Introduction to Human Sciences (HS8.102)

Spring 2022, IIIT Hyderabad
11 Jan, Tuesday (Lecture 3)

Taught by Prof. Don D'Cruz

Knowledge and Understanding

A Priori vs. *A Posteriori* (contd.)

A priori knowledge, as we have seen, is knowledge that is not justified by appeal to the senses, *i.e.*, knowledge that has no empirical evidence.

An example of knowledge that is posited to be *a priori* is the law of non-contradiction – it is not possible for something to be X and not-X at the same time. Another claimed category of *a priori* truths are statements that are true by definition.

A priori truths have two characteristics – they are necessary (not contingent, or accidental) and universal (regardless of time and place).

Self-Evident Truths

In philosophy, as in mathematics, there are some statements which we consider to be axiomatically true. Often they seem intuitively true without needing any reasoning.

Artificial Intelligence

A philosophical view of AI is needed to answer questions about the possibility of computers having free will, consciousness, or the ability to learn.
A widely acknowledges standard for computers' "intelligence" is the popular Turing test – if a computer can convince a human to think that it is also human (via a chat interface), then it is truly intelligent.

Whether intelligence is defined functionally (in terms of its goals or purposes) or mechanistically (in terms of its internal workings) is also important in this debate. The Turing test is a functional test of intelligence.