

PHIL 134 section 01, **Computers, Ethics & Society**

Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30pm to 2:45pm

Fall 2020

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In the digital age, we increasingly spend our lives online, and a growing part of philosophical thinking reflects this meaningful change. This course applies moral, epistemological and political thinking to normative issues surrounding the use of the internet. It is composed of four parts: (1) Online Wrongs: Ethical Challenges in the Cyberspace; (2) Digital Ignorance: Epistemic Challenges in the Cyberspace; (3) Democracy 2.0: Political Challenges in the Cyberspace and (4) The Ethics of Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence. Questions we will discuss include the following: what is the value of anonymous interaction; what challenges do epistemic bubbles, echo chambers and fake news pose to democracy; what should be the limits of free expression on the internet; why should we care about online privacy (if at all); is hacktivism an acceptable form of civil disobedience, and how are algorithms biased against minorities?

Each class meeting will contain a lecture, a period of small group discussion, an online survey and a short written assignment. Although the course focuses on the internet, students will have the opportunity to forge (and share) their perspective on timeless philosophical issues such as anonymity, privacy, deception, intellectual virtues, freedom of expression, civil disobedience and social equality.

GE Area: V

Prerequisites: Completion of core GE, satisfaction of Writing Skills Test and upper division standing.