6AANB027
ETHICS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Syllabus – Academic year 2013/14

Basic information

*Credits*: 15  
*Module Tutor*: Matteo Mameli  
*Office*: PB708  
*Consultation time*: please check the departmental website  
*Semester*: 2  
*Lecture time and venue*: please check the official timetables on the website

Module description

Science and technology transform the world, including the social, cultural and political world in which we live. They also transform the ways in which human persons experience the world and the ways in which they can exercise their freedom and their rights. Are such transformations good or bad? How can we evaluate them? Can we learn anything from utopian and dystopian conceptions? Whose views should control the governance of science and technology? How can we avoid elitism, paternalism, the distortions of commercialization, and the tyranny of the ignorant? Should we welcome – and perhaps even promote at a collective and political level – new technologies and see them as ways of enhancing human capabilities? Or should we see them as a threat to our own very humanity and to our most fundamental interests as moral beings? Are such technologies instruments of social progress, personal liberation, perhaps even of collective salvation? Or are they instruments of oppression, injustice, dehumanization, and destruction?

Assessment methods and deadlines

*Formative assessment*: one x 2,000–3,000-word essay  
*Summative assessment*: one x 4,000-word essay (deadline: May 16)

Outline

There are 10 lectures/seminars. Details of the week-by-week structure will be communicated during the lectures/seminars.

Readings

Foucault, M: Lectures at the College de France. Palgrave Macmillan.
NB: The function of this reading list is simply to indicate some monographs and edited collections, by philosophers and non-philosophers, that deal with topics that will be discussed in the lectures/seminars. The details of the week-by-week readings will be given at the start of the module.

Essay titles

Students are encouraged to create their own essay title. The essay must be on a topic related to the covered material. The essay title must be submitted to and approved by the Module Tutor. For those who are unsure about what to write, a list of suggested titles will be given at the lectures/seminars.