

Non-Reductive Physicalism and its Challenges

PHIL 534: Spring 2006

T 3–5:30

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Course Description

In philosophy of mind, nonreductive physicalism is still near-orthodoxy. This course will examine how it got that way, and evaluate some challenges to its popularity. After canvassing the classic arguments, we will consider contemporary challenges to several facets of the doctrine. Along the way we'll consider questions about physicalism, intertheoretic reduction, the realization relation, supervenience, mental causation, multiply realizable properties, and the nature of the physical.

Credit

Credit will be awarded for a seminar paper (20-25 pages). Presentations by students are always encouraged and are an excellent way to prepare for writing a seminar paper.

Texts

Texts will be on reserve in the philosophy department library or distributed as PDFs before the session. There will be no texts at the bookstore, but if you feel like buying something we will use Jaegwon Kim's *Mind in a Physical World* and his collection *Supervenience and Mind* rather heavily.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

Nonreductive Physicalism: The Basics

Week 1 *Introduction*

Optional: Kim, "The Myth of Nonreductive Physicalism" and MIPW Ch1

Week 2 *Reductive Physicalism*

Ernest Nagel, Chapter 11 pts 1-2 (p336-365) of *The Structure of Science*
Oppenheim and Putnam “Unity of Science as a Working Hypothesis”
Optional: Causey, “Attribute Identities in Micro-reductions”

Week 3 *Multiple Realizability*

Putnam “The Nature of Mental States”
Fodor, “Special Sciences, or The Disunity of Science as a Working Hypothesis”
Shoemaker, “Causality and Properties”
Optional: Kitcher “1953 and All That: A Tale of Two Sciences”

Week 4 *Role Functionalism*

Block, “What is Functionalism?”
Putnam, “Philosophy and Our Mental Life”
Lewis “Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications”

Week 5 *Davidsonian Arguments*

Davidson “Mental Events”
Kim “Psychophysical Laws”
Optional: Fodor “Making Mind Matter more”

Week 6 *Supervenience*

McLaughlin, “Varieties of Supervenience”
Kim “Supervenience as a Philosophical Concept”, “Concepts of Supervenience”
Bennett “Global Supervenience and Dependence”

Week 7 *A distinction: Emergent Physicalism*

McLaughlin, “The Rise and Fall of British Emergentism”
Crane, “The Significance of Emergence”
Papineau, “Appendix: History of the Completeness of Physics”

Problem 1: Causal Exclusion

Week 8 *The Problem*

Kim, “Mechanism, Purpose, and Explanatory Exclusion”
Kim, “The Nonreductivists’ Troubles with Mental Causation”
Crisp and Warfield, “Kim’s Master Argument”
Optional: Block, “Do Causal Powers Drain Away?” Kim, “Blocking Causal Drainage and Other Maintenance Chores with Mental Causation”

Week 9 *Some Responses*

Yablo “Mental Causation”
Bennett “Why the exclusion Problem Seems Intractable, and How, Just Maybe, to Tract It”
Optional: Shoemaker “Realization and Mental Causation”

Problem 2: Functional Explanation

Week 10 *Problems with Functional Explanation*

Block “Can the Mind Change the World?”

Bennett, “Mental Causation” §7: “Functionalism and the Problem of Metaphysically Necessitated Effects”

Jackson and Petit, “Program Explanation: A General Perspective”

Optional: Kim MIPW Chs 2 & 3

Week 11 *Realizer Functionalism & Reduction*

Lewis, “Reduction of Mind”

Lewis “An Argument for the Identity Theory”

Kim, *Mind in a Physical World* Ch 4

Glennan “Rethinking Mechanistic Explanation”

Problem 3: MR Properties

Week 12 *Could there be MR properties?*

Kim “Multiple Realizability and Metaphysics of Reduction”

Block “Anti-Reductionism Slaps Back”

Fodor, “Special Sciences: Still Autonomous After All These Years”

Klein “Of Minds and Metals”

Week 13 *What are MR properties, anyway?*

Shapiro, “Multiple Realizations”

Clapp, “Disjunctive Properties: Multiple Realizations”

Rosenberg, “Comments and Criticism on multiple realizations and the special sciences”

Klein, “Reduction without Reductionism: A defense of Nagel on Connectability”

Problem 4: The Physical

Week 14 *What is the Physical?*

Moran “The Body Problem”

Hempel “Reduction: Ontological and Linguistic Facets”

Crane & Mellor “There is no Question of Physicalism”

Optional: van Fraassen, excerpts from The Empirical Stance

Week 15 *Reduction and Science*

Nagel, part 3 of Chapter 11 of *The Structure of Science*

Wimsatt, “Reductionism, levels of organization, and the mind-body problem”