



PHIL202

Philosophy, Technology, and the Future of Humanity

S2 Online 2019

Dept of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit convenor and Lecturer

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp at 100 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

We live an increasing part of our lives online, playing videogames, and engaging with various technologies and virtual realities. Our workplaces are more automated, cars drive themselves, and robots take care of us. Is this a good thing? What is it doing to us? Where will it take us in the future? In this unit we draw on philosophical and ethical theories to explore the impacts of information and related technologies on humanity. Topics we will explore include issues around human-technology relations, such as: technological neutrality and technological determinism; embodiment, gender, and technology; and the co-evolution of mind and technology. We will examine ethical aspects of technology, such as: the impacts that online sharing has on our philosophical understandings of friendship; the right to internet privacy; how theories in moral psychology explain the ethical impacts of playing videogames; the ethics of self-driving cars and robotic care-workers; and the justice implications of the automation of work. Finally, we also look at topics surrounding the intertwining of humanity and technology and the future impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as: whether AI and the singularity is an existential risk to humanity; how technology will be used as a tool of human enhancement; and whether we will (and should) become cyborgs and stop being human.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).

An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.

An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically

The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Clarity of thought and clarity of expression.

General Assessment Information

Late Submission Policy “Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.”

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Research Essay</u>	40%	No	7/11/2019
<u>Participation</u>	15%	No	On-going; closes 6/11/19
<u>Weekly reflective blog</u>	30%	No	Part 1: 27/8/19. Part 2: 5/11/19.
<u>Weekly Quiz</u>	15%	No	On-going; closes 1/11/2019

Research Essay

Due: **7/11/2019**

Weighting: **40%**

The essay (2000 words) is designed to extend your understanding of a specific topic or topics and to test your ability to engage with that topic in depth. Essay writing tests your ability to synthesise material from a range of readings and to express, analyse and structure key ideas

and arguments clearly, logically and systematically. It also tests your ability to develop your own view, and to argue for that view in a cogent and sustained way. You will be expected to read and incorporate into your essay extra secondary sources beyond the required readings.

Essay questions and rubric handed out: 11 September. Due by 11:59PM on Thursday November 7.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought and clarity of expression.

Participation

Due: **On-going; closes 6/11/19**

Weighting: **15%**

Participation in discussions, both in-class (for internal students) and on-line (for all students), is an important part of studying philosophy. The quality, quantity, and timeliness of your participation will be graded.

Participation criteria and rubric handed out: Wednesday July 31.

Participation closes: November 6. Posts made after this date will not be read or graded.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought and clarity of expression.

Weekly reflective blog

Due: **Part 1: 27/8/19. Part 2: 5/11/19.**

Weighting: **30%**

Weekly reflective blog (private).

You will receive your grade for this assessment in two parts to ensure that you receive some early feedback.

Part One - for weeks 1-4 (inclusive). Worth 10%. Due Tuesday 27 August, 11:59PM.

Part Two - for weeks 5-12 (inclusive). Worth 20%. Due Tuesday 5 November, 11:59PM.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought and clarity of expression.

Weekly Quiz

Due: **On-going; closes 1/11/2019**

Weighting: **15%**

There will be 10 weekly on-line quizzes worth a total of 15% (or a maximum of 1.5% for each of the 10 quizzes). Quizzes start in Week 3 and run until Week 12. Quizzes open after the relevant lecture. All quizzes close on Friday November 1 at 11:59 PM. You should do the quizzes weekly. It is not advisable to leave all the quizzes until the end to complete.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).

Delivery and Resources

Required Readings.

All required readings can be downloaded from through Leganto and the iLearn site.

You must read the required readings BEFORE class.

Unit Schedule

W1 – Introduction: Philosophy and Technology (PF)

No Reading

MIND, BODIES AND TECHNOLOGY

W2 – What is technology? Optimist and pessimist views of technology (JPD)

Reading 1: Mary Tiles and Hans Oberdiek, “Conflicting Visions of Technology,” in *Living in a Technological Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 12–31.

Reading 2: Andrew Feenberg, “What is the Philosophy of Technology?,” in *Defining Technological Literacy. Towards An Epistemological Framework*, J. Dakers (ed.), (Palgrave McMillan, 2006), 5-16.

W3 –Artificial Intelligence (RM)

Reading 1: Margaret Boden (2016) “Chapter 2: General Intelligence as the Holy Grail”, *AI: Its Nature and Future*, Oxford UP: Oxford.

Reading 2: Bringsjord, Selmer and Govindarajulu, Naveen Sundar, "Artificial Intelligence", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/artificial-intelligence/>>.

