

University Name | Semester Year

COURSE CODE

Ethics of Robots

Day Time | Classroom

INSTRUCTOR:

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Office | Office Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will discuss issues related to the ethics of Robots. We begin by discussing a key concept of *artificial moral agents*, which presumably covers some automated machines. Then we talk about 4 different ethical issues related to artificial moral agents:

- Allocation of Responsibility – if a machine “misbehave”, who should be hold responsible for it?
- Allocation of Rights – do robots have rights? If so, which kind of rights do they have?
- Legal Status – are robots “legal entities” (like a state or a business) or “legal persons” (like human beings)?
- Ethics of Creating Conscious Robots – what is *artificial consciousness*? Is it ethical to create robots with artificial consciousness? If so, what kind of rights do they have (such as the right of not being switched off)?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	STUDENT OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage critically with selected important debates, positions, and methods in Western philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain debates and positions clearly and precisely in written and oral form. • Construct thought experiments and arguments against hypotheses presented in class.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand basic concepts and distinctions in the readings and theories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply theories and concepts in new contexts. • Use introduced concepts and distinctions in your own arguments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop original ideas on selected topics in philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically engage with positions and arguments put forth in readings. • Write and present clear, precise, and moderately original argument on self-chosen topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 20% Midterm - in class
- 20% Final - paper
- 20% Group Presentation
- 20% Short Essays
- 10% Participation
- 10% Reading Quizzes

Midterm

Midterm exam will be 3-4 short essays to be answered in class. Questions will be taken from handouts and worksheets.

Date: Week 6.

Final - paper

First version of the paper (**max. 1.500 words**) is due on **last day of classes** for a peer-review activity. Prompts will be made available two weeks prior. Students choose which prompt to address (**only one** prompt).

Deadline of the final version: exam week.

Papers will be graded as follows: 10% final version; 5% responsiveness to feedback given by another student; 5% quality of feedback given to another student's paper.

Group Presentation (20 min. pres.; 10 min. q&a)

Students will be divided in groups to give a presentation in one of the topics of the course. Presentations will happen throughout the semester. For this activity, each group will have to submit a short essay (**max. 750 words**) the day before their presentation is scheduled, (2) give an in class presentation, and (3) ask questions in other presentations. Students will be graded as follows: 8% report (one per group); 8% presentation (one per group), 4% questions asked on other presentations (individual).

Short Essays

There will be 6 group presentations. Each student will have to write a short essay (**max. 500 words**) on 2 presentations (other than their own). Each essay is worth 10% of the final grade. You may submit as many essays on any presentation you like (one essay per presentation). If you submit more than 2 essays, only the 2 highest grades will count.

Deadline: to be announced after each presentation.

Participation

Participation grade will be based on student's engagement with the material throughout the course. Attendance will be taken but do not expect a perfect grade merely for being an organic body. Students may show engagement by holding discussions in lectures, office hours, or by email.

Reading

Reading Quizzes will be made available weekly. Each quiz is worth **2 points**. Only the highest **5** grades will count to the course grade.

NOTE: Things change – the Fates are fickle. Information found on this syllabus is subject to revision as we progress through the quarter: Readings and content may be added (or cut) depending on our rate of progress, and it may be necessary to amend the due date of the assignments. Revisions will be announced in lecture and posted online. It is each student's responsibility to keep informed of any changes.

MATERIALS

All readings will be available online.

Students are expected to have done the readings *before* lecture.

COURSE READINGS

Intro & The Basics of Arguments (1 session)

- Introduction & Arguments.
- Thought Experiments, “AITA, that if Jurassic Park were real, I would tell my husband that he cannot go.” https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/chzjl5/aita_that_if_jurassic_park_were_real_i_would_tell/.

Artificial Moral Agents (5 sessions)

- Moor, J.H. “The Nature, Importance, and Difficulty of Machine Ethics”.
- Torrance, S. “Machine Ethics and the Idea of a More-Than-Human Moral World”.
- Presentation #1.

Allocation of Responsibility (5 sessions)

- Taddeo, M. & Floridi, L. “How AI Can Be a Force for Good”.
- Nyholm, S. “Attributing Agency to Automated Systems: Reflections on Human–Robot Collaborations and Responsibility-Loci”
- Nyholm, S. “The Ethics of Crashes with Self-Driving Cars: A Roadmap, II”.
- Presentation #2.

Allocation of Rights (5 sessions)

- Gerdes, A. “The Issue of Moral Consideration in Robot Ethics”.
- Bryson, J.J., “Robots Should Be Slaves”
- Gunkel, D.J. & Bryson, J.J. *Machine Morality: The Machine as Moral Agent and Patient*, excerpts.
- Presentation #3

Legal Status (5 sessions)

- EU Parliament “Draft Report with Recommendations to the Commission on Civil Law Rules on Robotics (2015/2103(Inl))”.
- Bertolini, A. & Aiello, G. “Robot Companions: A Legal and Ethical Analysis”.

- Bryson,J.J., Diamantis,M.E., & Grant,T.D. “Of, for, and by the People: The Legal Lacuna of Synthetic Persons”.
- Presentation #4.

Creating Conscious Robots (5 sessions)

- van Wynsberghe,A. a& Robbins,S. “Critiquing the Reasons for Making Artificial Moral Agents”.
- Bentley,P.J., Brundage,M., Häggström,O., & Metzinger,T. “Should We Fear Artificial Intelligence? In-Depth Analysis”.
- Presentation #5.