

**Applied Rationality**

Code: 43844  
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4316227 Applied Philosophy	OB	0	2

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

**Contact**

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**Use of Languages**

Principal working language: english (eng)

**Teachers**

Gerard Vilar Roca

**Prerequisites**

- Good reading abilities in the English language; participation in the class discussion can be done both in Spanish and English.
- Interest in philosophical and scientific debates over rationality and/or reason
- Interest in the critical discussion of classical and current texts on the class topic
- Knowledge of basic logic is necessary; knowledge of theories of probability and rational decision is helpful.
- Willingness to prepare the class discussion of one of the readings (summary of one article/book chapter plus preparation of discussion questions and/or critical evaluation of the arguments contained)
- Readings are obligatory unless noted otherwise. Don't just read the course texts passively; work actively with them and come well-prepared to classes. Three questions are always central: What's the author's main claim? What is his argument for the claim? What should we think of the argument's form and premises? Especially for your own presentation of an article/book chapter, please use these questions as guidelines.

**Objectives and Contextualisation**

Theories of rationality should ideally provide us with tools for a number of important tasks: We want to avoid irrationality, or aim at justifying our beliefs and decisions by certain standards. This is important for many tasks in ordinary life, such as judgments and decisions of individual and public health, wealth, and happiness. We want to be clear about whether the reasons for our beliefs and actions are valid or reasonable. Furthermore, we often have to communicate with others about our beliefs and decisions, such as in scientific, ethical, or political contexts. All this requires conceptions or even theories of reason or rationality.

But what do we mean when we say that something, or someone, is rational (or irrational)? What are the normative standards of rationality? How should a theory of rationality be built? What are its presuppositions, its potentials and limits? What role does science play in it? In the answers to such questions, different thinkers have introduced a bewildering variety of distinctions - such as theoretical versus practical, instrumental versus

non-instrumental, formal versus content-based, or optimizing versus "bounded" concepts of rationality. The course presents a selection of classical and current debates in which such understandings of rationality or reason emerge.

## Competences

- Analyze and interpret topics and problems in current contemporary philosophical research based on the interrelation between ethics, art and politics.
- Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
- Contribute to debates in current philosophical research making significant critical contributions, with conceptual precision and good arguments by means of public presentation.
- Relate the concepts and knowledge of the various areas of current philosophical research in relation to dependencies between science and technology, and the ethical and political implications of such dependencies.
- Search for, select and manage information autonomously, both from structured sources (data bases, bibliographies, specialized journals) and from information distributed on the web.
- Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Apply the theory of rationality to problem areas in regulations, aesthetics and science and technology.
2. Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
3. Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
4. Know the main contemporary theories on rationality, especially its social, political, ethical and cognitive implications in scientific and technological development.
5. Make a written or oral heuristic contribution to the theories of rationality.
6. Search for, select and manage information autonomously, both from structured sources (data bases, bibliographies, specialized journals) and from information distributed on the web.
7. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.

## Content

Applied Rationality: Aesthetic Rationality, Imagination and Creativity

Gerard Vilar

Texts

- Kant, I., Critique of the Power of Judgement, paragraphs 46-47 and 49.
- Deleuze, G., What is the creative act?. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKd71Uyf3Mo>; text: Deleuze, G., Two Regimes of Madness, Texts and Interviews 1975-1995, Semiotext(e), 2006, pp. 312-324.
- Asimov, I., On Creativity: <http://www.technologyreview.com/view/531911/isaac-asimov-asks-how-do-people-get-new-ideas/>
- Feyerabend, P., "The Myth of Creativity", Critical Inquiry 13 (1987): 700-711.
- Gaut, Berys, "Educating for Creativity", in Paul, E.S., and Kaufman, S.B., The Philosophy of Creativity. New Essays, Oxford U.P., 2014, pp. 265-287.

Program:

1. Rationality and creativity?
2. What do we call aesthetic rationality?
3. Kant and the faculty of judgement versus theoretical reason and practical reason
4. Kant and creativity: aesthetic ideas, novelty, originality and exemplarity

5. Deleuze: What is the creative act?
6. Asimov: no rules but tips
7. Feyerabend: Critique of creativity
8. Can we learn to be creative?

## Semiotics and Rationality: From Linguistics to Biology

Òscar Castro

**Aims:** In the history of thought, the history of signs, signals and symbols have been part of the communicative manifestation of the different types of reality manifested in the cultural fabric, as well as the manifestation of man's interaction with his immediate environment. In several schools of knowledge from Pythagoras, expressed the sense of the signs criteria scaffolding by reason. According to the Circle of Eranos in Ascona, the meaning of the symbol acquires the value of "relating reason". In contrast, in American pragmatism with Charles S. Peirce, the symbol is the value of the representation of the sign in an icon.

