

INQ 120V Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Durell Bouchard

Office Hours: M-F: 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

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Course Objectives

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 create robots that are freer 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 that are 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

Text:

EasyWriter (7th Edition), by Andrea A. Lunsford, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.

Project: For a final project, we will write, develop, and share podcast episodes on the impact of artificial intelligence on our lives.

Oral Presentations: We will learn how to prepare and deliver two oral presentations. The midterm presentation connects the topics of robots and ethics to popular culture. The final presentation is a presentation of the final project.

Assignments: We will have regular reading assignments with short oral reflections. These assignments are an opportunity to demonstrate what parts of the reading are most interesting to you. This guides the in-class discussions to the topics and issues that we find most engaging. Because these assignments are necessary to prepare for class, late assignments can not be accepted.

Participation: By participating in class discussions, we engage more deeply with the course material and develop presentation skills. Because we can not develop our presentation skills without practice, meaningful daily participation contributes to final grades.

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

Grade Weights			
Category		Weight	
Final Project		30%	
Midterm Project		30%	
Assignments		25%	
Participation		15%	
Grade Scale			
Grade	Range	Grade	Range
A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

Course Policies

Attendance: If you have a temperature of 100.4 or higher or other COVID symptoms, do not come to class. Call Health Services IMMEDIATELY. For your absence to be excused, you must allow Health Services to notify me that you have consulted them about COVID symptoms. If Health Services instructs you to isolate and not attend class for multiple days, inform me so that we can devise a plan to keep you up-to-date with the course material. All absences caused by consultation with Health Services regarding coronavirus symptoms or

isolation ordered by Health Services will be excused. You will still need to complete the work and graded assignments, even if we extend your deadline.

Class attendance is crucial for success in this course; the material covered during missed sessions remains the responsibility of the student. Conversations in class clarify the published class materials and are subject to evaluation in subsequent assignments. If you anticipate being unable to attend class, please email me before class to request an excusal.

Late Work: Unless specified otherwise, assignments must be submitted before the start of class on the due date. If you anticipate being unable to meet a deadline, email me before the deadline to request an extension. Unexcused late work will receive no credit.

Academic Integrity: Collaboration is a fundamental part of learning. During class, you are encouraged to discuss and learn from one another. However, unless expressly stated otherwise, all outside classwork should be solely your own. And since a central goal of this course is to help you become independent and critical thinkers. Unless expressly stated otherwise, you are discouraged from the extensive use of generative AI tools as part of your work. If you use AI-generated content in your assignments, you must indicate how you integrated the AI work into your own. Please familiarize yourself with Roanoke College's standards for academic integrity. If you are unsure how the policy applies to any assignments in this course, seek clarification from me.

Writing Center: The Writing Center @ Roanoke College, located on the Lower Level of Fintel Library (Room 15), offers free tutorials focused on writing projects and oral presentations for students working in any field. Writers and presenters at all levels of competence may visit the Writing Center at any point in their process including brainstorming, drafting, organizing, editing, or polishing presentation skills 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 at <www.roanoke.edu/writingcenter>. Questions? Email writingcenter@roanoke.edu or call 540-375-4949.

Accessible Education Services: Accessible Education Services (AES) is located in the Goode-Pasfield Center for Learning and Teaching in Fintel Library. AES provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. To register for services, students must self-identify to AES, complete the registration process, and provide current documentation of a disability along with recommendations from the qualified specialist. Please contact Dustin Persinger, Assistant Director of Academic Services for Accessible Education, at 540-375-2247 or by e-mail at aes@roanoke.edu to schedule an appointment. If you have registered with AES in the past and would like to receive academic accommodations for this semester, please contact Dustin Persinger at your earliest convenience to schedule an appointment and/or obtain your accommodation letter for the current semester.

Student Health and Counseling Services: Student Health & Counseling Services supports students through in-person health appointments, in-person counseling, 24/7 telehealth

(TimelyCare), Therapy Assistance Online, as well as resources related to general wellness, LGBTQ+, sexual assault, substance abuse, and suicide prevention. Unmet health needs can negatively impact your performance in this course. Student Health & Counseling Services can help. Please see <https://www.roanoke.edu/shcs> for more information and to access services.

Diversity: This classroom is a place where all individuals will be treated with respect, and students of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, abilities, and other visible and non-visible differences are welcomed. All members of this class are expected to contribute to creating a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for each other.

Preferred Name/Pronoun: I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester to make appropriate changes to my records.

Course Schedule

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

Date	Topic
Wednesday, January 17	Introduction - Robot List
Friday, January 19	Introduction - Robot or Not
Monday, January 22	Classical AI - Robot Navigation
Wednesday, January 24	Classical AI - Roomba
Friday, January 26	Classical AI - Maze
Monday, January 29	Classical AI - Chatbot
Wednesday, January 31	Public Speaking - Introduction
Friday, February 2	Public Speaking - Delivery
Monday, February 5	Special Topic
Wednesday, February 7	Public Speaking - Nervousness
Friday, February 9	Public Speaking - Content
Monday, February 12	Special Topic
Wednesday, February 14	Public Speaking - Visual Aids
Friday, February 16	Ethics - Morality
Monday, February 19	Special Topic
Wednesday, February 21	Ethics - Utilitarianism
Friday, February 23	Ethics - Libertarianism

Date	Topic
Monday, February 26	Special Topic
Wednesday, February 28	Ethics - Kantianism
Friday, March 1	Midterm - Workshop
Spring Break	
Monday, March 11	Special Topic
Wednesday, March 13	Midterm - Workshop
Friday, March 15	Midterm - Discussion
Monday, March 18	Special Topic
Wednesday, March 20	Midterm - Discussion
Friday, March 22	Midterm - Discussion
Monday, March 25	Special Topic
Wednesday, March 27	Modern AI - Neural Network
Monday, April 1	Special Topic
Wednesday, April 3	Modern AI - Learning
Friday, April 5	Modern AI - Alignment
Monday, April 8	Special Topic
Wednesday, April 10	Modern AI - Generative AI
Friday, April 12	Final - Workshop
Monday, April 15	Special Topic
Wednesday, April 17	Final - Workshop
Friday, April 19	Final - Discussion
Monday, April 22	Final - Discussion
Tuesday, April 23	Final - Discussion