MINOR IN ETHICS OF AI

In Workflow

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Approval Path

1. 2026-08-28T20:42:45Z
   Brandon Carey (brandon.carey): Approved for PHIL Committee Chair
2. 2026-08-28T21:08:42Z
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3. 2026-10-07T18:41:38Z
   Rebekkah Mulholland (rebekkah.mulholland): Approved for ALS College Committee Chair
4. 2026-10-07T19:45:35Z
   Gladys Francis (gladys.francis): Approved for ALS Dean

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: 2026-08-24T23:00:02Z

Viewing: Minor in Ethics of AI

Last edit: 2026-10-07T18:41:15Z

Changes proposed by: Matt McCormick (101040208)

Academic Group: (College)

Arts & Letters

Academic Organization: (Department)

Philosophy

Catalog Year Effective:

2027-2028 Catalog

NOTE: This degree major program will be subject to program review evaluation within six years after implementation.

Individual(s) primarily responsible for drafting the proposed degree major program:

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

Program Snapshot

Type of Program:
Minor

Title of the Program:
Minor in Ethics of AI

Designation: (degree terminology)
Minor

Delivery Mode:
Fully Face to Face
Hybrid

Support Mode:
State Support
Self Support

Please see the CSU/CIP Code Crosswalk: https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-workflow/_internal/_documents/csu_codes_to_cip.pdf

Is this a pilot program?
No

Will this program require accreditation?
No

Provide a clear, concise overview of the program proposal (new or change) and provide a justification. For NEW programs describe the purpose and focus of the program, identify the target student population(s), and highlight key strengths and distinguishing features of the program.
Ethics of AI Minor: Program Overview

The 15-unit Ethics of AI Minor prepares students to evaluate how artificial intelligence should be developed, used, and governed. Housed in Philosophy, the program focuses on the ethical and conceptual questions that technical training alone cannot answer: when AI systems should be trusted or limited, how responsibility should be assigned, whose interests should count, and how AI may affect autonomy, justice, human relationships, meaningful work, political power, and human flourishing.

Students also examine the philosophical foundations of these issues, including questions about intelligence, agency, knowledge, consciousness, personhood, and the possible moral status of artificial systems. The program's central aim is to develop ethical independence: the ability to assess AI critically rather than merely use it or adapt to it.

Target Student Populations

The minor is designed for students across the university, particularly those preparing for fields in which AI will increasingly shape professional judgment and institutional decision-making. Likely students include majors in:

Computer science, engineering, and data-related fields
Business, management, and human resources
Education and psychology
Communication, journalism, media, and design
Criminal justice, political science, and public administration
Health care and the sciences
Philosophy and other humanities
Pre-law and students interested in public policy

It is especially valuable for students interested in careers involving technology ethics, responsible AI, governance, compliance, policy, consulting, organizational leadership, or technology-related law.

Curriculum

All students complete two required courses:

PHIL 135: Ethics of AI, addressing such issues as AI companions, automation, manipulation, responsibility, autonomous weapons, alignment, existential risk, governance, AI welfare, bias, and surveillance.
PHIL 137: Philosophy of AI, examining intelligence, mind, language, knowledge, computation, machine reasoning, agency, consciousness, and personhood.

Students then select three Philosophy electives: two in Ethics, Society, and Technology and one in Mind, Knowledge, and Reasoning.

Key Strengths and Distinguishing Features
Ethics-centered rather than tool-centered. The program asks not simply what AI can do, but whether particular uses are justified and under what conditions.
Grounded in Philosophy's distinctive strengths. Students receive systematic training in ethical reasoning, conceptual analysis, argument evaluation, and justified judgment.
Broader than conventional AI-ethics programs. Alongside bias, privacy, and surveillance, the curriculum addresses emerging questions about artificial companions, AI welfare, moral status, human flourishing, alignment, and existential risk.
Accessible across majors. The minor does not require advanced technical preparation and complements both technical and nontechnical degree programs.
Intellectually rigorous and practically relevant. Students learn to distinguish empirical, conceptual, and normative claims; evaluate competing values; assess uncertainty and risk; and defend concrete recommendations.
Flexible and efficient. The 15-unit structure combines two common core courses with electives that allow students to connect AI ethics to their primary academic and professional interests.
Clear learning outcomes and sustainable assessment. The program directly assesses ethical reasoning, philosophical foundations, argumentation, and applied ethical judgment through the two required courses.

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

Will this program be 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

Curriculum Alignment and Assessment

Program Goals

Provide a brief statement of the program's overarching goals and priorities: • Describe the program's mission, focus, and intended impact on students. • Identify broad areas of emphasis (e.g., career preparation, research, community engagement, leadership development). • Goals may be aspirational or developmental and do not need to be directly measurable.

Program Goals Statement

The mission of the Ethics of AI Minor is to prepare students to think critically, independently, and responsibly about the development, use, and governance of artificial intelligence. Grounded in philosophy, the program places ethical reasoning at its center while providing students with the conceptual foundations needed to examine questions about intelligence, agency, knowledge, consciousness, personhood, and moral status. Its overarching goal is to enable students to ask not only what AI systems can do, but whether and under what conditions their use is justified.

The program seeks to develop students who can identify competing values, distinguish empirical questions from conceptual and normative questions, evaluate arguments and policies, assess uncertainty and risk, and defend reasoned judgments about appropriate individual, institutional, and social responses to AI. It emphasizes the effects of AI on autonomy, justice, responsibility, human relationships, meaningful work, political power, and human flourishing.

