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## Weekend Courses 2024-25

### AI and Society

**Start date:** 28 February 2025      **End date:** 2 March 2025

**Venue:** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ

**Tutor:** Dr Jonnie Penn      **Course Code:** 2425NRX027

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#### Tutor biography

Dr Jonnie Penn, FRSA, is a historian of information technology, broadcaster, and public speaker. In addition to teaching the AI Ethics and Society masters at the University of Cambridge, he is an Affiliate at the Berkman Klein Center at Harvard Law School, a #1 New York Times bestselling author, a fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts and a Research Fellow at St Edmunds College. He has held prior fellowships at the MIT Media Lab, Google, and the British National Academy of Writing. He writes and speaks widely about youth empowerment, the future of work, data governance, and sustainable digital technologies.

#### Summary of content:

In the mid-1950s, researchers in mathematics, administration, and engineering melded formal theories of problem solving and intelligence with another powerful new tool for control: the electronic digital computer. This course briefly introduces you to the multi-century long historical forces that informed this fabled inflection point, as well as the forces that shaped the development of artificial intelligence (AI) thereafter. These complex histories provide rich evidence with which to calibrate speculation about AI and AI Ethics in the decades ahead.

#### Aims:

This course aims to:

- apply historical understanding of AI ethics and governance to develop new insights
- consider complex sociotechnical issues both systematically and creatively
- show originality in tackling and solving these problems

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## Course sessions

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
<b>20:30 – 22:00</b>	<b>History &amp; Nature of AI</b>
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>Attempts to Conceptualise 'AI'</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Prehistories of AI and Measures of Progress</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
<b>16:30 – 18:00</b>	<b>Genealogies of Conditioning</b>
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
<b>20:00 – 21:30</b>	<b>The Hard Ecological Limits on an AI Future</b>
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>Synthetic Media</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Non-Use</b>
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

**Presentation of the course:**

This course will include seven lectures that build upon the recommended readings. These lectures include time for class discussion via breakout groups.

**Learning outcomes:**

As a result of the course, you will gain a greater understanding of the subject and you should be able to:

- discuss the ethical and societal challenges of AI with an understanding of its history and its relationship to other disciplines and technologies
- identify the capabilities of current AI systems, their key applications and the potential ethical and societal challenges of those applications
- evaluate key ethical and societal challenges arising from the use of AI and the existing critical literature
- analyse the strengths and weaknesses of current governance approaches for addressing the challenges posed by AI

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## Reading and resources list

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There are no compulsory readings for this course.

However, you may find the below recommended reading list of interest to supplement your course.

Archer, Pechawis, Jason Edward Lewis, Noelani Arista, and Suzanne Kite, *Making Kin with the Machines*, *Journal of Design and Science*, no. 3.5 (16 July 2018).  
<https://jods.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/lewis-arista-pechawis-kite>.

Daston, Lorraine, *Calculation and the Division of Labor, 1750-1950*, *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 62 (Spring), 9-30 (2018) <http://hdl.handle.net/21.11116/0000-0001-DBC7-8>

Francesca, *Is GPT-3 Islamophobic?*, *Towards Data Science* (3 February 2021)  
<https://towardsdatascience.com/is-gpt-3-islamophobic-be13c2c6954f>.

Pasquale, Frank, *The Second Wave of Algorithmic Accountability. The Law and Political Economy Project* (25 November 2019) <https://lpeproject.org/blog/the-second-wave-of-algorithmic-accountability>.

Winner, Langdon, *Do Artifacts Have Politics?* *Daedalus* 109, no. 1: 121–36 (1980)  
[www.jstor.org/stable/20024652](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024652)

### Online resources:

Benjamin, Ruha, *Race after Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* (Medford, MA: Polity 2019)

Cook, Scott D N, edited by Joseph C. Pitt, *The Structure of Technological Revolutions and the Gutenberg Myth*, *In New Directions in the Philosophy of Technology*, 63–83. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands 1995) [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-8418-0\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-8418-0_4).

Forsythe, Diana E, *Engineering Knowledge: The Construction of Knowledge in Artificial Intelligence*, *Social Studies of Science* 23, no. 3, 445–77 (August 1993)  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312793023003002>.

Jenkins, Destin, and Justin Leroy, eds, *Introduction. Histories of Racial Capitalism. Columbia Studies in the History of U.S. Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press 2021)

Tarnoff, Ben, *To Decarbonize We Must Decomputerize: Why We Need a Luddite Revolution* *The Guardian* (18 September 2019)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/sep/17/tech-climate-change-luddites-data>

**Note:** Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of April 2024)