Applied Ethics 2019/20

**Lecturer**
Dr Debbie Roberts
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DSB 4.12

**Class**
Monday 11:10-1pm, F21, 7 George Square

**Office Hours**
Thursdays 15:00-16:00, or by appointment

**Course Secretary**
Ann-Marie Cowe
philinfo@ed.ac.uk

You will also have a **tutorial** each week. Please stick to the group that you are officially in.

Information regarding Assessment, Feedback and Student Support can be found here: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/current/undergraduate/handbooks](https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/current/undergraduate/handbooks)

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**OVERVIEW**

The primary focus this year will be topics in the *Ethics of Technology*. There is no doubt that technology increases our capabilities and makes life easier in a myriad of ways, which seems desirable. Viewed instrumentally, on the face of it, technology is generally a good thing. However, it also raises many difficult and pressing ethical issues.

In this course we will focus on ethical issues raised by technology with regard to: big data, social media, human enhancement, eugenics and geoengineering. First we will the ethical implications of big data and social media taking into account values including privacy, consent, autonomy and well-being. In the sections on human enhancement and eugenics we consider questions such as the legitimate limits of health care, and if and when genetic enhancement is ever permissible or even obligatory. The final section of the course concerns technology and its application, via geoengineering, to the pressing problem of climate change.

**Suggested background readings:**

The online Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy


Tim Hayward 'Climate Change and Ethics’. Nature Climate Change 2 843–848 (2012)

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**ASSESSMENT**

**40% Mid-Term Essay [1500 words]**

**Deadline:** Midday, Thursday 27th February.

**60% Final Essay [2500 words]**

**Deadline:** Midday, Thursday 23rd April

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**READINGS AND TOPICS**

Listed below are the topics and readings, organized by week. These divide into:

(i) Required Readings that would give you background for the lecture (i.e. they tend to discuss the same issues).

(ii) Specific required readings for the tutorial (i.e. the text that we will discuss in the tutorial). Note: sometimes these will be the same as the background for the lecture.

(iii) Further readings (i.e. places to learn more about the topic and to start your research if thinking of writing an essay on a particular topic or papers to discuss with your ALG).

**Accessing Readings**

Most readings are available online or online through the library website, or in the library. Only readings not accessible in these ways will be uploaded to the Learn page.

**How to Use the Reading List**

You *must* do the reading for the lecture and the tutorial. You are not required to read everything, or any particular thing, on the further readings list. Be guided by your interests here. You are also encouraged to do your own research beyond this list, especially for your essays.

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**WEEK 1 **

**ETHICS OF TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW**

**13 January**

*Lecture*

*No required reading this week*
Tutorial
*No Tutorial This week*

Further Reading
Stanford Encyclopedia ‘Philosophy of Technology’. See bibliography for further suggestions.

### WEEK 2  BIG DATA & PRIVACY  20 January

**Lecture**

**Tutorial**

**Further Reading**
Scottish Council for Development and Industry AI and Data policy paper - online
Scottish Government working group paper on privacy and data - online
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy ‘Privacy and Information Technology’
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy ‘Privacy’
The Whitehouse 2016 report on Big Data - online
UK Government Data Ethics Framework - online

### WEEK 3  SOCIAL MEDIA & FRIENDSHIP  27 January

**Lecture**

**Tutorial**

**Further Reading**

WEEK 4

SOCIAL MEDIA & ATTENTION
3 FEBRUARY

Lecture

Tutorial

Further Reading

There is little philosophy written on this topic. For further references see the references /bibliography of the items above. If you are interested in writing on this topic get in touch for help with readings.

WEEK 5

HUMAN ENHANCEMENT
10 FEBRUARY

Lecture

Tutorial

Further Reading
[available online]


Flexible Learning Week 17 February

Week 6 Human Enhancement & Justice 24 February

Lecture
Buchanan, Allen et al. From Chance to Choice: Genetics and Justice. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, Chapters 3 and 4


Tutorial

Further Reading

Week 7 Human Enhancement & Morality 2 March

Lecture

Tutorial

Further Reading

WEEK 8 EUGENICS 9 MARCH

Lecture

Tutorial

Further Reading
Gyngell C, Bowman-Smart H, Savulescu J (2019)“Genome editing, Goldilocks and polygenic risk scores”. Journal of Medical Ethics 45:530-531.
Singer P “The human genome and the genetic supermarket” Free Inq 2001;21

WEEK 9 GEOENGINEERING & CLIMATE CHANGE 16 MARCH
Lecture

Tutorial
Why Geoengineering is Not Plan B. Stephen Gardiner & Augustin Fragnière - 2016 - In Christopher Preston (ed.), *Climate Justice and Geoengineering*. Rowman and Littlefield

Further reading

-------- Why Geoengineering is Not a ‘Global Public Good’, and Why It is Ethically Misleading to Frame It as One. - 2013 - *Climatic Change* 121 (3):513-525


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 10</th>
<th>[STUDENT CHOICE]</th>
<th>23 MARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Reading</td>
<td>Tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 11</th>
<th>WRAP UP &amp; ESSAY HELP</th>
<th>30 MARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>