W4 – The Singularity and Mind-uploading: Will humanity survive? (PF)

Reading: Chalmers, David J. “The Singularity.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 17, no. 9 (2010): 7–65.

ETHICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF TECHNOLOGY

W5 – Privacy on the Internet: Do we have any and should we care? (PF)

Reading 1: Reiman, Jeffrey H. “Driving to the Panopticon: A Philosophical Exploration of the Risks to Privacy Posed by the Highway Technology of the Future.” *Santa Clara High Technology Law Journal* 11 (1995).

Reading 2: Joinson, Adam N., and Carina B. Paine. “Self-Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet.” In *Oxford Handbook of Internet Psychology*, edited by Adam N. Joinson, Katelyn Y. A. McKenna, Tom Postmes, and Ulf-Dietrich Reips, Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 2012.

W6 –Videogames and morality: Do virtual actions matter? (PF)

Reading 1: Luck, M. (2009). The gamer’s dilemma: An analysis of the arguments for the moral distinction between virtual murder and virtual paedophilia. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 11(1), 31–36.

Reading 2: Ryan, M., Staines, D., & Formosa, P. (2017). Focus, Sensitivity, Judgement, Action: Four Lenses for Designing Morally Engaging Games. *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association*, 3(2), 143–173.

W7 – Artificial moral agents: Can robots be persons? (PF)

Reading 1: Wynsberghe, Aimee van, and Scott Robbins. “Critiquing the Reasons for Making Artificial Moral Agents.” *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 2018, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-018-0030-8>.

Reading 2: Moor, James H. “Four Kinds of Ethical Robots.” *Philosophy Today*, no. April (2009).

W8 – Autonomous Vehicles and Carebots: How to live with machines (PF)

Reading 1: Gogoll, Jan, and Julian F. Müller. “Autonomous Cars: In Favor of a Mandatory Ethics Setting.” *Science and Engineering Ethics* 23, no. 3 (June 2017): 681–700.

Reading 2: Vallor, Shannon. “Moral Deskilling and Upskilling in a New Machine Age: Reflections on the Ambiguous Future of Character.” *Philosophy & Technology* 28, no. 1 (March 2015): 107–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-014-0156-9>.

W9 – Economy and politics of cognitive capitalism (JPD)

Reading 1: Nick Srnicek, extracts from *Platform Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017) 36-50, 126-129.

Reading 2: Yves Citton, “Reflexive Attention”, in *The Ecology of Attention*, trans. B. Norman (Cambridge: Polity, 2017) 139-170.

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

W10 – Automation: dangers and solutions. (JPD)

Reading 1: Nicholas Carr, *The Glass Cage*, chapter 4.

Reading 2: David Zoller, “Skilled Perception, Authenticity and the case against Automation”, in Patrick Lin, Keith Abney, and Ryan Jenkins (eds) *Robot Ethics 2.0. From Automated Cars to Artificial Intelligence*, (Oxford University Press, 2017), chapter 6.

Reading 3: Andrew Feenberg, “Philosophy of Technology at the Crossroads,” from *Technology and the Good Life?*, ed. Eric Higgs, Andrew Light, and David Strong (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 294–315.

W11 - Mind and technology: co-evolution of mind and technology. (RM)

Reading 1: Sterelny K. (2011) "From hominins to humans: how sapiens became behaviourally modern". *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B.* 366: 809-822. <http://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2010.0301>

W12 – Human enhancement: Where to from here? (RM)

Reading 1: Clark A. (2013). Chapter 2. *Natural Born Cyborgs*, Oxford UP: Oxford.

Reading 2: Kahane, G. and Savulescu, J. (2015), Normal Human Variation: Refocussing the Enhancement Debate. *Bioethics*, 29: 133-143. doi:10.1111/bioe.12045

W13 – No Lecture

Writing week.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released

directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.

- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Participation
- Weekly reflective blog

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Weekly reflective blog

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis

of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Weekly reflective blog

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- Clarity of thought and clarity of expression.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Participation
- Weekly reflective blog
- Weekly Quiz

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Participation
- Weekly reflective blog

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An ability to understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- An ability to evaluate these theories and arguments critically
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Weekly reflective blog

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Clarity of thought and clarity of expression.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Participation
- Weekly reflective blog

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Weekly reflective blog

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good general knowledge of some of the major theories and current debates in philosophical and ethical issues surrounding new forms of technology (primarily information technologies).
- The ability to develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit.

Assessment tasks

- Research Essay
- Weekly reflective blog