Today’s Lecture

• A comment about your Third Assignment and final Paper
• Patricia and Paul Churchland on “Some of the best minds of our times” (audio)
• Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind
A comment about your Third Assignment and final Paper

• I’m going to take the long weekend to grade your Third Assignments. As you will get them back three days before the paper is due, this will not give you any less days before the paper due date to look over my comments than you have had for the previous assignments.
A comment about your Third Assignment and final Paper

• In saying this, my guess is that you will be even more tired then than you are now. So I propose to give you a bonus day of grace to get your final Paper in to me.

• Three things to note about this proposal:

• (1) It means that IF you get your paper to me, or the assignment drop box, by 4:00 p.m. on August 11th, THEN you will not receive any late penalties for your paper.

• (2) This extra day of grace only applies to your Paper.

• (3) Technically, this does not change the due date for the paper (which remains August 8th).
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• Patricia and Paul Churchland on mind, religion and ethics.
• Both Patricia and Paul are Canadian Philosophers.
• Both work in the areas of neurophilosophy and philosophy of cognitive science.
• At the time of the interview they were philosophers at the University of California at San Diego (Paul, at least, is still there).
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• Issues brought up in the program:
• (1) Mind is what makes us, humans, persons and moral agents.
• (2) “The mind is what the brain does”. Cognition (or thought) is a product of the brain.
• (3) The brain is a computational system, albeit much more complicated a system than anything we have created.
Some of the best minds of our times
(with Peter Gzowski)

• (4) Animals other than human also have minds.
• (5) Human and nonhuman animals cognize, or process and manipulate data, in importantly different ways than any computer we have thus far created.
• (6) To know how the brain works we need to know how the components (e.g. neurons or synapses) work.
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• (7) Philosophy as an introspective discipline is importantly different than philosophy informed by the cognitive sciences.

• (8) Big Blue does not function in the relevantly similar ways to the human (or nonhuman) mind. It beats humans only because of its speed, its limited focus, and the limited choices available to it to accomplish the task at hand.
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• (9) Classical AI is doomed to failure. Successful AI must simulate the ways in which brains actually function.
• (10) Can a machine have a mind?
• (11) The mind is not an inner light. In biological organisms, we find certain capacities or abilities required to survive and reproduce that have evolved over a long period of time on earth. Behavioral complexity requires an increasingly complex coherent control center and a coherent body image (or inner model of the body and the environment). Mind emerged from this evolution of complexity in the central nervous systems of animals.
(12) Descartes refused to explain the mind using the physical framework he had otherwise adopted to explain natural phenomena.

(13) We can increasingly explain human and animal behavior without the appeal to non-physical entities.

(14) Dualism: There are material and non-material substances in the universe.

(15) Dualism may again become an attractive option to philosophers of mind but only if physicalist models experience significance failure in explaining or predicting human and nonhuman cognition.
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• (16) What of God and religion? It is unlikely that we have a soul. Is it unlikely that there is a God.

• (17) Then what of the spiritual? You can be an atheist and spiritual.

• (18) What of morality? What is important is that we have a sense of community, can cooperate to achieve certain ends, and organize ourselves in relation to each other in ways that are fair-minded and just.
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• (19) A model of morality that depends on the existence of a Divine Legislator has not done very well in human history.

• (20) The minded animal can learn and recognize analogous cases to those prototypes it has up to that moment used to organize its ‘understanding’ of the environment and its subsequent behavior. This is an important aspect of being minded.
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• (21) Our increasing knowledge of the brain promises better medical treatment than is currently available for various mental or cognitive problems.

• (22) Are there ethical issues that fall out of too much knowledge about how our brains work and our individual genomes? Should we stop research in these areas because of the potential abuse of any knowledge acquired in this area?
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

- (23) Is medical treatment natural? Should that matter?
- (24) Where does pleasure come from? Does it emerge from the chemical or neuronal processes of the brain? The Churchlands think it does. The center part of the brain, which is the most primitive area of the brain, is found among many animals on earth. It seems to be correlated with the pleasure we (and presumably other animals) feel.
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• (25) Perceptual knowledge itself a brain process.
• (26) If we do understand the physical processes of the brain associated with certain destructive behaviors or addictive behaviors, it offers us the hope of physical treatment for the causes of such behavior.
• (27) Antonio Demasio. Emotions must play a part in decision making or we cannot make practical or coherent decisions (that is, we cannot be rational without our emotions).
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

- (28) The important thing to being rational, and making rational decisions, is to have an appropriately balanced set of emotional responses to things. Emotions contain interesting and important pieces of information to which the brain should be sensitive. They are an integral part of human rationality.
Some of the best minds of our times (with Peter Gzowski)

• (29) Humans that lose their emotional affect lose the ability to reason out certain very basic or simple life decisions.

