

Course syllabus

Philosophy of Mind and Design

Det sociala medvetandet och design

EXTF76, 5.0 credits, G2 (First Cycle)

Valid for: 2025/26

Faculty: Faculty of Engineering LTH

Decided by: PLED C/D

Date of Decision: 2025-04-14

Effective: 2025-05-05

General Information

Depth of study relative to the degree requirements: First cycle, in-depth level of the course cannot be classified

Mandatory for: MID1

Language of instruction: The course will be given in English

Aim

To understand social interaction is vital for all types of design since artefacts of various types often are used in social settings. One of the purposes of this course is to give the future designer basic knowledge about user centred design and social interaction. Another purpose is to add depth to students' understanding of the human being as a social creature with limited cognitive capacities and how this determines how we experience each other and various types of artefacts. A third purpose is to allow students to increase their skill in analysing artefacts and to understand them as being parts of a social context which both affects them and which they affect.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

For a passing grade the student must

- Be able to discuss the dynamics of social interaction, how it develops over time and how artefacts and their design affect these processes
- Be able to give a broad presentation of the types of cognitive and emotional processes that are at the foundation for different types of decisions and how they are affected by the properties of different objects
- Be able to present various factors that affect how we experience and value different options
- Show an awareness of different theories of the social mind
- Be able to present and problematize current research within the domain

Competences and skills

For a passing grade the student must

- Be able to account for a complex social context when analysing interaction
- Be able to discuss and compare different types of artefacts with respect to how they affect various cognitive processes
- Be able to handle the complexity that is at the core of mankind as a creature of information and knowledge

Judgement and approach

For a passing grade the student must

- Understand the value of analysing design in relation to its social context
- Be aware of the limitations of different theories when it comes to explaining the social mind
- Show insight into ethical aspects of design and how it affects man
- Be able to identify any further need for more knowledge about social cognition in specific situations

Contents

In the course social interaction will be approached from different perspectives such as child development, consumer research and technology supported interaction. The course will approach several components that are central both for social interaction and for user centred design:

1. Emotions. To be able to interpret others' emotions is necessary for all types of interaction. They give us a context and help us to interpret other individuals. Various types of artefacts support interaction (for instance at a distance), but differ in their ability to convey emotional reactions or evaluations.

2. Attention. Joint attention strongly supports interaction by allowing several individuals to focus on the same item or event. We may use artefacts to help individuals share attention in appropriate ways. Artefacts can, for instance, support cooperation between several individuals at the same location by allowing them to visualize information or by providing an appropriate context for their interaction.

3. Intention. To interpret and understand others' intentions is an important factor when joint decisions are to be made or when supporting some else's decision process. To understand the intention of other actors is also necessary when activities are coordinated.

4. Expectation. The last step of social interaction is to understand that another individual can understand the world differently than

we do. If social interaction is to be successful such differences will have to be allowed to affect the interaction. Expectations are not only vital for how we understand social interaction, they are important when trying to understand all types of interaction.

During the course we will also discuss ethical aspects on design that are relevant for social interaction.

Examination details

Grading scale: UG - (U, G) - (Fail, Pass)

Assessment: Group assignments, written and oral group presentations, written (individual) exam. For a final grade all these must be completed with a pass.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Modules

Code: 0115. **Name:** Philosophy of Mind and Design.

Credits: 5.0. **Grading scale:** UG - (U, G).

Admission

The number of participants is limited to: No

Kursen överlappar följande kurser: EXTf75

Reading list

- Compendium.

Contact

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Course homepage: <https://www.lucs.lu.se/home/>