

PHI 591: Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind And the Web

April 10-28: M, W, F, 6:00-10:10 PM.

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Description

Main topic. Can cutting edge research at the intersection of contemporary epistemology and philosophy of mind inform and be informed by the nascent field of Web science?

Background. Within philosophy, research is increasingly concerned with the ever-growing relationship between man and machine. A number of epistemologists and philosophers of mind have lately turned their focus on the hypotheses of extended and distributed cognition, according to which cognition may occasionally extend to the artefacts we employ (e.g., smartphones, laptops, etc.) or even be distributed between several collaborating individuals (e.g., scientific research teams, sports teams, etc.). Similarly, within Web science, research has always focused on the engineering of efficient human-machine interfaces, aspiring to the seamless integration of the two. Recently, there has also been a surge towards the development of Social Web and Web 2.0 technologies that aim to promote social interactions and increased user participation in the creation and maintenance of online content.

Method. Bearing in mind the parallels between the aims of these two fields of study, this course will introduce the idea of *philosophical engineering*: How can philosophical theories on the nature and boundaries of individual and social cognition impact on the structure and development of the Web? It will cover topics such as understanding the authority of information resources; the reliability of Social Machines such as Wikipedia; the ethics of extended and distributed cognition; the future of digital education and more.