IN5470 Course content

Spring 2022

This course introduces phenomenology as an approach to understanding our experiences with technology. Phenomenology as a branch of philosophy studies subjective experiences, that is how we experience ourselves in our surroundings, how we experience our relations with other people, how we experience our relations with technology and so on. In trying to understand human experience, phenomenology puts emphasizes on the role of embodiment in human perception and cognition. For designers, phenomenology is useful as the artifacts and tools we make, affect the way people experience themselves and their surroundings. Phenomenology gives us a way to understand, describe and represent our experiences with technology as designers and users.

The course will address the topic through four lenses:

- Relations - people as beings in the world, what does this mean for us as designers of technology, how does our physical and social environments, including the things and technology in such environments matter for experience?
- Familiarity - how do we relate to and recognize things, interaction and situations? How can we as designers make use of skills and knowledge people already have?
- Mobility and movement - how do we relate to and move in relation to the things around us? How do we understand movement, and what does a movement "mean"? How do we incorporate technology as extensions of our bodies?
- Mediation - what does it mean and how can we make use of the fact that the world, and therefore our experience, is mediated through technology?

Learning outcomes

After having attended this course you will

- be able to understand, articulate and discuss how phenomenology is relevant to technology design
- have further developed your empathy as a designer by sharpening your ability to understand users' as well as your own experience with technology (and you should be able to reflect on how this makes you better designer)
- be able to use theoretical frameworks to evaluate existing design and inform your own design work
- name current research topics in the areas embodied interaction, movement-based interaction, tangible interaction etc, and discuss applications to a field of designs, (f. ex., art, dance, health applications, contemplative interaction, affective, aesthetic, work applications and so on), and demonstrate your understanding in academic writing

Teaching

- 2 hours of lectures and discussion every week.
  Teaching is based on a mixture of lectures, active discussions, and experiential tasks in a workshop format. The students are expected to have read the assigned readings, prepare notes and discussion questions.
- The course requires 80% attendance in class, and production of reading notes and discussion questions (bring these to class) for 80% of the articles in the curriculum.
- The first lecture will have important information about the course.

Examination

The course grade is based on the following assessments:

- Completion of 3 obligatory submissions (Feb 17th, Mar 24th, April 28th)
- All mandatory assignments must be completed and approved prior to the exam.
- The final exam, an individual written piece of work on a self-chosen topic decided in collaboration with the instructor. (100%) (Exam period May 19th - submission June 2nd)

All parts of the exam and the attendance must be passed, and passed in the same semester, to pass the course.