• (30) Neurophilosophy: The interface between what we know of the brain and what we know of the mind.
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

- Philosophy of Mind is one area of study falling under metaphysics.
- Questions in the philosophy of mind concern such matters as the nature of mind, the relationship between the mind and brain, and the criteria for ascribing mind.
- Some examples:
  - What is a belief? What is a thought?
  - Are mental states brain states?
  - Is consciousness a physical process or set of processes?
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

- Three areas of study are associated with Philosophy of Mind:
  - (1) The Philosophy of Psychology.
  - (2) Philosophical Psychology.
  - (3) The study of the “inherent nature of mental phenomena” (FP, p.389)...this is the metaphysics of mind proper.
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

• (1) The Philosophy of Psychology: In this area of philosophical analysis philosophers critically examine the methodology of the cognitive sciences and the theoretical entities posited to explain human and nonhuman animal behavior (FP, p.389).

• (2) Philosophical psychology: In this area philosophers are concerned with providing philosophical analyses of commonsense categories or theoretical entities used to explain human and nonhuman animal behavior (FP, p.389).
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

• (3) The metaphysics of mind proper: In this area philosophers attempt to answer questions regarding the nature of mental phenomena, the relationship of mental and brain states, the intentionality of mental states, the nature of consciousness, the causal relationship between the greater world and our mental states, \textit{et cetera} (FP, pp.389-90).
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

- There are two fundamental directions in which you might be pulled: Towards a monistic treatment or analysis of mind or towards a dualistic treatment or analysis of mind.
- A monistic treatment or analysis of mind will seek to EITHER reduce our talk of mental states to talk of neuronal or brain states OR provide an analysis of our cognitive vocabulary such that it does not require extra-physical or extra-material explanatory/theoretical entities.
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

• A dualistic treatment or analysis of mind will seek to keep separate talk of brain states and talk of mental states in such a way that our cognitive vocabulary will require extra-physical or extra-material explanatory/theoretical entities.
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

- **Substance Dualism** and **Property Dualism** are two types of dualistic treatment or analysis of mind.
- In **Substance Dualism**, mental states are substantially different than brain or neuronal states. The mind, under this account, is not physical or material. In the relevant religious traditions this is often discussed in terms of the soul and the body.
- In **Property Dualism**, certain non-physical mental properties (e.g. consciousness) emerge from the proper functioning of our brains (see FP, p.391).
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

• Under monistic treatments or analyses of mind you will find Behaviorism, Mind-brain Identity Theory, and Functionalism.

• Behaviorism, which became the dominant theory of human and nonhuman animal behavior in the early to mid Twentieth Century (and continues to be the dominant theory of nonhuman animal behavior), comes in three basic forms.
• (i) **Methodological Behaviorism** seeks to explain and predict human and nonhuman behavior through the study of environmental stimuli and behavioral responses in the relevant animals. Methodological Behaviorists hope to develop a science of psychology that only regards publicly observable contingencies when explaining or predicting behavior. Mentality, or an ‘inner realm’ of private mental (conscious or unconscious) states, is not used in behaviorist explanatory or predictive models of behavior. Importantly, methodological behaviorism does not deny the existence of the mental, it simply disregards it as an appropriate or possible area of scientific study (**FP**, p.394).
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

• (ii) **Metaphysical Behaviorism** seeks to understand, describe or explain human and nonhuman animal behavior in terms of physical dispositions to act (see FP, p.391). Unlike Methodological Behaviorists, Metaphysical Behaviorists deny that there is an inner private realm of mentality (see FP, pp.391, 394).

• (iii) **Logical Behaviorism** seeks to reduce our discourse about the mind to discourse about dispositions to act. Logical Behaviorists were also Metaphysical Behaviorists (FP, pp.394-95).
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind

- **Mind-brain Identity Theory** contends that types of mental states are nothing more than types of brain states.
- **Functionalism** resists the Identity Theorist’s identity of mental states and brain states in order to allow for the multiple realizability of mental states (i.e. individuals without central nervous systems composed of neurons can nevertheless have minds). For the Functionalists an internal state of an individual counts as a type of mental state if it performs an analogous causal role to that which is performed by the relevant brain states of the properly functioning cognitively mature human (see FP, p.391).
Preliminary comments on the Philosophy of Mind