

Objective 2.1: Knowledge of the Liberal Arts**Course: PHIL 335: Conceptions of the Mind**

Students will possess a broad understanding of how to think about the world, having studied the modes of inquiry characteristic of humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social and behavioral sciences.

Outcomes 2.1-E: Philosophical Mode of Inquiry

By graduation students will:	Not Proficient 1 Point	Developing Proficiency 2 Points	Proficient 3 Points	Exceeding Proficiency 4 Points
Identify the distinguishing characteristics of philosophical questions (non-empirical questions suitable for being approached dialectically).	<i>The student fails to identify three philosophical claims.</i>	<i>The student identifies three philosophical claims but fails to explain what makes them philosophical.</i>	<i>The student identifies three philosophical claims and succeeds at explaining what makes them philosophical.</i>	<i>The student identifies three philosophical claims and, in explaining what makes them philosophical, clearly indicates an understanding of the limits of empirical inquiry.</i>
Compose an essay that accurately captures someone else's reasoning in support of their answer to a philosophical question.	<i>The student fails to capture the gist of the argument.</i>	<i>The student captures the gist of the argument but leaves out one or more important elements.</i>	<i>The student sets the argument out clearly, accurately, and fully.</i>	<i>The student sets the argument out clearly, accurately, and fully, and reflects intelligently on its significance.</i>
Compose an essay that accurately captures a significant objection to a clearly formulated philosophical argument and explains why the objection is significant.	<i>The student fails to raise a significant objection.</i>	<i>The student raises a significant objection, but fails to explain how it undermines the argument.</i>	<i>The student raises a significant objection and explains how it undermines the argument.</i>	<i>The student raises a significant objection, explains how it undermines the argument, and reflects intelligently on how a defender of the argument could reasonably reply.</i>

Assignment meeting Outcome 1: Given a list composed of philosophical and non-philosophical claims, the student will select three examples of philosophical claims and explain what makes them philosophical.

Assignment meeting Outcome 2: The student is assigned a passage of text presenting a philosophical argument and asked to set the argument out clearly and fully in their own words.

Assignment meeting Outcome 3: The student is presented with a clear and full statement of a philosophical argument in numbered steps and is asked to formulate and defend an objection calling into question either one of the argument's premises or its internal logic.

PHIL 335: Conceptions of the Mind -- sample assignments fitting the CORE assignment descriptions

Outcome 2.1E.1

Select three philosophical claims from the following list (which actually contains four such claims) and explain what makes them philosophical.

1. In human beings, vision is associated with activity the occipital regions of the brain.
2. Cats cannot distinguish the colors blue and red.
3. Cats do not have free will.
4. Students will learn more quickly if they find the material interesting.
5. IQ test scores are influenced by hereditary factors.
6. The mind cannot possibly be a material thing.
7. Many psychiatric drugs can cause nerve or brain damage.
8. It would be morally wrong to try to correct behavioral problems with involuntary brain surgery.
9. The drug Prozac can relieve the symptoms of depression in most patients.
10. Nothing can be known to be true if it cannot be verified by scientific observation.

Outcome 2.1E.1

Set out the argument in the following passage from Descartes' *Meditations* clearly and fully in numbered steps, and explain for each step what Descartes has in mind:

First, I know that if I have a clear and distinct thought of something, God could have created it in a way that exactly corresponds to my thought. So the fact that I can clearly and distinctly think of one thing apart from another assures me that the two things are distinct from one another – that is, that they are *two* – since they can be separated by God. Never mind *how* they could be separated; that does not affect the judgment that they are distinct. So my mind is a distinct thing from my body.

Outcome 2.1E.3

What is the strongest objection you can think of to the following argument? Set out your reasoning as clearly, thoroughly, and persuasively as you can, and be sure to explain how, if this were true, the argument would be undermined.

1. The mind can at least sometimes causally influence our material bodies (for instance, choosing to raise my arm will sometimes cause my arm to go up).
2. But it would be impossible for a totally immaterial, non-physical mind to ever causally influence anything material.
3. Therefore, the mind cannot be immaterial.