

IFI7153	Philosophy and Cognition		
Study load: 3(ECTS/EAP)	Load of contact hours: 14	Study semester: Fall 2012	Exam
Objectives:	To create opportunities for acquiring a better understanding about some foundational issues related to human cognition		
Course outline:	<p>The course will treat three major macro topics.</p> <p>The first macro topic will look into the ecological nature of human cognition (6 hours). This part of the course will be devoted to showing how human cognition cannot be confined within the skull, but it is essentially a distributed, situated, and embodied phenomenon, which could be better accounted from an ecological perspective. The main pillars of the ecological approach will be presented during the course are: 1) a critique to the computational theory of mind; 2) the illustration of the main tenets of the so-called extended mind hypothesis; 3) the idea of human cognition as an open-ended ecological controller, which is meant for seeking out chances.</p> <p>The second macro topic will treat some issue related to the evolution of cognition and how to deal with it (4 hours). The evolution of cognition hits the problem of the relationship between nature and culture. Firstly, we will discuss the limitations of evolutionary psychology in addressing the issue. In the second part an alternative approach based on the idea of cognitive niche construction will be presented and discussed.</p> <p>The third topic will deal with the limits of consciousness (4 hours). Consciousness does not exhaust the meaning and the activity of human cognition. A substantial part of our cognitive capacities are not directly controlled by our consciousness. In order to give students some hint about this intricate issue, three main subtopics will be treated: 1) the tacit dimension of knowing – the inability of making our knowledge fully explicit; 2) the phenomenon of confabulation – the tendency not necessarily pathological to produce explanations for our choices, beliefs, decisions, which have nothing to deal with their real motives; 3) the unconscious – the hypothetical realm of repressed wishes and feelings, unorganized intuitions, memories, etc.</p>		
Learning Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learner has acquired knowledge on foundational issues in the field of cognition and philosophy - Learner has acquired the skills to discuss topics related to cognition and philosophy - Learner has acquired skills to combine different concepts related to foundational issues in cognition and philosophy - Learner has acquired skills of written expression. - Learner is familiar with the major foundational issues related to cognition and philosophy. 		
Assessment Methods:	<p>Essay</p> <p>The essay should be about 3000 words and cover any subject within the general limits of the course. Topic and title should be briefly discussed with</p>		

	<p>the supervisor. The paper will give up to 80 points.</p> <p>Written Tasks</p> <p>There will be a written task for each lecture for a total of 4 tasks. The task should be done in written form by using a blog or emailing the teacher. A task can be the discussion of a statement or the analysis of a clip by using information and knowledge acquired during the class meetings.</p> <p>Each task will be given at the end of each lecture and students will have about a week to complete it.</p> <p>Students should let the teacher keep track of their progress over newsfeed (RSS) or by email. Students can receive up to 20 points.</p>
Teacher(s):	Emanuele Bardone, post-doc
Subject name in Estonian:	Tunnetusfilosoofia
Prerequisite subjekt(s):	none
Compulsory Literature:	<p>R.D. Rupert, Introduction: The Mind, the Computer, and the Alternatives. In R.D: Rupert, <i>Cognitive Systems and the Extended Mind</i>, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009.</p> <p>A. Clark, Soft Selves and Ecological Control. In Don Ross, David Spurrett, Harold Kincaid and G. Lynn Stephens (eds), <i>Distributed Cognition and the Will</i>, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2007.</p> <p>R. C. Richardson, <i>Evolutionary Psychology as Maladapted Psychology</i>, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2007, Chapters 1, 2, 3.</p> <p>E. Bardone, Moving the Bonds: Distributing Cognition through Cognitive Niche Construction. In E. Bardone, <i>Seeking Chances. From Biased Rationality to Distributed Cognition</i>, Springer, Heidelberg, 2011.</p> <p>M. Polanyi, <i>The Tacit Dimension</i>, University Of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009, Chapter 1.</p> <p>C.G. Jung, Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation, in C.G. Jung, <i>The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious</i>, Routledge, London, 1991.</p> <p>W. Hirstein, <i>Brain Fiction: Self-deception and the riddle of confabulation</i>, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2005, Chapter 1.</p>
Replacement Literature:	<p>A. Clark, <i>Supersizing the Mind. Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension</i>. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.</p> <p>Laland, K.N., Odling-Smee, F.J. & Feldman, M.W., Cultural niche construction and human evolution, <i>Journal of Evolutionary Biology</i> 14: 22–33.</p> <p>W. Hirstein, <i>Brain Fiction: Self-deception and the riddle of confabulation</i>, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2005.</p>
Participation and Exam requirements:	Requirements that should be fulfilled in order for student to be admitted to exam: students should not miss more than 25% of their class meetings
Independent work:	Compiling a written work, a 3000 words essay, and completion of the written tasks

<p>Grading criteria scale or the minimal level necessary for passing the subject:</p>	<p>91 or more - "A": Learner has fully acquired knowledge on foundational issues in the field of cognition and philosophy, and demonstrated to be able to combine different concepts in the domain of philosophy and cognition. Excellent written exposition and creative elaboration of ideas and concepts acquired during the course.</p> <p>81-90 - "B" Learner has satisfactorily acquired knowledge on foundational issues in the field of cognition and philosophy, and demonstrated to be able to combine different concepts in the domain of philosophy and cognition. Very good written exposition of ideas and concepts acquired during the course.</p> <p>71-80 - "C" Learner has sufficiently acquired knowledge on foundational issues in the field of cognition and philosophy, and demonstrated to be able to combine different concepts in the domain of philosophy and cognition. Good written exposition and elaboration of ideas and concepts acquired during the course.</p> <p>61-70 - "D" Learner has superficially acquired knowledge on foundational issues in the field of cognition and philosophy, and demonstrated to be able to combine different concepts in the domain of philosophy and cognition. Poor written exposition and elaboration of ideas and concepts acquired during the course.</p> <p>51-60 - "E" Learner has partly acquired knowledge on foundational issues in the field of cognition and philosophy, and demonstrated to be able to combine different concepts in the domain of philosophy and cognition. Not entirely satisfactory exposition of ideas and concepts acquired during the course.</p> <p>50 or less - "F" Learner has failed to acquire knowledge on foundational issues in the field of cognition and philosophy, and to demonstrate to be able to combine different concepts in the domain of philosophy and cognition. Inadequate written exposition of ideas and concepts acquired during the course.</p>
--	--

Information about the course:

05/10/2012 1-2pm	Introduction to philosophy of cognition. (1 hour)
05/10/2012 2-3pm	Why cognition is not computation (1 hour)
05/10/2012 3-5pm	The extended mind hypothesis: theory and evidence (2 hours)
19/10/2012 1-3pm	Human cognition as an open-ended ecological controller (2 hours)
19/10/2012 3-5pm	The limits of evolutionary psychology in explaining the evolution of cognition (2 hours)

01/11/2012 1-3pm	The theory of cognitive niche construction and its evolutionary meaning (2 hours)
01/11/2012 3-5pm	The tacit dimension: theory and evidence (2 hours)
16/11/2012 3-5pm	The confabulating mind and the Unconscious (2 hours)