

Quest 1: AI, Philosophy & Society

IDS2935 Special Topics
Class numbers: 25062, 25063, 25064
Fall 2023

I. General Information

Meeting times and locations:

All sections of the course:

Mondays and Wednesdays period 9 (4:05 PM – 4:55 PM)	Computer Science & Engineering Building room E222
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Individual sections:

Class number	Day & Time	Location
25062	Friday period 5 (11:45 AM – 12:35 PM)	Turlington 2306
25063	Friday period 6 (12:50 PM – 1:40 PM)	Weil Hall 238
25064	Friday period 7 (1:55 PM – 2:45 PM)	Weil Hall 234

Instructor Dr. David Grant
Office Griffin-Floyd Hall 330
Email david.grant@ufl.edu
Office hours Wednesdays 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM and by appointment

Teaching Assistant John "Jack" Madock
Office Griffin-Floyd Hall 316
Email johnmadock@ufl.edu
Office hours Wednesdays 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM.

Course Description

Investigation of the significance and impact of artificial intelligence. Topics include such questions as whether such devices are genuinely intelligent, how ethics should guide their design, and how AI might affect the economy and personal relationships. Goals include understanding existing technology and reflecting on how AI should shape our future.

General Education Credit

This course provides credit for both the Quest 1 requirement and the General Education Humanities requirement. The course is designed to accomplish the objectives of those requirements as spelled out in the UF catalog. For those objectives, see:

- Quest 1: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-programs/general-education/#ufquesttext>
- General Education Humanities: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-programs/general-education/#objectivesandoutcomestext>

A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Course Materials

All readings are available through the Canvas site.

II. Graded Work

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university grading policies that can be found in the catalog at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/>.

Graded Components

	Description	Points
Perusall	Annotated weekly readings in Perusall	100
Group exercises	Five group activities focused on experiential learning and reflection	200
Short essays	Two short analytical essays	300
Capstone project presentation	Group presentation exploring a philosophical question raised by the course	100
Capstone project essay	Short analytical essay exploring the philosophical question selected by the student's group	200
Participation	Participation in lecture and section	100

Perusall (100 points)

Collaborative annotation of weekly readings on the Perusall online collaborative annotation platform. You will be asked to annotate approximately ten readings in total. Your grade will be determined by the quantity and quality of your participation in these collaborative discussions over the course of the semester.

Note that while many of the readings for this course are short, they are also very dense—you will need to read them carefully and multiple times in order to fully absorb the material. I will provide instructions about how to get the most out of the readings in lecture.

Perusall annotations are required and will not be accepted late.

- You can skip one Perusall annotation assignment without penalty.
- Each subsequent Perusall annotation assignment that you fail to submit will result in a 20% deduction from your Perusall grade.

You are responsible for doing all assigned readings, regardless of whether there is an associated Perusall assignment.

Group exercise reports (5 x 40 points = 200 points)

Five small group exercises focused on experimenting with contemporary AI systems or reflecting on the role AI plays (or should play) in our society. The exercises will be completed in section and graded on the basis of a brief written report. Each member of the group will submit their own version; the group will then select which version to submit for grading. Group members will normally receive the same grade, based on the overall quality of the report submitted by the group (see the rubric for written assignments below). However, students that fail to contribute adequately (based on peer evaluations) may be required to re-do the assignment for an individualized grade. Students that do not submit an individual version of the report will receive a zero for the assignment.

Short papers (1 x 100 + 1 x 200 = 300 points)

Two thesis-driven analytical essays (1000-1250 words each) on assigned topics relating to the material read and discussed in class. Each essay will ask you to develop and defend your own position on a question posed by the readings and/or lectures for the course.

Capstone project presentation (100 points)

Students will form small groups and select a philosophical question raised by the course to explore in greater detail. Groups will work together to formulate an answer to their chosen philosophical question, and develop a short presentation articulating and defending that answer. Groups will then deliver their presentations in lecture during the last two weeks of class. Groups will normally receive a single grade for the presentation, except in cases where one or more group members fails to adequately contribute.

Capstone project essay (200 points)

Prior to delivering their group's capstone project presentation, students will submit a 750-word analytical essay articulating and defending an answer to the group's chosen philosophical question. This answer may be, but need not be, the same as the answer defended by the group. Essays should be informed by the group's discussions, but must be written individually rather than in collaboration with other group members. Students will then be asked to revise this paper in the light of the feedback they receive from the class during their group's presentation. The deadline for submitting a revised essay will be the Monday following the presentation. Only the final version of the essay will be graded. However, students must submit a complete draft to receive credit for the assignment.

