Ethics of Science and Technology

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MW 2:00-3:20

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The Internet, artificial intelligence, genetic manipulation, renewable energy, self-driving cars—all of these scientific and technological developments have or will have profound effects on society. Likewise, society shapes the types of technologies that are developed and the types of scientific questions that are investigated. These developments have profound ethical implications that must be considered as we enact public policies related to science and technology. This course asks the broad question, *what are the ethical responsibilities of the scientific and engineering communities in the research they conduct and the technologies they design?*

To answer this question, we'll first endeavor to define the terms *science* and *technology*. Next, we'll familiarize ourselves with prominent Western moral theories, and then we'll use these terms and concepts to analyze some of today's most pressing techno-scientific issues. The issues we discuss will be determined in part by the interests of the class, but might include topics such as who conducts and benefits from science and technology, privacy and security in software engineering, genetic treatment versus enhancement, artificial intelligence, and consumption and sustainable development.