the long paper grade counts for 60% of your total grade. You should meet with me to discuss your long paper topic at least two weeks before it's due.
- **Weekly thoughts:** Each week you will be asked to submit "thoughts of the week" (ToWs) by email that will be posted to the class web page. These ToWs will be responses to some particular question I'll post, and they should run about 200 words or two paragraphs. 2 ToWs will be dropped; the average for the rest of them will count for 10% of your final grade.
- **Seminar presentations and participation:** All students will do approximately two seminar presentations; more if there's time. A typical presentation will consist in presenting some material for about 20-30 minutes and running a discussion on that material for another 20-30 minutes. Along with your class participation, presentations will count for 30% of your course grade.

### Course outline, v.0.5: (still very very loose and non-committal)

- **Week 1:** Going over the plan, and background to philosophy of mind for those who want/need it
- **Week 2:** Some phenomenological ideas, and more setup/background
- **Weeks 3-9(?):** Working through the Illusionism volume
- **Weeks 10-14:** To be determined; may include neuroexistentialism, panpsychism, and externalism