Participation (100 points)

10% of your final grade will be determined by the quantity and quality of your in-class participation in the course. You will receive a letter grade for participation representing the overall quality of your participation over the course of the semester. Below is a summary of course standards for different letter grades (borderline cases will receive "+" or "-" grades as appropriate):

- A (100%): Outstanding participation. Highly engaged during lecture and section, with active participation in small group discussions and frequent constructive contributions to full-class discussions. In-class contributions reflect excellent understanding of and critical engagement with the content of lectures and assigned readings.
- B (86%): Good participation. Moderately engaged during lecture and section, with active participation in small group discussions and occasional constructive contributions to full-class discussions. In-class contributions reflect significant understanding of and critical engagement with the content of lectures and assigned readings.
- C (76%): Minimally adequate participation. Minimally engaged during lecture and section. In-class contributions are infrequent and reflect limited understanding of and critical engagement with the content of lectures and assigned readings.
- D (66%): Poor participation. Attentive during lecture and section, but participating only very infrequently in small-group and full-class discussions. In-class contributions do not reflect understanding of or critical engagement with the content of lectures and assigned readings.
- F (0%): Inadequate participation. Not attentive during lecture and section and/or not participating in either small-group or full-class discussions.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%	C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%	C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%	D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%	D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%	D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%	F	<60

Grading Rubrics

Each rubric assigns graded work a number of points from 0 to 10. Those are equivalent to letter grades as follows:

10	A+ (100%)	4	C+ (79%)
9	A (96%)	3	C (76%)
8	A- (93%)	2	C- (73%)
7	B+ (89%)	1	D (66%)
6	B (86%)	0	F (60%)
5	B- (83%)		

The following Writing Rubric applies to all written work:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Content	Fully addresses all aspects of the prompt. Demonstrates excellent understanding of and critical engagement with course material. Uses appropriate details and citations from the text(s). (5-6 points)	Fully addresses all aspects of the prompt. Demonstrates good understanding; minor points may be misstated or omitted. Demonstrates good critical engagement with course material. Uses appropriate details and citations from the text(s). (3-4 points)	Significant misunderstandings of course material. Key ideas are explained incorrectly or omitted. Limited critical engagement with course material. Little textual evidence to back up interpretation of the readings. (1-2 points)	Very substantial misunderstandings. Key ideas are explained incorrectly or omitted. Very limited evidence of critical engagement with course material. Textual evidence is missing or not relevant. (0 points)
Writing	Written in simple, non-technical language. Develops a small number of points thoroughly. Well-organized and easy to follow. Few, if any, spelling or grammatical errors. (4 points)	Mostly clear, focused, and organized, but includes some confusing passages, digressions/repetitive passages, or lapses in organization. Some spelling or grammatical errors. (3 points)	Significant lapses in clarity, focus, or organization. Significant spelling or grammatical errors that interfere with understanding. (1-2 points)	Very difficult to understand; many spelling or grammatical errors. (0 points)

The following rubric applies to the in-person project presentation part of the capstone project.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Content	Fully addresses all aspects of the prompt. Demonstrates excellent understanding of and critical engagement with course material. (5-6 points)	Fully addresses all aspects of the prompt. Demonstrates good understanding of course material with minor errors or omissions. Demonstrates substantial critical engagement with course material. (3-4 points)	Significant misunderstandings of course material. Key ideas are explained incorrectly or omitted. Limited critical engagement with course material. (1-2 points)	Very substantial misunderstandings. Key ideas are explained incorrectly or omitted. Very limited evidence of critical engagement with course material. (0 points)
Presentation	Ideas are presented in simple, non-technical language. Develops a small number of points thoroughly. Well-organized and easy to follow. Polished and engaging. Presentational materials (e.g., slides) are polished and effective. (4 points)	Mostly clear, focused, organized, and polished. Brief segments of the presentation are confusing, repetitive, or off-topic. Uses effective presentational materials. (3 points)	Significant lapses in clarity, focus, or organization. Presentational materials are ineffective or poorly constructed. (1-2 points)	Very difficult to understand. Presentational materials are absent or incomplete. (0 points)

III. Tentative schedule and readings

Please note that the following is tentative and subject to change. Please see Canvas for an up-to-date schedule and list of readings

