

## PHIL 3135 Syllabus

Philosophy of Technology Phil 3135, All Sections, 3 Credits

Fall 2026

### Instructor Information

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### General Course Information

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#### Description

The course considers philosophical accounts of how technologies can and should shape our understandings of politics, ethics, and daily life. We will use case studies to better understand real problems scientists, engineers, and citizens face when dealing with technologies. Finally, we will host a technology conference to explore one method of regulating technology in democratic societies.

#### Course Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Understand and explain the major philosophical schools of thought regarding the relationship between technology and society.
2. Apply ethical reasoning to technological problems.
3. Confidently participate in debates about technology.
4. Develop a better understanding of the role of technology in their own lives and have the skills to build a good life in a technological world.

#### Required Course Materials

Students must have physical or digital copies of the following:

- *Technology Ethics*, Robson and Tsou, 2023, Routledge.
- *Technology and the Virtues*, Shannon Vallor, 2016, Oxford. *[Available for free through the GA Tech library]*

All other readings will be available through Canvas or the library.

**Grading Policy:**

You will earn letter grades as follows:

- A 90+%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F Below 60%

You will earn points according to the following distribution:

- Case Studies 20%
- Technology Conference 20%
- Pop Reading Quizzes 20%
- Tests (Midterm and Final) 40%

**Description of Graded Components**

**Case Studies:** Several class periods will be devoted to analyzing case studies related to course concepts. Grading will reflect the quality of (a) submitted/presented work and (b) participation in class. The format varies, but may involve written components, group work, debates, etc. While some reading or research may need to be completed before class, the grade is based activities completed in class. The lowest scoring case study will be dropped.

**Technology Conference:** The end of term will be devoted to analyzing a particular technology or tech-related issue (such as whether or not to construct an AI data center, whether or not to engage in de-extinction animals, etc.). You can think of this as an extended case study. The topic will be selected by ranked choice voting. The class will also be able to select the schedule and format of the conference, but it typically involves small group presentations and discussions. You will be graded on the quality of your preparation and participation.

**Pop Reading Quizzes:** No more than 10 times throughout the semester, a short pop quiz will be given. They are meant to be a check on whether or not you completed and understood the readings at a beginner level. They are not cumulative (only material assigned following the previous quiz will be assessed). Usually, they will be multiple choice and/or short answer. They will be handwritten. No notes may be used. The lowest scoring quiz will be dropped.

**Tests:** There will be two tests administered. One is a midterm, the other is a cumulative final. The midterm will occur during a regular class period. The final will occur during the final exam period. I am looking to determine if you (i) understand core concepts from the course, (ii) can apply concepts from the course to new scenarios, and (iii) can critically

assess claims made about technology using tools from the course. Both tests will be handwritten. No notes may be used, unless otherwise noted.

## **Course Policies**

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### **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and participation are very important in this course. Almost all graded work is completed in class. Aside from your grade, regular attendance and participation are also vital to a number of course goals. By participating in class, you can gain confidence in expressing your viewpoint and debating philosophical issues. It also allows you to learn from your peers and understand other points of view. The first step towards success in this course is showing up.

Missed class work, quizzes, and tests can be made up with a valid excuse, which will be granted in the case of illness or emergency **documented through OSL**, Institute Approved Absence, official accommodation, or pre-arranged religious obligation. Accommodations, illnesses, or other conflicts must be documented through the appropriate University channels. Make-ups must be arranged promptly.

### **AI Use**

AI, including large language models, may not be used to complete any graded material in this course. Presenting the output of AI as your own work will be counted as a form of plagiarism.

### **Late Work**

No late work is permitted except in the case of illness or emergency documented through OSL, Institute Approved Absence, official accommodation, or pre-arranged religious obligation.

### **Email**

I will make every attempt to respond to emails promptly. However, I cannot guarantee that I will respond outside of 9 AM to 5 PM. Please allow 24 hours for a response, then send a follow-up email if needed. Likewise, I do not expect students to be available to respond to email outside of typical work hours.

### **How to Get Help**

My office hours are your primary way to get help with this course. No appointment is necessary—feel free to show up to discuss readings, assignments, or anything else. If you are unable to attend my office hours, email me with other times that work for you. Depending on my availability, I may suggest working together over Zoom or through

email. I will review drafts of work during meetings only. If at any point you are concerned about your grade or a score you received, meet with me to discuss it.

### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

### **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.