PHIL2020

Philosophy, Technology, and the Future of Humanity

Session 2, Fully online/virtual 2020

Department of Philosophy

Contents

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Notice

As part of Phase 3 of our return to campus plan, most units will now run tutorials, seminars and other small group learning activities on campus for the second half-year, while keeping an online version available for those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies online.

To check the availability of face-to-face and online activities for your unit, please go to timetable viewer. To check detailed information on unit assessments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult your unit convenor.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit convenor and Lecturer
A/Prof Paul Formosa
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Lecturer
Dr Alexander Gillett
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Credit points
10

Prerequisites
40cp at 1000 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 automatisation 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:

ULO1: explain the major theories about the philosophical and ethical issues raised by new forms of technology

ULO2: analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.

ULO3: evaluate relevant theories and arguments critically

ULO4: communicate clearly your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit

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
Weekly quiz	15%	No	ongoing; closes 4/11/2020
Participation	15%	No	ongoing; closes 4/11/2020
Weekly reflective blog	30%	No	11/09/2020
Research essay	40%	No	5/11/2020

Weekly quiz

Assessment Type [1]: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 10 hours
Due: **ongoing; closes 4/11/2020**
Weighting: **15%**

Weekly quiz covering key ideas examined in the unit

On successful completion you will be able to:

• explain the major theories about the philosophical and ethical issues raised by new

forms of technology

Participation

Assessment Type [1]: Participatory task
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 12 hours
Due: **ongoing; closes 4/11/2020**
Weighting: **15%**

Participation in in-person or online seminars and/or online forums

On successful completion you will be able to:

- explain the major theories about the philosophical and ethical issues raised by new forms of technology
- analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- evaluate relevant theories and arguments critically
- communicate clearly your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit

Weekly reflective blog

Assessment Type [1]: Reflective Writing
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 20 hours
Due: **11/09/2020**
Weighting: **30%**

Weekly reflective blog on class content

On successful completion you will be able to:

- analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.
- evaluate relevant theories and arguments critically
- communicate clearly your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit

Research essay

Assessment Type [1]: Essay
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 30 hours

Due: **5/11/2020**
Weighting: **40%**

Research essay exploring one relevant topic in depth

On successful completion you will be able to:

- explain the major theories about the philosophical and ethical issues raised by new forms of technology

- analyse arguments in the relevant literatures.

- evaluate relevant theories and arguments critically

- communicate clearly your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit

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[1] If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment

- the Writing Centre for academic skills support.

[2] Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

- Resources

Required Readings.

All required readings can be downloaded from Leganto and the unit's iLearn site.

You must read the required readings BEFORE class.

- Delivery

Recorded content

Asynchronous forums

Unit Schedule

W1 – Introduction: Philosophy and Technology (PF)

No Reading

MIND, BODIES AND TECHNOLOGY

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

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 (AG)

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

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

W5 – 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

W6 – 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).

W7 – 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.

W8 –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.

W9 – 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.

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

W10 – Economy and politics of cognitive capitalism (AG)

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.

W11 – Automation: dangers and solutions (AG)

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.

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

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.m q.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-centr al). 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.)*

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the Student Policy Gateway (https://students.m q.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 (http s://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/p olicy-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 help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Getting help with your assignment
- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- Subject and Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian

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.