# PHIL 135: ETHICS OF AI

## In Workflow

1. PHIL Committee Chair (brandon.carey@csus.edu)
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## Approval Path

1. 2026-08-31T17:58:07Z
   Rebekkah Mulholland (rebekkah.mulholland): Rollback to Initiator
2. 2026-10-07T19:27:37Z
   Rebekkah Mulholland (rebekkah.mulholland): Rollback to Initiator
3. 2026-10-13T21:46:45Z
   Brandon Carey (brandon.carey): Approved for PHIL Committee Chair
4. 2026-10-13T23:06:27Z
   Russell DiSilvestro (rdisilv): Approved for PHIL Chair
5. 2026-10-13T23:34:53Z
   Rebekkah Mulholland (rebekkah.mulholland): Approved for ALS College Committee Chair
6. 2026-10-13T23:45:54Z
   Matt Schmidtlein (schmidmc): Approved for ALS Dean

### New Course Proposal

Date Submitted: 2026-10-13T21:45:31Z

### Viewing: PHIL 135 : Ethics of AI

### Last edit: 2026-10-13T21:45:30Z

Changes proposed by: Brandon Carey (205073704)

**Contact(s):**

| Name (First Last) | Email | Phone 999-999-9999 |
|---|---|---|
| Matt McCormick | mccormick@csus.edu | 9167173283 |

**Catalog Title:**
Ethics of AI

**Class Schedule Title:**
Ethics of AI

**Academic Group: (College)**
ALS - Arts & Letters

**Academic Organization: (Department)**
Philosophy

**Will this course be offered through the College of Continuing Education (CCE)?**
No

**Catalog Year Effective:**
Spring 2027 (2026/2027 Catalog)

**Subject Area: (prefix)**
PHIL - Philosophy

**Catalog Number: (course number)**
135

**Course ID: (For administrative use only.)**
TBD

**Units:**
3

**Is the ONLY purpose of this change to update the term typically offered or the enforcement of existing requisites at registration?**
No

**In what term(s) will this course typically be offered?**
Fall, Spring

**Does this course require a room for its final exam?**
Yes, final exam requires a room

**Does this course replace an existing experimental course?**
No

**This course complies with the credit hour policy:**
Yes

**Justification for course proposal:**
PHIL 135 is a core requirement for the proposed Minor in Ethics of AI examining ethical issues raised by artificial intelligence, including problems of value, responsibility, rights, justice, agency, and human flourishing. The course examines AI-related ethical issues in social and political philosophy such as autonomy, fairness, responsibility, manipulation, bias, political power, surveillance, and the possible moral status of artificial beings. The course thus serves a cornerstone of the new proposed Minor in Ethics of AI, as well as expanding Philosophy's offering in GE Area 4. Due to the timeliness and career-relevance of the subject matter, we expect significant demand from both Philosophy students and students from other disciplines seeking an upper division course in area 4.

**Course Description: (Not to exceed 90 words and language should conform to catalog copy.)**
Examines how artificial intelligence may transform moral life, human flourishing, and the future of society. Topics may include AI companions, sex and love with AI, work and automation, manipulation, responsibility, autonomous weapons, alignment, existential risk, governance, AI welfare, the possible moral status of artificial systems, bias, and surveillance.

**Are one or more field trips required with this course?**
No

**Fee Course?**
No

**Is this course designated as Service Learning?**
No

**Is this course designated as Curricular Community Engaged Learning?**
No

**Does this course require safety training?**
No

**Does this course require personal protective equipment (PPE)?**
No

**Does this course have prerequisites?**
No

**Does this course have corequisites?**
No

**Graded:**
Letter

**Approval required for enrollment?**
No Approval Required

**Course Component(s) and Classification(s):**
Lecture

**Lecture Classification**
CS#02 - Lecture/Discussion (K-factor=1WTU per unit)
**Lecture Units**
3

**Is this a paired course?**
No

**Is this course crosslisted?**
No

**Can this course be repeated for credit?**
No

**Can the course be taken for credit more than once during the same term?**
No

## Description of the Expected Learning Outcomes and Assessment Strategies:

**List the Expected Learning Outcomes and their accompanying Assessment Strategies (e.g., portfolios, examinations, performances, pre-and post-tests, conferences with students, student papers). Click the plus sign to add a new row.**

