What is Consciousness?

"By "consciousness I simply mean those subjective states of sentience or awareness that begin when one awakes in the morning from a dreamless sleep and continue throughout the day until one goes to sleep at night or falls into a coma, or dies, or otherwise becomes, as one would say "unconscious"."" — John Searle

Ways of thinking about the relation of mind and body, if relation there be:

• **Dualism**: the view that mind and matter (body) are distinct and independent kinds of substances (Descartes, 1596-1660)
• **Subjective Idealism**: the view that the body itself is nothing but a collection of actual or possible sights, sounds, touches and smells (Berkeley, 1685-1753).
• **Materialism**: the view that the mind is reducible to matter.
• **Epiphenomenalism**: the view that mind is not itself a material thing, but is a distinct and causally impotent by-product (an "epi-phenomenon") of the brain or the world represented by physics.
• **Double- or Dual- Aspect Theories**: those views that deny that the mind and body are distinct and independent substances, each capable of "existing" on its own, but rather are two "aspects" of a substance that in itself is neither mental nor physical. Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) and P. F. Strawson.
• **Identity Theory**: the view that holds that mental events (aches and pains, sensations, *qualia*, thoughts and desires) are simply identical with brain processes — in the way (for an example) lightning flashes are "identical" with electrical discharges.
• **Eliminative Materialism**: the view that mental states, as they are ordinarily understood by us, have the status like that of witches and phlogiston or the *elan vital* and should simply be deleted from our theorizing about ourselves.

What Consciousness is not:
Consciousness should not be confused with
i. Knowledge,
ii. Attention, or
iii. Self-consciousness

What are the relations between Consciousness and the Brain?

• Higher and lower level features of a system:
• Top-down and bottom-up approaches to the mind-brain problem
• The Modular Conception

Some Features of Consciousness That A Theory of the Relation Between Mind and Body should Explain:

1. Subjectivity.
2. Unity.
3. Intentionality.
4. Central and Peripheral Consciousness
5. The Gestalt Structure of Consciousness
6. The Aspect of Familiarity
7. Moods
8. Boundary Conditions