Unit	Date	Topic	Readings
Unit 1: Intelligent machines	Wed 08/23	What are the machines up to?	No readings
Unit 1: Intelligent machines	Mon 08/28	How smart are machines getting?	<i>The Ezra Klein Show</i> , "A.I. could solve some of humanity's hardest problems. It already has" (podcast)
Unit 1: Intelligent machines	Wed 08/30	How do we tell if a machine is smart?	Turing, "Computing machinery and intelligence"
Unit 1: Intelligent machines	Mon 09/04	Holiday (no class)	
Unit 1: Intelligent machines	Wed 09/06	Are machines already smart?	Bubeck et al., "Sparks of Artificial General Intelligence: Early experiments with GPT-4"
Unit 1: Intelligent machines	Mon 09/11	Maybe machines aren't so smart?	Marcus and Davis, "GPT-3, Bloviator: OpenAI's Language Generator Has No Idea What It's Talking About", Hofstadter, "The Shallowness of Google Translate"

Unit 2: Social machines	Wed 09/13	Will we lose our jobs to machines?	DePillis and Lohr, "Tinkering with ChatGPT, workers wonder: Will this take my job?"; Gheaus and Herzog, "The goods of work (other than money!)"
Unit 2: Social machines	Mon 09/18	If machines do it better, why bother?	Karlan, "Human achievement and artificial intelligence"
Unit 2: Social machines	Wed 09/20	Can we fall in love with machines?	<i>HiPhi Nation</i> , "Love in the time of Replika" (podcast)
Unit 2: Social machines	Mon 09/25	Can machines fall in love with us?	Frank and Nyholm, "From Sex Robots to Love Robots: Is Mutual Love with a Robot Possible?" (pages 219–238)
Unit 2: Social machines	Wed 09/27	Should machines kill?	Satariano et al., "Killer Robots Aren't Science Fiction. A Push to Ban Them Is Growing."
Unit 2: Social machines	Mon 10/02	When a machines kills, who should we blame?	Sparrow, "Killer robots"
Unit 2: Social machines	Wed 10/04	Will machines destroy us?	The Future of Humanity Institute, "Pause Giant AI Experiments: An Open Letter"; Bostrom, "Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority"; Srinivasan, "Stop the Robot Apocalypse"
Unit 3: Moral machines	Mon 10/09	Why don't machines do what we want?	Christian, <i>The Alignment Problem</i> , chapter 1
Unit 3: Moral machines	Wed 10/11	Why is it hard to get machines to do what we want?	Amodei et al, "Concrete Problems in AI Safety"
Unit 3: Moral machines	Mon 10/16	What should we want machines to do?	Karen Hao, "Should a Self-Driving Car Kill the Baby or the Grandma? Depends on Where You're From"; Abby Jaques, "Why the Moral Machine is a Monster" (pages 1–9)
Unit 3: Moral machines	Wed 10/18	How can we make machines do what we want?	Asimov, "The three laws"; Anderson and Anderson, "Creating an Ethical Intelligent Agent"
Unit 3: Moral machines	Mon 10/23	Why not just ask machines to do what we want?	Hard Fork, "Dario Amodei, C.E.O. of Anthropic, on the Paradoxes of A.I. Safety" (podcast) (Amodei interview only)
Unit 3: Moral machines	Wed 10/25	Would a moral machine act like a moral human?	Grant, "Ethics for Artificial Agents"
Unit 4: Superintelligent machines	Mon 10/30	Will machines get smarter than us?	Chalmers, "The singularity: a philosophical analysis" (pp. 1-22)
Unit 4: Superintelligent machines	Wed 11/01	If machines get smarter than us, can we control them?	<i>Ex Machina</i> (film), Chalmers, "The singularity: a philosophical analysis" (pp. 22-34)
Unit 4: Superintelligent machines	Mon 11/06	Can we become machines?	<i>Black Mirror</i> , "Be right back" (episode)
Unit 4: Superintelligent machines	Wed 11/08	How could we become machines?	Chalmers, "The singularity: a philosophical analysis" (34-54)
Unit 5: Final project	Mon 11/13	Review and final project orientation	No new readings
Unit 5: Final project	Wed 11/15	Work on final project	No new readings
Unit 5: Final project	Mon 11/20	Work on final project	No new readings
Unit 5: Final project	Wed 11/22	Holiday (no class)	
Unit 5: Final project	Mon 11/27	Project presentations	No new readings
Unit 5: Final project	Wed 11/29	Project presentations	No new readings

Unit 5: Final project	Mon 12/04	Project presentations	No new readings
Unit 5: Final project	Wed 12/06	Project presentations	No new readings

IV. Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the Quest and General Education learning outcomes as follows.