| | Expected Learning Outcome | Assessment Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Explain major ethical issues arising from the development and use of artificial intelligence. | Reading-discussion quizzes |
| 2 | Apply philosophical concepts, arguments, and methods of ethical reasoning to questions concerning artificial intelligence, human behavior, social institutions, and emerging technologies. | Midterm and final examinations |
| 3 | Analyze how artificial intelligence interacts with social institutions, cultural values, power relations, and patterns of inequality. | Midterm and final examinations |
| 4 | Evaluate ways in which artificial intelligence may affect differently situated individuals and groups, including differences involving race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and disability. | Reading-discussion quizzes |
| 5 | Develop and defend reasoned judgments about contested ethical questions concerning artificial intelligence while recognizing relevant objections, uncertainty, competing values, and alternative perspectives. | Written essay project |

**Attach a list of the required/recommended course readings and activities:**
PHIL 135 Ethics of AI Syllabus.docx

**For whom is this course being developed?**
Majors in the Dept
Majors of other Depts
Minors in the Dept
General Education
Other

**Is this course required in a degree program (major, minor, graduate degree, certificate?)**
Yes

**Has a corresponding Program Change been submitted to Workflow?**
No

**Identify the program(s) in which this course is required:**

| Programs: |
| --- |
| Minor in Ethics of AI |

**Does the proposed change or addition cause a significant increase in the use of College or University resources (lab room, computer)?**

No

**Will there be any departments affected by this proposed course?**

No

**I/we as the author(s) of this course proposal agree to provide a new or updated accessibility checklist to the Dean's office prior to the semester when this course is taught utilizing the changes proposed here.**

I/we agree

## University Learning Goals

**Undergraduate Learning Goals:**

Competence in the disciplines
Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
Intellectual and practical skills
Personal and social responsibility
Integrative learning

**Is this course required as part of a teaching credential program, a single subject, or multiple subject waiver program (e.g., Liberal Studies, Biology) or other school personnel preparation program (e.g., School of Nursing)?**

No

## Is this a General Education (GE) or Graduation Requirement (GR) course or is it being considered for GE/GR?

**Is this a General Education (GE) course or is it being considered for GE?**

Yes

**In which GE area(s) does this apply?**

4. Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Which GE objective(s) does this course satisfy?**

Read, write, and understand relatively complex and sophisticated English prose.
Construct a non-fallacious verbal argument, recognize fallacious arguments, and follow the verbal arguments of others.
Find and use common information resources, engage in specialized library research, use computers and seek out appropriate expert opinion and advice.
Use mathematical ideas to accomplish a variety of tasks.
Gain a general understanding of current theory, concepts, knowledge, and scientific methods pertaining to the nature of the physical universe, ecosystems, and life on this planet.
Develop an acquaintance and understanding of cultures and major dynamic social institutions which affect one's life.
Possess a significant and useful understanding of peoples from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds, including women and ethnic and other minority groups who have been the objects of prejudice and adverse discrimination within our society.

**Attach Course Syllabus with Detailed Outline of Weekly Topics:**

PHIL 135 Ethics of AI Syllabus.docx

Syllabi must include: GE area outcomes listed verbatim; catalog description of the course; prerequisites, if any; student learning objectives; assignments; texts; reading lists; materials; grading system; exams and other methods of evaluation.

**Will more than one section of this course be offered?**

No

## General Education - Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Section 1.

**Please provide a statement indicating the means and methods for evaluating the extent to which the objectives of Area 4, the cultural diversity requirements, and writing requirements are met for all course sections.**

The extent to which the objectives of Area 4, the cultural diversity requirements, and writing requirements are met will be evaluated with quizzes, tests, class discussion, and other in-class assessments,

**What steps will the department take to ensure that instructors comply with the category criteria (and who is responsible)? Before a course can be offered in multiple sections, a designated person in the department must provide a description of what would be common to all sections and what might typically vary between sections.**

The department conducts peer reviews of all courses in the curriculum, and syllabi review, and pre-semester checklist reviews. Faculty are expected to revise their courses and adjust in response to peer evaluations.

