

CT 1053 – Ethics & Technology

Spring Semester 2020, AC02 TR 002, Mondays and Wednesdays 10:10 AM to 11:40 AM

Professor: Danny Weltman | danny.weltman@ashoka.edu.in | Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-12 in AC02 320

About This Course: Topic and Goals

In this course, we will learn about philosophical issues involving the intersection of ethics and technology, and we will also learn about how to approach writing tasks, especially expository and analytic writing tasks.

Below are the **goals** for this course. The course is designed to help you accomplish the following:

- Learn about some topics in ethics and technology and hear what people have to say about them
- Improve your skills at accurately and concisely summarizing complicated ideas
- Improve your skills at articulating your viewpoint about complicated ideas
- Learn how to reflect on your writing goals and your writing process with an eye towards improvement

Course Content

Aside from the readings for the first three weeks, the course topics will be chosen via vote. All readings are available on the course web site at <https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/1511980>. **Please bring the readings to class each day**, either printed out or in *easily accessible* electronic form.

Assignments and Grading

There are four kinds of assignments in this class: **weekly reading quizzes**, **writing assignments**, **writing assignment revisions**, and a **writing meta-cognition assignment**. Late quizzes will not be accepted. Late writing assignments will lose 1 point for each day late, except in case of emergency. (Computer issues are not an emergency.)

Weekly Reading Quizzes (10% of your grade) are to help you focus on the important parts of the reading and to get instant feedback on whether you have understood the reading. Quizzes are due 11:59 PM Sunday night. There is 1 quiz per week for a total of 13. Your lowest 3 quiz scores will be ignored.

Weekly Writing Assignments (40% of your grade) are the main way you will practice writing. There are 8 due. Your lowest 3 writing assignment scores will be ignored.

Writing Assignment Revisions (35% of your grade) are for you to get practice incorporating feedback and revising your writing. There are 5 due.

The **Writing Meta-Cognition Assignment** (5% of your grade) is an opportunity to reflect on your writing process and evaluate what works, why it works, what doesn't work, and why it doesn't work.

Class Participation (10% of your grade) is required. This includes attendance, listening respectfully to me and to your fellow students, and offering thoughtful questions and contributions to the discussion. Using mobile phones or computers for non-academic purposes, browsing the Internet, coming in late, not showing up, or otherwise ignoring people is not respectful and will reduce your participation grade.

Grade Breakdown:

- 10% - Weekly Reading Quizzes** (13, lowest 3 ignored)
- 40% - Writing Assignments** (8, lowest 3 ignored)
- 35% - Writing Assignment Revisions** (5)
- 5% - Writing Meta-Cognition Assignment**
- 10% - Class Participation**

Class Grade Rubric:

- 100-97% = A+
- <97-94% = A
- <94-90% = A-
- <90-87% = B+
- <87-84% = B
- <84-80% = B-

- <80-77% = C+
- <77-74% = C
- <74-70% = C-
- <70-67% = D+
- <67-64% = D
- <64-61% = D-
- <61-0% = F

Resources

The resources section of my website (danielweltman.com/resources.html) has resources on reading, writing, and researching philosophy. These resources include a glossary for unfamiliar words and phrases.

Disabilities

If you have disabilities which require some form of accommodation, please contact me ahead of time so that I can make the necessary arrangements.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Any time you use **words, phrases, ideas, or anything else** in your writing that you did not think up on your own, you must **cite** your source the best of your ability. Words and phrases from others must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that you did not write them yourself. Failure to cite a source is **plagiarism** and it's not okay. Plagiarism may result in a zero on the assignment or in other point reductions. You should not need to use (or cite) outside sources for this class, but if you do use them, you must cite them. It is perfectly okay to use points made by your classmates in class or on the discussion boards, *as long as you cite them to the best of your ability*. The one exception is that you do not need to cite me for your writing assignments in this class.

Reading and Assignments Schedule

All reading assignments should be read prior to the class meeting for that reading.

January 20 – Class introduction and discussing Berry’s article

Reading: Wendell Berry, “Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer”

Quiz Due the night before (January 19) at 11:59 PM

January 22 – Discussing replies to Berry, letters to the editor, and writing in general

Reading: Letters in reply to Berry, and Berry’s response

Writing Assignment Due next Monday, January 27 at 11:59 PM. You can write an analytic assignment or a letter to the editor.

January 27 – Discussing the ethics of pet cloning

Reading: Autumn Fiester, “Creating Fido’s Twin: Can Pet Cloning Be Ethically Justified?”

Quiz Due the night before (January 26) at 11:59 PM

January 29 – The ethics of pet cloning part 2, and philosophical writing

Reading: Jennifer Parks, “Lassie, Come Home! Ethical Concerns about Companion Animal Cloning”

Writing Assignment Due next Monday, February 3 at 11:59 PM. You must write an analytic assignment.

