

PHIL 221: History and Philosophy of Science

Topic for Winter Semester, 2014: History and Philosophy of Cognitive Science

Course description

Cognitive science developed in the 1950s out of confluence of ideas in various disciplines. Its central theoretical commitments, however, are that the mind is a kind of machine – a computational device – and thought is a form of symbol manipulation. Elaborations of this idea led to the development of a conceptual framework that is still mainstream in all the sciences of the mind. The purpose of this course is to examine the seminal intellectual events that led to the creation of cognitive science and to investigate its philosophical foundations.

Objectives

On successful completion of this unit, students will (a) understand the contemporary conceptual framework for the sciences of the mind; (b) have a grasp of the innovations that led to this framework; and (c) have developed skills in careful reading and expository writing.

Course commitments

This course is made up of two one-hour lectures and one conference each week.

Times and venues

Lecture: TR 4:35 pm - 5:25 pm in Stewart Biology Building N2/2

Conferences: TBA

Contact details

Lecturer: Ian Gold

ian.gold@mcgill.ca

3465 Peel, Room 401

Telephone: x-3418 (to be changed shortly)

Office hours: by appointment

Conference Leader: Karina Vold

karina.vold@mail.mcgill.ca

Office location and hours TBA

Assessment

The work for the course includes (a) an electronic journal (30% of the final grade); (b) a short paper (35% of the final grade); and (c) a final exam (35% of the final grade).