PHIL 164 - Technology & Human Values
Summer I - Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 AM to 1:50 PM in Center Hall 205
Instructor: Danny Weltman
dweltman@ucsd.edu | Office Hours: 2 to 3 PM Tuesdays + Thursdays at Mandeville Coffee Cart
Teaching Assistant: Michael Pittman
mpittman@ucsd.edu | Office Hours: 10 to 11 AM Tuesdays in H&SS 7055

About This Course
In this course, we will be investigating philosophical questions that involve technology and the way it involves human values. These include issues as varied as genetic modification, whether robots could ever truly think, and whether certain technologies are themselves evil.

Below are the goals for this course. Our class sessions and homework are designed not just to help you learn about philosophy, but also for you to learn how to:

- Identify a philosopher's argument and summarize it in your own words
- Generate questions about, extensions of, and objections to the argument
- Reflect on, refine, and articulate your own views on the various topics we address

Course Content
Each week after the first week has two possible topics. As a class, we will choose which topic to focus on each week. I have put all the possible readings on a separate sheet so that the syllabus is not huge. When we pick the topics we will examine, I will give you a new sheet that is updated with just the articles we will read. All readings are available on the course TED page. Each week has one or two mandatory readings, plus a list of additional readings from which you should choose at least one article to read in addition to the mandatory reading. Please bring the readings to class each day, either printed out or in easily accessible electronic form.

Assignments and Grading
There are three kinds of assignments in this class: weekly reading quizzes, weekly discussion posts, and the final take-home exam. Late quizzes or posts will not be accepted except in case of emergency. (Computer issues are not an emergency.) The final will lose 1/3rd of a letter grade for each day that it is late. Turning in a final exam is required in order to pass the course.

Weekly Reading Quizzes (5% of your grade) are to help you focus on the important parts of the reading and to get instant feedback on whether you have understood the reading. Quizzes are due midnight on Monday (except week one). There is one quiz per week, for a total of five quizzes.

Weekly Discussion Posts (40% of your grade) are your opportunity to get practice writing concisely about philosophy. There are two weekly discussion posts due on the TED discussion board for that week. One is due by midnight Wednesday and the other is due by midnight next Monday. The first one must be 500 words or less, and it should summarize a point from one of
the readings, then offer a question, an extension of the argument, or a critique of the argument. The one due the next Monday is 250 words or less, and it should be a comment on someone else's post, offering an answer to their question, your own question, an extension to their post, or a critique of their post. There are nine weekly discussion posts due: one for week 1, and two for weeks 2-5. Posts are graded no credit/half credit/full credit and your lowest score will be dropped. Posts that exceed the word limit will earn half credit at most.

The Take-Home Final Exam (40% of your grade) will ask you to summarize points from four of the readings we have done, and then offer extensions of the argument or critiques of the argument. You may use your discussion posts as a basis for your answers on the final exam. The exam is due August 1st at 3:00 PM via email or in class but you can turn in any or all of its four parts early - they will be graded and returned within 3 days.

Class Participation (15% of your grade) is required. This includes attendance, listening respectfully to me and to your fellow students when we talk, and offering thoughtful questions and contributions to the discussion. Texting, browsing the Internet, coming in late, not showing up at all, or otherwise ignoring people is not respectful and will reduce your participation grade.

Grade Breakdown:

- 5% - Weekly Reading Quizzes (5 total)
- 40% - Weekly Discussion Posts (9 total, lowest dropped)
- 40% - Take-Home Final (due August 1st at 3:00 PM)
- 15% - Class Participation

OSD Information

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to me and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.

Contact the OSD for further information:

858.534.4382 (phone) | osd@ucsd.edu (email) | http://disabilities.ucsd.edu (website)

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Any time you use words, phrases, ideas, or anything else that you did not think up on your own, you must cite your source the best of your ability. Words and phrases from others must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that you did not write them yourself. Failure to cite a source is plagiarism and it's not okay. Plagiarism may result in a zero on the assignment and may be forwarded to the Academic Integrity office. You should not need to use (or cite) outside sources for this class. It is perfectly okay to use points made by your classmates in class or on the discussion boards, as long as you cite them to the best of your ability.
PHIL 164 - Schedule and List of Potential Readings

Week 1 - Introduction and Pet Cloning! (June 30 + July 2)
This week, we will talk about the class in general terms: what is technology? What are human values? How is class going to work? What are good methods for reading, evaluating, and writing philosophy? Then, on Thursday, we will turn to our first topic, pet cloning. A discussion post is due by midnight on Wednesday, July 1.

Required Reading (July 2):

Week 2 - Robots Robots Robots Robots Robots Robots! (July 7 + July 9)
Could a machine ever think or feel like we can? Or will this only ever be an illusion? Could you transfer your mind to a computer so that you could live even after your body dies? Your first discussion post for this topic is due by midnight on Wednesday, July 8. The second post is due by midnight on Monday, July 13.

Topic #1: Could robots think and feel?
Required Reading (July 7):

Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 7):


Topic #2: Could we upload ourselves to a computer?
Required Reading (July 7):
Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 7):


Week 3 - Human Enhancement and Ethics! (July 14 + July 16)

Have you ever seen the movie *Gattaca*? It's about a society which discriminates against people who aren't genetically enhance. Should we enhance ourselves? Or might this lead to bad results? Your first discussion post for this topic is due by midnight Wednesday, July 15. The second post is due by midnight Monday, July 20.

**Topic #1: Should we enhance ourselves?**

**Required Reading (July 14):**


and  


*Focus on just the section relevant to the secondary reading you pick.*

**Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 14):**


**Topic #2: Should we only have female babies?**

**Required Reading (July 14):**


*and*


**Focus on just the section relevant to the secondary reading you picked.**

**Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 14):**


Week 4 - Changing Ourselves with Medication! (July 21 + July 23)

Should we take pills to erase our traumatic memories? Should we give our children ADHD medicine, even though this changes their personalities? Your first discussion post for this topic is due by midnight Wednesday, July 22. The second post is due by midnight Monday, July 27.

Topic #1: Taking drugs to erase traumatic memories

Required Reading (July 21):


and


Focus on just the section relevant to the secondary reading you picked.

Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 21):


**Topic #2: Giving ADHD medicine to children**

**Required Reading (July 21):**


and


*Focus on just the section relevant to the secondary reading you picked.*

**Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 21):**


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**Week 5 - Do Science and Technology Have Any Values? (July 28 + July 30)**

Do value judgments have any place in science? Can technology itself be good or bad? Your first discussion post for this topic is due by midnight Wednesday, July 29. The second post is due by midnight Friday, July 31. **Note that it is due earlier than normal!**

**Topic #1: Do value judgments have any place in science?**

**Required Reading (July 28):**


**Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 28):**


**Topic #2: Can technology be good or bad? Or does this depend on how we use it?**

**Required Reading (July 28):**

Secondary Readings (Choose one for July 28):
