PHIL 221: History and Philosophy of Science
Topic for Winter Semester, 2019: 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 commitment, however, is 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 “computer model of the mind” – the conceptual framework that remains mainstream for all of the sciences of the mind. The purposes of this course are (a) to explore the seminal intellectual events in the establishment of cognitive science; and (b) to outline the computer model of the mind.

Objectives
On successful completion of this unit, students will (a) understand the contemporary conceptual framework of 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 three one-hour lectures each week.

Times and venues
Lectures: MWF 10:35 – 11:25
Location: Stewart Bio S3-3

Contact details
LECTURER: IAN GOLD
ian.gold@mcgill.ca
Leacock 908
Telephone: x-8939
Office hours: by appointment

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) three in-class tests (35% of the final grade).

Readings (all available on mycourses)
Descartes R. 1641. Meditations (various editions).


**Handicaps**

If you have a visible or invisible handicap (e.g. mental disorder), I encourage you to let me know about it so that I can accommodate and assist you.

**The fine print**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/ for more information).

L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/).

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.