Recommended Viewing: *Black Mirror*, Series 2 Episode 1, “Be Right Back”

February 3 – The role of technology in society

Reading: Philip Brey, “The Strategic Role of Technology in a Good Society”

Quiz Due the night before (February 2) at 11:59 PM

Recommended Viewing: *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace*, parts 1 and 2

February 5 – The role of technology in society continued, its role in India, and personal letter writing

Reading: Selections from Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj*, letter from Gandhi to Nehru, and response from Nehru

Writing Assignment Due next Monday, February 10 at 11:59 PM. You can write an analytic assignment or a personal persuasive correspondence letter.

February 10 – Erasing Traumatic Memories

Reading: Henry et al., “Propranolol and the Prevention of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Is it Wrong to Erase the Sting of Bad Memories?”

Quiz Due the night before (February 9) at 11:59 PM

Recommended Viewing: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

February 12 – The Erasing Traumatic Memories

Reading: Trachtman, Hall & Carter, Kolber, and Rosenberg

Writing Assignment Due Monday, February 24 at 11:59 PM. You must write an analytic assignment.

February 17 – Erasing Traumatic Memories

Reading: Bell, Craigie, Kabasenche, Hurley, and Warnick

Quiz Due the night before (February 16) at 11:59 PM

February 19 – Erasing Traumatic Memories

Reading: Liao & Wasserman, Tenenbaum & Reese, Sade, and Henry et al.

Writing Revision Due Monday, March 2 at 11:59 PM. Revise your writing assignment for this topic.

February 24 – Self-Driving Cars

Reading: Nyholm, “The ethics of crashes with self-driving cars: A roadmap I”

Quiz Due the night before (February 23) at 11:59 PM

Recommended Moral Quiz: <http://moralmachine.mit.edu>

February 26 – Self-Driving Cars

Reading: Howard, “The Moral Imperative of Self-Driving Cars”

Writing Assignment Due Monday, March 23 at 11:59 PM. You may write an analytic assignment or an op-ed piece.

March 2 – Self-Driving Cars

Reading: Nyholm, “The ethics of crashes with self-driving cars: A roadmap II”

Quiz Due the night before (March 1) at 11:59 PM

March 4 – Meta-Cognition Assignment

Reading: None

Writing Revision Due Monday, March 30 at 11:59 PM. Revise your writing assignment for this topic.

March 16 – Predictive Brain Implants

Reading: Gilbert, “A Threat to Autonomy? The Intrusion of Predictive Brain Implants”

Quiz Due the night before (March 15) at 11:59 PM

March 18 – Predictive Brain Implants

Reading: Giordano, Amadio & Boulis, Widdershoven et al., Palacios-González, Hainz, Trafimow

Writing Assignment Due Monday, April 6 at 11:59 PM. You must write an analytic assignment.

March 23 – Predictive Brain Implants

Reading: Sullivan, Enck, Peña-Guzmán, Sarajilic, Klein, Murray, Ryberg

Quiz Due the night before (March 22) at 11:59 PM

March 25 – Predictive Brain Implants

Reading: Wiseman, Nakar et al., Wasserman, Zopeikin, Brown, Müller et al.

Writing Revision Due Monday, April 13 at 11:59 PM. Revise your writing assignment for this topic.

March 30 – Rights for artificial intelligences

Reading: Schwitzgebel and Garza, “A Defense of the Rights of Artificial Intelligences”

Quiz Due the night before (March 29) at 11:59 PM

Recommended Viewing: *Ex Machina*; *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*; *Star Trek: The Next Generation* Season 2 Episode 9, “The Measure of a Man”; *Wreck-It Ralph*; *Ralph Breaks the Internet*; *Black Mirror* Series 4 Episode 1, “USS Callister”

April 1 – Rights for artificial intelligences

Reading: Tavani, “Can Social Robots Qualify for Moral Consideration? Reframing the Question about Robot Rights”

Writing Assignment Due Monday, April 20 at 11:59 PM. You may write an analytic assignment or a media analysis blog post.

April 6 – Rights for artificial intelligences

Reading: Johnson and Verdicchio, “Why robots should not be treated like animals”

Quiz Due the night before (April 5) at 11:59 PM

April 8 – Rights for artificial intelligences

Reading: Agar, “How to Treat Machines that Might Have Minds”

Writing Revision Due Monday, May 4 (not the usual day) at 11:59 PM. Revise your writing assignment for this topic.

April 13 – Mind Uploading

Reading: Chalmers, “Uploading: A Philosophical Analysis”

Quiz Due the night before (April 12) at 11:59 PM

Recommended Viewing: *Advantageous*; *Black Mirror*, Series 2 Episode 4, “White Christmas”

April 15 – Mind Uploading

Reading: Pigliucci, “Mind Uploading: A Philosophical Counter-Analysis”

Writing Assignment Due Sunday, April 26 (not the usual time) at 11:59 PM. You may write an analytic assignment or an argument flow chart.

April 20 – Mind Uploading

Reading: Corabi and Schneider, “If You Upload, Will You Survive?”

Quiz Due the night before (April 19) at 11:59 PM

Recommended Video Game: *SOMA*

April 22 – Mind Uploading

Reading: Olson, “The Values and Directions of Uploaded Minds”

Writing Revision Due May 8 (not the usual time) at 11:59 PM. Revise your writing assignment for this topic.

Recommended Viewing: *Black Mirror*, Series 3 Episode 4, “San Junipero”