Section 2.

## Indicate in written statements how the course meets the following criteria for Area 4. Relate the statements directly to the course syllabus and outline. Be as succinct as possible.

**Describes and evaluates ethical and social values in their historical and cultural context.**

In the course, students will engage in ethical analysis; they will identify, explain, and critically evaluate major ethical issues arising from the development and use of artificial intelligence. We will consider, for example, Human flourishing, work, intimacy, AI rights, war, governance. Philosophical argumentation applied to companions, manipulation, automation, autonomous weapons, alignment Bias, discrimination, surveillance, employment, policing, disability, gender, class. Automation, surveillance, AI governance, warfare, changing social relationships

**Explains and applies the principles and methods of academic disciplines to the study of social and individual behavior.**

In the course, students will engage in the application of philosophical methods and analysis: They will apply philosophical concepts, arguments, and methods of ethical reasoning to questions concerning artificial intelligence, human behavior, social institutions, and emerging technologies.

**Demonstrates an understanding of the role of human diversity in human society, for example, race, ethnicity, class, age, ability/ disability, sexual identity, gender and gender expression.**

The course will engage in Social and Cultural Analysis: Analyze how artificial intelligence interacts with social institutions, cultural values, power relations, and patterns of inequality.
And the course will address: Human Diversity and AI: Evaluate ways in which artificial intelligence may affect differently situated individuals and groups, including differences involving race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and disability.

**Explains and critically examines social dynamics and issues in their historical and cultural contexts.**

The course will develop develop and defend reasoned judgments about contested ethical questions concerning artificial intelligence while recognizing relevant objections, uncertainty, competing values, and alternative perspectives.

## Includes a writing component described on course syllabus

**I) If course is lower division, formal and/or informal writing assignments encouraging students to think through course concepts using at least one of the following: periodic lab reports, exams which include essay questions, periodic formal writing assignments, periodic journals, reading logs, other. Writing in lower division courses need not be graded, but must, at a minimum, be evaluated for clarity and proper handling of terms, phrases, and concepts related to the course.**

**2) If course is upper division, a minimum of 1500 words of formal, graded writing. [Preferably there should be more than one formal writing assignment and each writing assignment (e.g. periodic lab reports, exams which include essay questions, a research/term paper etc.) should be due in stages throughout the semester to allow the writer to revise after receiving feedback from the instructor. Include an indication of how writing is to be evaluated and entered into course grade determination.]**

The course will include staged writing projects, written midterm and final, in-class essay responses. The Written essay project will be 1500 words of formal, graded writing.

Section 3.

**If you would like, you may provide further information that might help the G.E. Course Review Committee understand how this course meets these criteria and/or the G.E. Program Objectives found in the CSUS Policy Manual, General Education Program, Section I.B.**

See attached syllabus.

**Reviewer Comments:**

**Matt McCormick (mccormick) (Mon, 24 Aug 2026 22:26:02 GMT):** This course should be considered for GE area, details with learning outcomes are in the syllabus.

**Matt McCormick (mccormick) (Tue, 25 Aug 2026 19:44:32 GMT):** Hi ALS Committee Chair, can you send this proposal back to the Philosophy Dept so we can do a few things? Thanks.

**Rebekkah Mulholland (rebekkah.mulholland) (Mon, 31 Aug 2026 17:58:07 GMT):** Rollback: Requested to be rolled back.

**Rebekkah Mulholland (rebekkah.mulholland) (Wed, 07 Oct 2026 19:27:37 GMT):** Rollback: Thanks for proposal. The committee has the following comments: Assessments need to be diversified for each ELO (and then also reflect those changes on the syllabus). Not sure what happened, but the link to the syllabus right under the ELOs takes you to a "not found" catalog link. The one further down does work, but that needs to be fixed/removed before moving on. The syllabus has all of the required elements, but is extremely hard to follow.

Key: 15588