

# INQ120F

## Living an Examined Life

### Syllabus

**Instructor:** Dr. Durell Bouchard

**Office Hours:** MWF: 1:40-2:40, TTH: 2:40-3:40, also by appointment or open door

**Office:** Trexler 365-C

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**Phone:** 375-4901

## Course Objectives

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Today there are autonomous self-driving cars on our roads. There are artificial intelligence programs that buy and sell billions of dollars of stocks every day. There are robots that vacuum our floors and mow our lawns. As we develop robots with greater capabilities, we are creating robots that are more free of human oversight. Is it possible to create robots with the ability to recognize right and wrong and to choose actions that will not harm people and themselves? In the not-so-distant future there will be robots are behaviorally indistinguishable from humans. What rights should these synthetic intelligences be afforded? In this course students will answer these questions by exploring the ethical and moral issues of the robots we have and the robots that will be.

**Intended Learning Outcomes:** At the end of the course the successful student will be able to

1. formulate and evaluate arguments about ethical positions.
2. describe connections between the course topic and broader traditions of critical reflections on the good life.
3. give an effective oral presentation.
4. write a paper with a clear thesis, cogent argumentation, effective organization, and a minimum of sentence-level errors.

## Course Content

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**Texts:**

- *Robots: The Recent A.I.*, by Rich Horton & Sean Wallace, Prime Books, 2012.
- *The Fundamentals of Ethics (Third Edition)*, by Russ Shafer-Landau, Oxford University Press, 2014.
- *What Every Student Should Know About Preparing Effective Oral Presentations*, by Martin R. Cox, Pearson, 2006.

- *A Writer's Reference (8<sup>th</sup> Edition) with Writing in the Disciplines (Roanoke College Edition)*, by Diana Hacker, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.

**Oral Presentations:** Students will learn how to prepare and will deliver three formal oral presentations with slides. The first two presentations will be a summary of an article. The second presentation will be a presentation of the student's research paper. Presentations will be evaluated by peers for content and clarity.

**Research Paper:** Students will research and write a paper that connects the topics covered in class to a student selected subject not covered in class. The paper will have two drafts; the first of which will be evaluated by peers for content and clarity.

**Participation:** Students are expected to attend class, participate in group activities, and engage in class discussions.

**Assignments:** In addition to regular reading assignments, students will also have short reading reflection assignments both to ensure students are keeping up with the assigned reading and to facilitate discussion during class. The reading reflection assignments are due before class. Late assignment will receive no credit.

**Grading:** Course grades are assigned based on the following weights and scale:

<b>Grade Weights:</b> oral presentations....40%	participation.....10%
research paper.....30%	assignments.....20%

<b>Grade Scale:</b> 93-100....A	83-86.....B	73-76.....C	63-66.....D
90-92.....A-	80-82.....B-	70-72.....C-	60-62.....D-
87-89.....B+	77-79.....C+	67-69.....D+	0-60.....F

## Course Policies

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**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance is vital to your success in this course; material covered during missed sessions is the responsibility of the student. Conversations held in class illuminate the published class materials and are subject to evaluation on quizzes. Moreover quizzes and in-class activities are not available for make-up. Students with excused absences will not be penalized for missing quizzes or in-class activities. Students with unexcused absences will receive no credit for missed quizzes and in-class activities.

**Late Assignment Policy:** Assignments are to be submitted before the specified time on the due date. Oral presentations are to be given in class on the specified day. If you anticipate being unable to meet a deadline, talk to me at least 24 hours before the deadline. In extenuating circumstances we may be able to make special arrangements. Please note that this must be discussed – just sending an email does not automatically grant you extra time. Unexcused late work will receive no credit. Electronic “glitches” do not waive your responsibility to submit your work in a timely manner.

**Academic Integrity:** It is accepted that you have read and understood the standards for academic integrity at Roanoke College. All papers, presentations, and quizzes are to be the work of the individual student. You are encouraged to work collaboratively on in-class activities. However, unless specifically

stated otherwise, all work outside of class must be completed individually. Copying someone else's work or turning in someone else's work is NEVER allowed. Using someone else's work or ideas as your own is plagiarism and an academic integrity offense.

**Electronic Devices:** All cell phones and pagers must be turned off prior to entering the classroom. The use of any electronic device during a quiz is prohibited. This includes cell phones, personal media players, personal digital assistants, and laptops. Any use of such a device during a test or quiz will be considered a breach of academic integrity.

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center @ Roanoke College, located on the Lower Level of Fintel Library, offers writing tutorials focused on written and oral communication for students working on writing assignments/projects in any field. Writers at all levels of competence may visit the Writing Center at any point in their process, from brainstorming to drafting to editing, to talk with trained peer tutors in informal, one-on-one sessions. The Writing Center is open Sunday through Thursday from 4 to 9 pm. Simply stop in, or schedule an appointment by going to [www.roanoke.edu/writingcenter](http://www.roanoke.edu/writingcenter) (<http://www.roanoke.edu/writingcenter>), where our schedule of writing workshops and creative writing playshops is also posted. Questions? Email [writingcenter@roanoke.edu](mailto:writingcenter@roanoke.edu) (<mailto:writingcenter@roanoke.edu>) or call 375-4949. Like our Facebook page for updates!

**Disability Support Services:** The Office of Disability Support Services, located in the Goode-Pasfield Center for Learning and Teaching in Fintel Library, provides reasonable accommodations to students with identified disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are provided based on the diagnosed disability and the recommendations of the professional evaluator. In order to be considered for disability services, students must identify themselves to the Office of Disability Support Services. Students requesting accommodations are required to provide specific current documentation of their disabilities. Please contact Dr. Bill Tenbrunsel, Director of the Center for Learning & Teaching, at 540-375-2247 or e-mail [tenbruns@roanoke.edu](mailto:tenbruns@roanoke.edu) (<mailto:tenbruns@roanoke.edu>).

If you are on record with the College's Office of Disability Support Services as having academic or physical needs requiring accommodations, please schedule an appointment with Dr. Tenbrunsel as soon as possible. You need to discuss your accommodations with him before they can be implemented. Also, please note that arrangements for extended time on exams, testing, and quizzes in a distraction-reduced environment must be made with the Center for Learning & Teaching at least 2 business days (M-F) *before every exam*.

## Schedule

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This course expects you to spend at least 12 hours of work each week inside and outside of class.

Dates	Topic
Jan 18 – Feb 19	Programming Robots
Feb 22 – Mar 18	Robot Free Will & Wrights
Mar 21 – Apr 25	Robot Relationships

