

## **FYSM 1210 B      To Make a Better World: Ethical Issues in Technology and Design**

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### **Course Description**

The world we live in is increasingly one of our own making, a world that is the consequence of design. This course will explore ethical dimensions of this, focusing on infrastructure and the built environment, virtual spaces, and public policy. Course material will include core philosophical readings, philosophical podcasts, and multidisciplinary studies. Students will have the opportunity to do an investigative project within Ottawa that explores the ethical dimensions of a public artifact, policy, or practice.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Through engagement with this course, you will:

- Understand a variety of philosophical issues concerning the ethical dimensions of technology and design
- Deepen your capacity to engage with, critique, and appreciate the world around you, both concrete and virtual
- Strengthen your general critical abilities

### **Texts:**

Readings are drawn from a variety of sources and will be available through Perusall, an annotation platform.

### **Course Calendar:**

*Week 1                      Introduction to the course*

Wed Sept 6:    Read:    This syllabus  
Do:        Annotate this syllabus in Perusall by Sunday night. Does anything strike you as unclear, confusing, fun, boring, unfair, interesting, etc.?

*Material Objects and the Built Environment*

Mon Sept 11:    Read:    Do Artifacts Have Politics? Langdon Winner  
Do:        Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class

Wed Sept 13:    Listen: [99% Invisible podcast on Curb Cuts](#)  
Do:        Spend 15 minutes annotating an intersection or place on [Project Sidewalk](#)

- Mon Sept 18 Watch: [David Laposky tours a new university building at Toronto Metropolitan](#)  
 Read: Selections from *Callous Objects*, by Robert Rosenberger  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Sept 20 Read: Selections from *Callous Objects*, by Robert Rosenberger  
 Listen: [Interview with Robert Rosenberger](#)  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Mon Sept 25 Read: Excerpts from *Callous Objects*, by Robert Rosenberger  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Sept 27 Group fieldwork
- Mon Oct 2 Discussion of fieldwork and midterm project
- Wed Oct 4 Read: Do Politics Have Artifacts? by Bernward Joerges  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Mon Oct 9 University closed, no class
- Wed Oct 11 Listen: <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/beneath-the-skyway/>  
 Read: selections from Jane Jacob's *Life and Death of American Cities*  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Mon Oct 16 Read: The Aesthetic Homogenization of Cities, C. Thi Nguyen  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Oct 18 Read: Who Should Pay When Development Causes Floods?, Denise Balkisson  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Class visitor: Jessica Strauss, Public Safety Canada (anticipatory disaster funding)
- Break Week
- Life in Virtual Spaces*
- Mon Oct 30 Read: The Moral Gray Space of AI Decisions, Patrick Lin  
 Listen: Hi-Phi Nation, The Precrime Unit  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Nov 1 Read: The Ethics of Predictive Policing, Hadjimatheou and Nathan  
 Read: Algorithmic Policing in Canada Explained, Miles Kenyon  
 Do: Annotate the readings in Perusall \*before\* class
- Mon Nov 6 Read: selections from *Weapons of Math Destruction* by Cathy O'Neill  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Nov 8 Listen: Hi-Phi Nation, [Risky Business](#)  
 Read: Agency laundering and Information Technologies, Rubel, Castro and Pham  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Mon Nov 13 Read: The Importance of Forgetting, Rima Basu  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Nov 15 Read: These Women Tried to Warn Us about AI, Lorena O'Neill  
 Read: The Ethics of Facial Recognition Technology, Evan Selinger, Brenda Leong  
 Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Mon Nov 20 Read The Surveillance Delusion, by Carissa Véliz

- Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Nov 22 Read: Distraction by Design, James Williams, from *Stand Out of our Light*  
Do: Annotate the reading in Perusall \*before\* class
- Mon Nov 27 Read: Ethics of the Attention Economy: The Problem of Social Media Addiction  
Bhargava and Velasquez  
Read: Is the Attention Economy Noxious?, Castro and Pham  
Do: Annotate the readings in Perusall \*before\* class
- Wed Nov 29 Do: Bring 1 page print out of final project idea to class

*Final projects*

- Mon Dec 4 Final Project workshop
- Wed Dec 6 Final Project workshop

**Evaluation**

Your course mark will be based on three things:

*Reading Annotations and Discussion Questions: 30 percent*

In advance of most classes, you are required to read and annotate a reading using Perusall, a social annotation software. See the Perusall Guide posted on the Brightspace page for more information about these assignments and how they will be marked. These annotations will make up 20% of your final mark.

Note: You are required to annotate 15 of the 19 readings prior to the class for which they are assigned; *late annotations will not be accepted*. You are encouraged to annotate all readings, and your mark will be based on the best 15 scores.

The other 10% of your final mark will be based on guided reading questions brought to the class for one day in the semester. (Days will be assigned at the beginning of the course.)

*Midterm Project: 30 percent*

Outline due Monday, Oct 2 (returned by Friday, Oct 7) (10% of final mark)  
Final submission due Friday, October 13 (20% of final mark)

A brief for this will be posted on Brightspace and distributed by week two.

*Final Project: 40 percent*

Due Friday, December 8. A brief for the project will be posted on Brightspace and distributed by week two.

These pieces of work are related. Reading and annotating the material ahead of each class puts you in a position to understand and engage with the class sessions. Understanding and engaging with the class sessions, in turn, puts you in a position to enjoy and do well on the midterm and final projects.

*Note:* Late penalties for the midterm essay and final project: 5 percent per day

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2023-24)

### **Assignments:**

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

### **Evaluation:**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

### **Deferrals for Term Work:**

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

### **Deferrals for Final Exams:**

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

### **Plagiarism:**

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

### **Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be

- tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 6 Classes start.

Sept. 19 Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.

Sept. 30 Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses.

Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.

Oct. 9 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Oct. 23-27 Fall Break – no classes.

Nov. 24 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.

Dec. 8 Last day of fall term classes. ***Classes follow a Monday schedule.*** Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.

Dec. 10-22 Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.

Dec. 22 All take-home examinations are due.

Jan. 8 Classes begin.

Jan. 19 Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.

Jan. 31 Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.

Feb. 19 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Feb. 19-23 Winter Break – no classes.

Mar. 15 Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.

Mar. 27 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.

Mar. 29 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Apr. 10 Last day of two-term and winter term classes. ***Classes follow a Friday schedule.*** Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.

Apr. 11-12 No classes or examinations take place.

Apr. 13-25 Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.

Apr. 25 All take-home examinations are due.

**Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:  
[www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy)  
520-2110

Registrar's Office:  
[www.carleton.ca/registrar](http://www.carleton.ca/registrar)  
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:  
[www.carleton.ca/academicadvising](http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising)  
520-7850

Writing Services:  
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>  
520-3822

MacOdrum Library  
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>  
520-2735