Phil 329: Minds, Machines, and Persons

Instructor: David Sorensen

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Office hours: Skype: Wednesdays 1-2pm (use email above) or by appointment
Meeting time: N/A
Meeting place: Virtual

In this course, we will study and discuss competing philosophical theories about the nature of the human mind and the possibility of creating machines that are intelligent. We will also consider the ethical implications of creating machines with minds like ours. The course will be broken into three sections. The first section will focus on philosophy of mind, the second on the foundations of cognitive science and artificial intelligence research, and in the third section, we will discuss the philosophical and ethical issues surrounding the possibility of mind uploading, virtual reality, and robot rights.

Here are some of the questions that we will raise and try to answer:

- What is the nature of the mind? What is the relation between our minds and brains?
- Is it possible to build machines that have minds like ours?
- What is intelligence and how does it relate to moral standing?
- If we build robots that have minds like ours, should they have the same rights as us?
- In the future, will it be possible to "upload" our minds to a cloud server?

Course Requirements

1. Course readings:
(a) Textbooks:
   1) The Mechanical Mind by Tim Crane (**3rd** edition)
(b) Supplementary readings available on Canvas (go to "pages" and then "readings and homework", or visit the "Files" section)
   1) You are expected to read the assigned articles and chapters **before** the class session the readings are scheduled for. However, I recommend doing the readings both before and after the class session, as the material may at times be difficult, or unclear the first time reading it. After lecture and in-class discussions, the material should be much easier to understand. The tests will assume that you have understood the readings. If you do not understand them, please send me an email or schedule an appointment with me during office hours.
(c) Powerpoints will be made available on Canvas (typically) the day before class. I recommend skimming the slides before class and carefully reviewing them before exams.
2. Course evaluation:

(a) Exams: There will be one midterm comprised of multiple choice, true or false, short answer, and essay questions.

(b) Homework assignments: Canvas quizzes (based on lecture and readings), reading questions, short writing assignments, discussion posts

(c) Paper: There will be one (6-8 page double spaced) paper due at the end of the semester. The paper will be an argumentative essay where you will defend and/or criticize a specific thesis related to AI, cognitive science and/or philosophy of mind.

Grade breakdown:

Homework assignments: 25%
Midterm: 20%
Paper: 25%
Final exam: 25%

Expectations of students:

Students are expected to carefully read the syllabus, regularly attend class, do the readings, keep notes, and complete all course assignments. Students should also regularly check your email (every day), and log onto Canvas to check for course updates or revised deadlines. If any problems arise, you should contact me ASAP.

Assignment deadlines: Each week, there will be two modules posted (one on Tuesday and the other on Thursday). Unless stated otherwise, all of the module assignments for a given week are due at the end of that same week (Sunday, by 11:59 pm).

Grading and feedback: You will receive some form of feedback for most of the assignments in this course. Problem sets, which are aut0-graded will contain explanatory notes if a question is answered incorrectly. For argument maps and discussion posts, your grade will be determined by a rubric which will be graded by me at the beginning of the following week.

Detailed schedule of topics/readings (tentative)

O: Online readings

Date	Topic	Readings(s)
9/1	Course introduction	Syllabus
9/3	The Mechanical Mind	Crane Ch. 1 Recommended: Papineau
9/8	Cartesian Dualism	O: Selections from Descartes

9/10	Other varieties of dualism	O: Huxley, James
9/15	Logical Behaviorism	O: Jackson/Mitchell, Putnam
9/17	Identity Theory	O: Smart, Armstrong
9/22	Functionalism	O: Fodor, Heil
9/24	The Puzzle of Representation	Crane Ch. 2
9/29	Intentionality	Crane Ch. 3, O: Brentano
10/1	Intentionality II	O: Searle
10/6	Exam I	
10/8	Common sense Psychology	Crane Ch. 5
10/13	Computation and Representation	Crane Ch. 6
10/15	The Turing Test and AI	Crane Ch. 7
10/20	The Chinese Room and other critiques of AI	O: Searle
10/22	Responses to AI's critics	O: Boden, Fodor
10/27	Mechanisms of Thought	Crane Ch. 8
10/29	Mental Representation	Crane Ch. 9
11/3	Mental Representation II	Crane Ch. 9
11/5	Biological Basis of the Mechanical Mind	Crane Ch. 10
11/10	The extended mind and embodied cognition	Crane Ch. 11
11/11	The extended mind and embodied cognition II	Crane Ch. 11
11/17	Non-reductive approaches	Crane Ch. 12
11/19	Mind uploading	O: Chalmers
11/24	Mind uploading II	O: Schneider
11/26	Thanksgiving	
12/1	Virtual Reality	O: Chalmers

12/3	Virtual Reality II	TBA
12/8	Robot rights	TBA
12/10	Robot rights II	TBA

Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy: *Principles of academic integrity require that every Rutgers University student:*

- *properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others*
- *properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work*
- *make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration*
- *obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions*
- *treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress*
- *uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing.*

Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to insure that:

- *everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments*
- *all student work is fairly evaluated and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others*
- *the academic and ethical development of all students is fostered*
- *the reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced.*

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

Disability services: The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources (e-mail: https://ods.rutgers.edu/, phone: (848) 445-6800). Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/applying-for-services. Please give your letter of

accommodation to me as soon as possible, and we will coordinate the accommodations privately.