

Case Study 4: The Ethical Use of Deepfakes

The ethical use of deepfakes: when it is appropriate and when it is not appropriate looking at both the case study of Disney's use of deepfakes for bringing actor back to life for Star Wars as well as the various deepfakes that have been used to create a post-truth society through political ad manipulation. Students will play the role of executives at Disney who have to decide whether to allow for deepfakes in their own movies as well as whether to allow them in TV advertisements that are broadcast on ABC, Disney's wholly-owned broadcast network.

Goals:

- To introduce students to the legal and philosophical issues related to deepfakes

Tags:

- Principle of Well-Being
- Respect for Autonomy
- Principle of Solidarity
- Principle of Prudence
- Principle of Protection of Privacy and Intimacy
- Virtue Ethics*
- Consequentialist Ethics*
- Deontological Ethics*

Assigned Readings:

[Debating the ethics of deepfakes | ORF \(orfonline.org\)](#)

[Deepfakes and the Dangers of AI | Deloitte US](#)

[prindleinstitute.org/2020/12/ethical-considerations-of-deepfakes/](#)

[Deepfakes – The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly \(forbes.com\)](#)

[Disney makes face swapping more believable \(techxplore.com\)](#)

[Rogue One Deepfake Makes Star Wars' Leia And Grand Moff Tarkin Look Even More Lifelike | Cinemablend](#)

[Lawmakers push forward on package addressing deepfakes in political ads ★ Michigan Advance](#)

Implementation and Assessment

This topic will be covered in two days, within one week. Prior to the first class for the week, students are to complete the reading assignments and to come in with a written statement that answers the question: "Should deepfakes be allowed in movies when actors or the estate of actors provide permission and are compensated?"

During the first class, students are to break up into small groups on each of the three key philosophical questions:

This material was developed by Dr. Zagros Madjd-Sadjadi as a part of Winston-Salem State University's Center for Applied Data Science (CADS) Faculty Adopter Program 2023-2024

- Should deepfakes be allowed in movies when actors or the estate of actors provide permission and are compensated?
- Should deepfakes be allowed in TV advertisements?

Between the first and second classes, students will also be asked to watch a deepfake that was authorized by the persons being deepfaked and one where it was not authorized.

During the second class, students will be asked to discuss what clues can be gleaned as to whether something is deepfaked or human-generated. Students will then debate the question:

- “To what extent do deepfakes erode trust in the information and entertainment industries?”

Students will then do a short (2 to 4 page) paper answering the three questions that were detailed for themselves with reference to both the debate and class readings that will be due the following week.

Note that the first question on whether deepfakes should be allowed in movies when actors or the estate of actors provide permission and are compensated is the same question as the pre-question for this module.