

Foundations and New Directions in Philosophy of Mind

What is the nature and boundaries of mental activity? How can mental life be scientifically naturalized? Traditional philosophy of mind considers mental representations as resulting from informationally based processes implemented by the hardware (i.e., the brain). In the 1990s, philosophers of mind began calling this core assumption by questioning the claim that that mental life reduces to representational computations in the brain. During the first half of the course, students will study and understand the central theoretical and methodological commitments of Computational Theory of Mind (CTM): what are the conditions of mental representations and representational content? During the second half of the course, students will be introduced to how in the past 20 years the application of Dynamical Systems Theory (DST) to investigations ranging from physiologically fundamental single-neuron activity and neuronal networks to behaviourally complex decision making and sensorimotor coordination, brings up a conceptualization of the mind that challenges the view of mental life as purely informationally-based.