Mind & Brain Fifth Paper Fall, 2011

By November 8 you will have encountered three different basic views of the relationship of minds to bodies: dualism, behaviorism, and materialism. Focus on the view you find most appealing (or least problematic). In your own words, define and describe this claim of how the mind is related to the body or brain. Review the reasons and arguments that support the concept, and give an account of the difficulties and problems you see with it, bringing in aspects of the other two concepts of mind in the process. Weighing the pros and cons in your own mind, how satisfactory do your find this view of the mind-body relationship to be, and why? As always with papers in our course, this is not intended to be a research paper using outside sources. Obviously you are more than welcome to read as widely as you wish on the topic, but in the end focus back on our courses assigned readings and discussion.

Your approximately 4-page paper is due in class on Tuesday, November 8.

Class and reading schedule:

**November 3: René Descartes, *Meditation VI*** (from book we previously used)

**Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Chap. 1 and part of 2)** (handed out 10/27)

What is the mind? From the notion that a person is a thinking thing, Descartes inferred that mind and body are two distinct substances, mental and physical respectively. But how could a non-physical mind interact with a physical brain or body? An alternative is to take mental processes to be ways of behaving, but that seems to leave out conscious experience.

**November 8: Jerome Shaffer, *Materialism* (Philosophy of Mind, Chapter 3)**

(Attached)

Is mental activity the same thing as brain activity? If so, which aspect of brain activity? Why does ourmental life then seem so different from brain activity?