

**MCB 90E - Matter, Mind, Consciousness - Freshman Seminar**

**University of California, Berkeley - Winter-Spring 2017**

Everything we know as appears to come to us by way of our mental experience: our thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and conscious awareness. The prevailing assumption in contemporary science is that mental experience will ultimately be completely understood in terms of physical processes in the brain and body. However, it is a deep mystery as to how the physical movements of ions and molecules in our brains give rise to subjective conscious experience. Some argue that the investigation of this mind-body relation is the most interesting question in all of science. We will consider this question from the perspectives of neuroscience, biology, physics, and philosophy. It is my opinion that for cognitive science and neuroscience to truly get to the next place of deeper understanding of the mind-body relation, revolutionary new developments will be required. This prospect makes the scientific study of mind a tremendously exciting arena to explore. Study of the nature of mind necessarily is an investigation of who we are and how we are related to everything else we think we know about the universe. What could be more interesting than this? In this seminar, you will be introduced to perspectives on these questions found in few other places.

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Office hours: Wednesdays 11:00 to 11:45 am, and Thursdays 11:00 to 11:45 am

Tuesdays 2:00 to 3:00 pm 301 Barker Hall

13 class meetings: Wednesday afternoons, beginning on January 18 and ending April 26.

No classes on March 29 (Spring Break) and April 19.

Class grade is P/NP. Grade is based on attendance and participation. In order to pass the class, you cannot miss more than 2 meetings. If you intend to miss a class, you must notify me in advance and let me know why you are missing a class meeting. I also ask that you visit my office hours at least two times during the semester.

Readings will be assigned for most of our meetings and will be distributed in class over the course of the semester. So that everyone may participate in the discussion, it is expected that everyone do the readings. There will be short writing assignments (less than one page) based on the readings, to be turned in at the beginning of class. These assignments must be completed in order to pass the class. Our goal is for this adventure in learning to be fun for everyone!

