

SyllabusCourse

Time: T/TH 1:00-2:20
Place: Hentschke 201
Website: Blackboard

Instructor Hamid R. Ekbia
Office: Hentschke 210
e-mail: hamid_ekbia@redlands.edu
Phone: x 3127
Office Hours: M/W 1:30 – 2:30, T/TH 2:30 –3:30, or by appointment

Textbook:

Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again
Clark, Andy
The MIT Press, 1997

Auxiliary Material: In addition to the textbook, other reading material will be made available in hard copy or online (on the Blackboard system)

Important: The reading material for each session should be read beforehand according to the schedule (page 3 of this document)

Course Description

This is an introductory course to cognitive science. Broadly speaking, cognitive science is the *science of the mind* — it seeks to understand intelligent behavior in terms of the states of the mind. In so doing, it draws upon the ideas and findings in many other disciplines such as psychology, artificial intelligence, computer science, linguistics, philosophy, and neuroscience. In this course, we will get to learn about many of these disciplines, but our ultimate concern is to better understand ourselves as intelligent human beings. The goal is not so much to acquire more “knowledge” about the mind, as it is to engage in an intellectual soul-searching about our place in the bigger scheme of things. Cognitive science is an area of inquiry that opens up more questions than it can (currently or possibly) answer, but it certainly helps us think more *clearly* about our minds and about ourselves. This is the source of its attraction to me. I am awed and enthralled by the beauty of our minds, and hope to convey this sense of awe and enchantment to you during the semester.

So... if you are here to get precise answers to your questions about mind and cognition you are probably in the wrong place. If, however, you want to think clearly and are prepared to immerse in a fascinating intellectual journey that would take you from ancient philosophy and religion all the way to modern supercomputers, artificial neural networks, and humanoid robots, this is the right place. Welcome aboard!

NB: For other perspectives on cognitive science, visit the following websites

<http://www.cogs.indiana.edu/~underg/index.html>
<http://www.cogs.indiana.edu/~underg/whatisletterRG.html>

Writing

Writing is an effective tool for clear thinking, and it constitutes a major activity of this course. You will do two kinds of writing:

- a. *Papers*: Three short papers will be assigned, about 1200–1500 words each. As discussed in a separate handout in more detail, each paper will be set on a 3-week schedule (repeated three times during the semester):
 - i. *First week*: Submit a first draft, and post it on Blackboard for your group.
 - ii. *Second week*: Post comments on 3 other students' drafts.
 - iii. *Third week*: Revise your paper based on the comments and feedback you have received.

The topics of the first two papers will be assigned and the same for the whole class, but you can choose the topic of the third paper yourself.

- b. *Squibs*: The other type of writing is short essays that you will write on a current topic during the semester. There will be four such squibs, 400–500 words each, which you will print and submit on paper to me directly.

Grading

The final grade will be based on:

- Squibs: 20% (5% each)
- Papers: 45% (15% per paper: 5% each for 1st draft, comments, and final version)
- Exams: 35% (15% midterm and 20% final)

Hard work, honesty, helpfulness, and humility throughout the semester and in relation to others are the major principles of this class, and will be rewarded in the course.

Participation: Students are expected to take active part in class discussions by paying close attention, raising questions, making suggestions, posing challenges, casting doubt, sharing experience, and so on — basically, any means that demonstrates their interest and enthusiasm but does not violate the University of Redlands' [Standards of Academic Honesty](#) (pages 13–20 of the catalogue).

Taking advantage of instructor office hours is strongly recommended.

Late hand-in is *not* accepted, except under documented emergency situations.

The **midterm** will be taken on Thursday Oct. 21, and the final is scheduled for Thursday Dec. 16 at 9:00 am.

Schedule

Period	Topic	Reading	Activity
Week 1: Sept. 6–10	What is this thing called “mind”?	BT: Introduction	Read syllabus, get reading material
Week 2: Sept. 13–18	Descartes and Dualism Skinner and Behaviorism	Clark (2000): Intro BT: Chapter 1	Squib 1 due on Thursday
Week 3: Sept. 20–24	The Turing Test The Chinese Room	Turing: 1950 Searle(1980)	Squib 2 due on Thursday
Week 4: Sept. 27– Oct. 1	The Developing Mind	BT: Chapter 2 BT: Chapter 3	Paper 1 draft due
Week 5: Oct. 4–8	Folk Psychology	Machado & Silva (2003) Ekbia (2003)	Paper 1 comments
Week 6: Oct. 11-15	Mind and Brain	Fall Break BT: Chapter 4	Paper 1 revised
Week 7: Oct. 18–22	Mind and Body	BT: Chapter 5 Optional: Brooks (2003)	Midterm on Thursday
Week 8: Oct. 25–29	Mind and World	BT: Chapter 6	Squib 3 due on Thursday
Week 9: Nov. 1–5	Mind in Motion: Emergence	BT: Chapter 7 Hofstadter (1985)	Paper 2 draft
Week 10: Nov. 8-12	Mind and Action	BT: Chapter 8 Hutchins (1995)	Paper 2 comments
Week 11: Nov. 15–19	Mind and Culture	BT: Chapter 9 Gee: Chapter 3	Paper 2 revised
Week 12: Nov. 22–26	Mind and Language	BT: Chapter 10 Gee: Chapter 4	Squib 4 due on Thursday
Week 13: Nov. 29 -Dec.3	Mind, Machines, and Consciousness	Kurzweil (2002) Searle (2002)	Paper 3 draft
Week 14: Dec. 6–10	Mind and Creativity	Hofstadter (2001)	Paper 3 comments
Final’s Week	<i>Mind under Test!</i>	All of the above	Paper 3 revised Final Exam