PHIL2020
Philosophy, Technology, and the Future of Humanity
Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2022

Department of Philosophy

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# General Information

## Unit convenor and teaching staff

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**Alexander Gillett**  
[mailto:alexander.gillett@mq.edu.au](mailto:alexander.gillett@mq.edu.au)

## Credit points

10

## Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

## Corequisites

None

## Co-badged status

None

## 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
Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – 10 marks out of 100 credit will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline.

Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 2 - Week 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly quiz</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1/06/2022 at 11:59PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective blog</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>30/04/2022 at 11:59PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research essay</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/06/2022 at 11:59PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation
Assessment Type 1: Participatory task
Indicative Time on Task 2: 15 hours
Due: Week 2 - Week 11
Weighting: 20%

Participation in in-person or online tutorials 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 quiz

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours
Due: 1/06/2022 at 11:59PM
Weighting: 25%

Weekly quiz covering key ideas examined in the unit

Reflective blog

Assessment Type ¹: Reflective Writing
Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours
Due: 30/04/2022 at 11:59PM
Weighting: 20%

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: Essay
Indicative Time on Task: 30 hours
Due: 2/06/2022 at 11:59PM
Weighting: 35%

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

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 can be downloaded from Leganto.
- You must read the required readings BEFORE class.

Delivery:
- Recorded lecture content (for both Internal and Fully online students)
- Synchronous online zoom tutorials or in-person tutorials (for Internal students)
- Asynchronous forums (for Fully online students)
Unit Schedule

W1 – Introduction: Philosophy and Technology (PF)
No Reading

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

W3 - Co-evolution of mind and technology. (AG)

W4 - Cognition and technology (AG)

W5 –Artificial Intelligence and Philosophy (AG)

W6 – The Singularity and Mind-uploading: Will humanity survive? (PF)
W7 – Artificial moral agents: Can robots be persons? (PF)


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


W9 – Videogames and morality: Do virtual actions matter? (PF)


W10 – Privacy on the Internet: Do we have any and should we care? (PF)


W11 – Platform adn Surveillance capitalism (PF)


W12 – AI, Automation and Work (PF)


W13 – No Lecture

Writing week.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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
- Assessment Procedure
- Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public
- Special Consideration Policy

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the search tool.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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
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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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe academic integrity – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free online writing and maths support, academic skills development and wellbeing consultations.

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- Workshops
- Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader
- Access StudyWISE
- Upload an assignment to Studiosity
- Complete the 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

Macquarie University offers a range of Student Support Services including:

- IT Support
- Accessibility and disability support with study
- Mental health support
- Safety support to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via AskMQ, or contact Service Connect.
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.