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).

- Identify, describe, and explain how the resources available in the humanities and sciences can help us understand artificial intelligence's present and future effects on society (Content SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1). Assessed by Group Exercises, Short Papers, Capstone Project, Participation, and Perusall.
- Identify, describe, and explain how the resources available in the humanities and sciences can help us reflect on how we should want artificial intelligence to affect society (Content SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1). Assessed by Group Exercises, Short Papers, Capstone Project, Participation, and Perusall.

Critical Thinking: Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).

- Identify, analyze, and evaluate themes in public and scholarly discussions of artificial intelligence and its effects on society (Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1). Assessed by Group Exercises, Short Papers, Capstone Project, Participation, and Perusall.
- Analyze and evaluate the particular questions about artificial intelligence and its effects on society that we discuss in the course, such as questions about how artificial intelligence will affect our work and romantic lives (Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1). Assessed by Group Exercises, Short Papers, Capstone Project, Participation, and Perusall.

Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).

- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions about how artificial intelligence is, will, and should affect society in oral and written forms appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1). Assessed by Group Exercises, Short Papers, Capstone Project, Participation, and Perusall.

Connection: Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.

- Reflect on how artificial intelligence is affecting us and our communities (Connection SLO for Q1). Assessed by Group Exercises 2, 4, and 5, Capstone Project, Participation, and Perusall.
- Reflect on what we value, and how those values should shape the way we interact with AI-based technologies and the way we respond to AI's social effects (Connection SLO for Q1). Assessed by Group Exercises 2, 4, and 5, Capstone Project, Participation, and Perusall.

Quest Learning Experiences

Details of Experiential Learning Component

Experiential learning is an important part of this course and will be incorporated into several assignments, including the group exercises, short analytical essays, and capstone project. These assignments will involve experimenting with large language models and conducting original philosophical research.

Details of Self-Reflection Component

Throughout the course, you will have the opportunity to reflect on how AI-based technologies have affected your own life and the lives of those around you, whether you believe those effects are good or bad (and why), and how we should address the social changes that AI is already bringing about and may bring about in the future. Time for self-reflection will be integrated into nearly every lecture, and will also be incorporated into the group exercises.

V. Policies and Resources

Permissible and impermissible uses of AI in this class

You are prohibited from using any AI application in the course of completing any assigned work — at whatever stage, even including preliminary stages — for this class, *unless you are given explicit permission* either in the assignment as spelled out on Canvas or by the instructor as spelled out in an email or an announcement, and your permission is then restricted to the parameters spelled out in those instructions. If you would like to use such an application at some stage, you can ask the instructor (not the Teaching Assistant) for such permission, but you cannot assume it is permitted unless you have explicit guidance saying you may use it.

Possible verbal examination and further writing policy

You are undoubtedly aware of the ways in which certain AI applications — the Large Language Models, including ChatGPT — can be abused by students who don't care about academic dishonesty. If you make prohibited use of one of these to produce text handed in for an assignment, it is possible your cheating will go undetected. However, it is also possible that we will become suspicious. So we have the following policy regarding any work you hand in that we find suspicious.

We reserve the right to require you to meet with us to discuss your work so we may gauge your level of understanding of what you allegedly wrote yourself. We *further* reserve the right, if we are unsatisfied with what you demonstrate in that verbal interview, to require you to produce a new bit of writing under controlled conditions that will substitute for the original assignment. The grade for that new work will then serve as the official grade for the original assignment.

Attendance policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Students requiring accommodation

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University academic honesty policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by

abiding by the Honor Code." On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Penalties for academic dishonesty

The penalty for any academic dishonesty in this class is a failing grade for the entire course. If you are at all unsure whether something might count as academic dishonesty, it is your responsibility to find out. Please consult the honor code and/or ask the instructor. Do not be afraid to ask! And keep in mind it would be better to fail a particular assignment than cheat and fail the entire course.

Resources available to students

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: umatter@ufl.edu; [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575).
- Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575).
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center; [352-392-1161](tel:352-392-1161).
- University Police Department: <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>; [352-392-1111](tel:352-392-1111) (911 for emergencies).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: learning-support@ufl.edu; <https://elearning.ufl.edu>; [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357).
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union; <http://www.career.ufl.edu/>; [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601).
- Library Support: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.
- Academic Resources: 1317 Turlington Hall; [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010); <https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu>.
- Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall; <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.