The minor supports career preparation by equipping students across disciplines with skills increasingly needed in technology, business, education, health care, law, media, public policy, government, and organizational leadership. It also promotes ethical leadership and responsible citizenship by preparing students to participate thoughtfully in public and institutional decisions concerning AI. Ultimately, the program aims to develop graduates who can help shape the uses and governance of artificial intelligence rather than merely adapt to technological change.

Program Learning Outcomes

Provide measurable, program-specific learning outcomes that reflect the most important competencies students will demonstrate upon completion of the program. Programs are expected to assess and use PLOs for continuous improvement.

Program Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome
Ethical Reasoning Analyze major ethical problems arising from the development, deployment, and use of artificial intelligence.
Philosophical Foundations Explain and critically evaluate philosophical questions about intelligence, agency, mind, knowledge, consciousness, and personhood that bear on the ethical significance of artificial intelligence.
Argumentation and Critical Evaluation Construct and evaluate reasoned arguments concerning the ethical and social implications of artificial intelligence, including the ability to distinguish empirical, conceptual, and normative claims.
Applied Ethical Judgment Apply ethical concepts, principles, and theories to concrete cases involving artificial intelligence and defend a reasoned judgment concerning appropriate individual, institutional, or social responses.

Learning Outcomes Display

Course Code	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4
PHIL 135 Ethics of AI				
PHIL 138 Philosophy of AI				
PHIL 2	✓			✓
PHIL 101	✓			✓
PHIL 102	✓			✓
PHIL 103	✓		✓	✓
PHIL 105			✓	✓
PHIL 122	✓		✓	✓
PHIL 155	✓		✓	✓
PHIL 182	✓		✓	✓
PHIL 192F	✓		✓	✓
PHIL 192P	✓		✓	✓
PHIL 60			✓	
PHIL 61			✓	
PHIL 125			✓	✓

PHIL 153		✓	✓	
PHIL 154		✓	✓	
PHIL 156		✓	✓	
PHIL 180		✓	✓	
PHIL 181		✓	✓	
PHIL 183		✓	✓	
PHIL 192E		✓	✓	
PHIL 192M		✓	✓	
PHIL 192S		✓	✓	

Please attach a Comprehensive Program Assessment Plan
Comprehensive Program Assessment Plan.pdf

Please attach a Curriculum Map Matrix
Curriculum Map Matrix.pdf

Please attach a Five-Year Budget Projection. For NEW programs, also attach a Budget Narrative.
Five Year Budget Projection Ethics of AI Minor.docx

Please attach the updated roadmap:
Ethics of AI Minor.pdf

Catalog Description (catalog copy):

Units required for Minor: 15

The Minor in Ethics of AI provides students with philosophical training to analyze ethical issues arising from the development, deployment, and use of artificial intelligence. Topics may include bias, privacy, surveillance, misinformation, automation, manipulation, responsibility, governance, autonomous weapons, existential risk, human relationships with AI, and the possible moral status of artificial systems.

Through required courses in the ethics and philosophy of AI and electives in ethics, society, mind, knowledge, and reasoning, students examine questions concerning intelligence, agency, consciousness, personhood, justice, autonomy, and human flourishing. The program develops skills in ethical reasoning, argument analysis, conceptual clarification, and the evaluation of empirical and normative claims. The minor complements majors across the University and prepares students to participate responsibly in professional, institutional, and public decisions involving artificial intelligence.

Admission and Continuation Requirements (catalog copy): minimum GPA and prerequisites (if applicable), required coursework or preparation, portfolio, test scores, and/or letters of recommendation. For graduate programs: expectations for a relevant bachelor's degree (required or preferred disciplines, prerequisite knowledge, or equivalent experience), include evidence that program requirements conform to the minimum requirements for the culminating experience, as specified in Title 5 Section 40510 The Master's Degree and Section 40511 The Doctoral Degree.

Program Requirements (catalog copy):

Code	Title	Units
Required Core (6 Units)		
PHIL 135 ETHICS OF AI	Course PHIL 135 ETHICS OF AI Not Found	3

PHIL 138 PHILOSOPHY OF AI	Course PHIL 138 PHILOSOPHY OF AI Not Found	3
Electives (9 Units)		
Elective List A		
Choose two courses from Elective List A.		6
PHIL 2	Ethics	
PHIL 101	Ethics and Social Issues	
PHIL 102	Professional and Public Service Ethics	
PHIL 103	Business and Computer Ethics	
PHIL 105	Science and Human Values	
PHIL 122	Political Philosophy	
PHIL 155	Philosophy Of Law	
PHIL 182	Ethical Theory	
PHIL 192F	Topics in Ethics	
PHIL 192P	Topics in Social and Political Philosophy	
Elective List B		
Choose one course from Elective List B.		3
PHIL 60	Deductive Logic I	
PHIL 61	Inductive Logic I	
PHIL 125	Philosophy Of Science	
PHIL 153	Philosophy Of Mind	
PHIL 154	Philosophy Of Language	
PHIL 156	Philosophy of the Social Sciences	
PHIL 180	Knowledge and Understanding	
PHIL 181	Metaphysics	
PHIL 183	Rationality	
PHIL 192E	Topics in Epistemology	
PHIL 192M	Topics in Philosophy of Mind	
PHIL 192S	Topics in Philosophy of Science	
Total Units		**15**

Please attach the Curriculum Overview

Ethics of AI Minor.pdf

Key: 645