

**PHIL 3652**  
**Topics in Contemporary Western Philosophy 當代西方哲學專題**

**Course Outline**

**Time : W 2:30pm-5:15pm**

**Location: FYB 405**

**Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)**

This course looks at the contemporary philosophical debate on the nature of mind and cognition – in particular at philosophical accounts of mind and cognition as embodied and situated (rather than merely ‘brainbound’). Readings will include mainly works in contemporary philosophy of cognitive science, from different angles (empirically minded, analytic, phenomenological). They will also include draft chapters from the lecturer’s book-in-progress.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

**Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)**

1. Learn about the historical development of cognitive science and its philosophy from the 1950s to the present day.
2. Understand strengths and weaknesses of different conceptions of mind and its relation to body and world.
3. Grasp main themes in the contemporary debate on the embodied and situated approach to mind and cognition.
4. Develop presentational and critical skills, orally and in writing.
5. Learn to conduct independent research on the topics of the course.
6. Develop a critical attitude and capacity to articulate original arguments.

**Topics**

The symbolic approach in cognitive science

Embodied cognition

Affordances

Extended mind

Scaffolded mind

Scaffolded affectivity

Incorporation

**Learning activities**

Student presentations

Lecturer’s explanations

Class discussion

Essay writing

**Assessment scheme as prescribed on CUSIS (revise if necessary)**

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Class participation	Active contribution to class discussion	10%
Presentation	20-minute presentation on the reading for the week	25%
Essay 1	1000 words (+/- 10%)	25%
Essay 2	2000 words (+/- 10%)	40%

**Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)**

1. **Participation** will be assessed on the basis of active involvement in class discussion.
2. Student **presentations** will start each class, and will be complemented by the lecturer's explanation only after - so they need to be of very high standards of clarity. You will be asked to use PowerPoint to present, to send the slides to the lecturer before the presentations, and to make the slides available to the rest of the class. If you cannot present because you are ill, please contact the lecturer asap. You will be asked to present on another day, or to submit an alternative assignment TBD.
3. **Presentation, essay 1, and essay 2** need to be *all on different topics* from the module.
4. All essays need to be based on the topics of the course, and show clear evidence of preparation on them. Failure to show that you have followed the course and studied the course material may result in a fail.
5. All assignments, including the presentation, need to show aspects of critical engagements with the readings and develop independent arguments.
6. You need to agree each essay title with the lecturer, in writing, unless you choose one of the following pre-given titles:
  1. Critically assess the view that the mind is a physical symbol system.
  2. Do you agree with Dreyfus that symbolic AI systems are not good models of the human mind? Why or why not?
  3. Is the mind embodied? Why or why not?
  4. Critically discuss and assess Gibson's account of affordances.
  5. Is the mind extended? Why or why not?
  6. Critically assess a topic from Colombetti's book-in-progress [\*discuss your idea with the lecturer in advance to ensure you choose a feasible topic].

**Grade Descriptor**

Please refer to: [http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade\\_descriptors.pdf](http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf)

**Required readings (to go with weekly schedule):**

Adams, Fred & Aizawa, Ken (2001). The bounds of cognition. *Philosophical Psychology*, 14, 43-64.

Clark, Andy & Chalmers, David J. (1998/2010). The extended mind. *Analysis*, 58, 7-19

Colombetti, Giovanna (in preparation). Draft chapters from forthcoming book on "scaffolded affectivity" (or how we use the material world to shape our affective life).

Colombetti, Giovanna & Krueger, Joel (2015). Scaffoldings of the affective mind. *Philosophical Psychology*, 28 (8), 1157-1176.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. (1979) From micro-worlds to knowledge representation: AI at an impasse. In J. Haugeland (ed.), *Mind Design II* (pp. 143-182). Cambridge MA: MIT Press

Gallagher, Shaun & Zahavi, Dan (2008) *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*. Oxon and New York: Routledge. Chapter 7, “The Embodied Mind”.

Gibson, James J. (1977). The theory of affordances. In R. Shaw & J. Bransford (eds.), *Perceiving, Acting and Knowing* (pp. 67-82). Hillsdale: Erlbaum.

Kirchhoff, Michael D. (2012). Extended cognition and fixed properties: steps to a third-wave version of extended cognition. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 11, 287-308.

Newell, A. & Simon, H.A. (1976). Computer science as empirical inquiry: symbols and search. *Communications of the ACM*, 19(3), 113-126.

Sterelny, Kim (2010). Minds: extended or scaffolded? *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 9, 465-481.

Sutton, Jon (2010). Exograms and interdisciplinarity: History, the extended mind, and the civilizing process. In R. Menary (ed.) *The Extended Mind* (pp. 189-225). Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Useful videos of SHRDLU (to complement the session on Dreyfus):

<http://hci.stanford.edu/winograd/shrdlu/>  
<https://welovephilosophy.com/2013/04/26/shrdlu-on-film/>

### Recommended learning resources

*The following are not required readings, but may be useful as general references:*

1. Clark, Andy (2000). *Mindware: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Cognitive Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Gallagher, Shaun & Zahavi, Dan (2008). *The Phenomenological Mind*. Routledge.
3. This website is also useful and has videos with good talks on the topic of situated cognition:  
<http://www.hdc.ed.ac.uk/>

### Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>
6 Sept	Introduction	No reading
13 Sept	The symbolic mind	Newell and Simon (1976)
20 Sept	Early critique of symbolic AI	Dreyfus (1979)
27 Sept	Embodiment	Gallagher & Zahavi (2008), chapter 7
4 Oct	Affordances	Gibson (1977)
11 Oct	Extended mind - first wave	Clark and Chalmers (1998) Adams & Aizawa (2001)
18 Oct	Extended mind –	Sutton (2010)

	second and third wave	Kirchhoff (2012)
25 Oct	Scaffolded mind	Sterelny (2010)
1 Nov	Scaffolded affectivity	Colombetti & Krueger (2015)
8 Nov	“	Colombetti chapter 2 – a conceptual map for affective scaffolding
15 Nov	“	Colombetti chapter 3 – different levels of consciousness in affective scaffolding
22 Nov	“	Colombetti chapter 4 – feeling objects as parts of the body
29 Nov	“	Colombetti chapter 5 – feeling objects as part of the sense of identity

**Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)**

<b>Teacher</b>	
Name:	Colombetti, Giovanna
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<b>TA</b>	
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**Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.