Our objective is to donate a historical description of the concept of "*semeion*" in the philosophical and scientific context, both in western and eastern culture. We will divide the module into two blocks. In the first block, you want to show the evolution of signs studies, especially the John Deely's "postmodern age" where the symbol's way of Saussure's semiology reached to American pragmatism with Charles S. Peirce and Charles Morris. Finally, with Eco, Sebeok and Tartu- Moscow School of Semiotics with Juri Lotman. In the second block, I would study Jakob von Uexküll's work. He was the father of biosemiotics, ethology and "subjective biology." Uexküll was neo-Kantians criteria underlying to biological epistemology (Kant, Baader, Müller, Driesch). His implication, as much in Cassirer's cultural anthropology, as in the biosemiotic, Uexküll gives us an essential foundation for endorsing us in the inner world of organisms. The meaningful value is interrelating with the physiological capacity at the perceptual field of the organism, from an amoeba to a socio-cultural collective. Finally, we will see how current semiotics develops new studies on mind, rationality, and cognition.

Contents:

- Brief History of the Sign in the History of Western Thought.
- The investigation of the sign in the postmodern era: Saussure, Peirce, Morris, Lotman, Sebeok, Eco.
- Jakob von Uexküll and the development of biosemiotics.
- Mind, rationality and cognition: cognitive cybersemiotics.

## Methodology

The module is structured into 10 sessions of 3.5 hours each. The sessions alternate between lecturing and seminar discussion of basic course readings. In the tutorials, professors will supervise the preparation of a written paper of 10-15 pages related to some topic treated in the module.

There are three types of activities: directed, supervised and autonomous.

- Autonomous. They will not change regardless of whether the teaching is face-to-face or virtual.
- Directed (theoretical classes and classroom practices). They must be able to adapt, if necessary, in whatever percentage, to virtual teaching, through the various existing systems (Teams, narrated powerpoints, videos, podcasts, etc.), as has been done in the period. of confinement.
- Supervision. To the extent that they are tutored by the teacher, face-to-face can easily be converted into virtuality. In the event that the student requires supervision of the follow-up, or of a specific job, supervision will be offered within the health measures, either during office hours or electronically by prior appointment

External Internships. They must be programmed in such a way that they can be carried out in person with the appropriate protection measures.

## Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
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Type: Directed			
Class discussion	17.5	0.7	1, 6, 4, 5, 7, 2
Type: Supervised			
Supervision	22.5	0.9	1, 6, 7, 2, 3
Type: Autonomous			
Autonomous study	110	4.4	1, 6, 4, 5, 7, 2, 3

## Assessment

In the event that tests or exams cannot be taken onsite, they will be adapted to an online format made available through the UAB's virtual tools (original weighting will be maintained). Homework, activities and class participation will be carried out through forums, wikis and/or discussion on Teams, etc. Lecturers will ensure that students are able to access these virtual tools, or will offer them feasible alternatives.

Plagiarism:

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

## Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Development of a written essay	50%	0	0	1, 6, 4, 5, 7, 2, 3
Oral presentation (Castro)	25%	0	0	1, 6, 4, 5, 7, 2, 3
Oral presentation (Vilar)	25%	0	0	1, 6, 4, 5, 7, 2, 3

## Bibliography

Aesthetic Rationality, Imagination and Creativity

- Gaut, B. & Kieran, M., *Creativity and Philosophy*, Routledge, 2018.
- Gaut, B, "Creativity and Rationality", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 70 (2012): 259-270.
- Gorodeisky, K. & Marcus, E., "Aesthetic Rationality", *Journal of Philosophy* 115 (2018): 113-140.
- Boden, M., *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms*, Routledge, 2004.
- Nickerson, Raymond S., "Enhancing Creativity," in Robert J. Sternberg (ed.), *Handbook of Creativity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 392-430.
- Paul, E. S.; Kaufman, S. B., *The Philosophy of Creativity*, Oxford U.P., 2014.

Semiotics and Rationality

- Brier, Soren (2008). *Cybersemiotics: Why Information Is Not Enough!* (2008, University of Toronto Press).

- Buchanan, Bret. To Kantian Biologist. Jakob von Uexküll and the intersubjective life of organisms
- Buchanan, Brett. (2008). *Onto- Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2008.
- Cassirer, E. A key to the Nature of Man. The Symbol. *Philosophical Anthropology*. pp. 45-49.
- Chater, N., et al. (2017). Mind, rationality, and cognition: An interdisciplinary debate. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. DOI 10.3758 / s13423-017-1333-5
- Deely, John (2001). *Four Ages of Understanding. The first Postmodern Survey of Philosophy from Ancient Times to the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*. University of Toronto Press.
- Favareau, D. (auth.) (2009). *Essential Readings in Biosemiotics. Anthology and Commentary*. Springer Netherlands (Biosemiotics 3).
- Hoffmeyer, Jesper. (2015). Semiotic Individuation and Ernst Cassirer's Challenge. *Progress in Biophysics and Molecular Biology*, 119 (3): 607-615.
- Kant, Immanuel (1796) *Criticism of the Faculty of Judgment*. Edicions 62, 2004. Translation: Jessica Jaques Pi.
- Uexküll, J. von (1934) *Ideas for a biological conception of the world*. Espasa- Calpe. Col. Library of Ideas of the 20th century. Madrid.
- Uexküll, J. von (1940). *Bedeutungslehre*. Leipzig: Verlag von J.B. Metz. In Spanish: *Biological Meditations. Theory of Meaning*. Translation by José M. Sacristán. Western Magazine. Madrid, 1942.