

*COS 116*  
*The Computational Universe*  
***Writing and Blogging Assignment***

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**Discussion for Tuesday, May 2:** Searle's brief but controversial article. Class discussion will focus on the following topics.

**Topic 1:**

Try to find passages in Searle's article that support the statements below. Mark them and bring them to class discussion.

1. Rules of human languages such as Chinese are pretty complex and not always clear even to native speakers. So a computer cannot pass a Turing test conducted in Chinese.
2. The Turing test is not a valid test for whether or not a machine can "think."
3. A computer program is nothing but a rule book being applied mechanically. So it cannot pass the Turing test.
4. There is a fundamental difference between syntax and semantics (i.e. meaning). A computer deals with the former, not the latter. So it cannot pass the Turing test.

**Topic 2:**

Why does Searle invoke his (now famous/notorious) example of the Chinese room? What role does it play in his overall argument, if any?

**Topic 3:**

Which of the above four statements (listed under Topic 1) best summarizes Searle's objection to Strong AI?

**Topic 4 (the only subjective question):**

Rodney Brooks discusses Searle's objection as well as Strong AI on pages 172-180; see also 194-195.

How convincing did you find Brooks' views?

*Please Turn Over*

## **Writing assignment (Due Tues, May 2, at the start of lecture)**

Write your answer to Topic 3 and explain your reasons in a paragraph or so. Please also indicate whether you found Searle's analysis (as you understood it) convincing. This paragraph will be collected at the **start** of class and will count towards your participation score.

## **Final blogging assignment (Post by Wed, May 10)**

Write in 250 words or so (feel free to exceed it!) your feelings about Searle's objection, as well as Brooks' views. To what extent do you personally think AI is possible? Mention any evolution in your views on this topic during the course of the semester, while reading Searle's article, or as a result of class discussion.