Experiential Ethics 2024

Introduction

Welcome!

- Teacher: Benjamín Muñoz.
- PhD Candidate in Political Science (4th year).
- Saturdays 11:00-12:30. OH: 13:00-14:00 (by email).

- **<u>Objective:</u>** discuss the ethical implications/dimensions of science and technology issues.
- **<u>Why to do it?</u>** There is a growing demand for these skills in today's world.
- **<u>Approach:</u>** student-driven discussion. This is a space to explore your values and think about your summer experiences in light of their values

Welcome!

Now It's Your Turn: Briefly introduce yourself (Suggestion: name, year, course, where you will be this summer, and what you'll be doing).

Activity 1: Discussion Norms

- In groups, create discussion norms for this class.
- I will assign you to different breakout rooms.
- Open the following link.
- Propose rules for a fruitful and respectful discussion.
- You have **8 minutes** for this task.

Logistics

- Syllabus: available on Canvas and here.
- Materials/Readings: Canvas.
  - I will send emails to facilitate the progress of the class.

- Attendance: discuss absences with me (send me an email).
- Grading: If you need an extension, let's talk about it.
  - Rubrics available.
  - Feedback post-assignments.
  - OH: opportunity to test ideas.
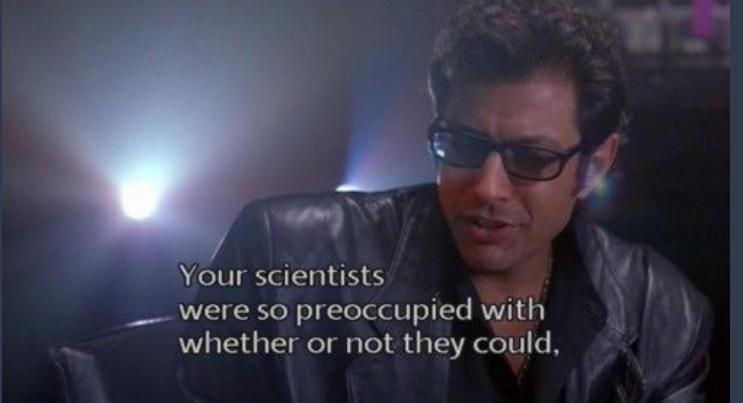
Ethics of Science and Technology

- What is ethics?
  - How we should live.
  - Individual dimension.
  - Collective dimension.

- Is a normative field
  - Opposed to a positive field of study.
  - What should be rather than what it is
  - Evaluations + Prescriptions

Intro to Ethics
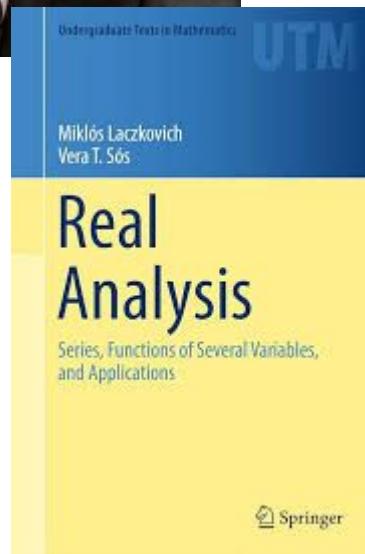
- Which one is the normative, ethical claim and which one the positive?

  1. ChatGPT is a chatbot based on a large language model that can answer questions and carry out various tasks.
  2. ChatGPT is a valuable educational tool that should be used by students and teachers in classrooms.

- What kinds of questions and claims do your disciplines/fields of study ask?

- What kinds of considerations are relevant to supporting ethical/normative claims.

Ethics of Science and Technology

Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could,

they didn't stop to think if they should.

- Practices of scientific research and technological design are not value-free, asocial, and ahistorical.

- All of these practices are embedded in wider societal contexts, shaped both by the institutions and circumstances already in place and our values and goals.

Ethics of Science and Technology

- The emphasis on science and technology as social practices rejects a naive view that pictures lone, brilliant minds discovering nature's hidden workings and mechanisms and then applying these findings to the creation of new technologies.

- This picture ignores the important ways in which social and political forces shape *not only the context but also the content* of our scientific and technological endeavors.

Oppenheimer (2023)

THE SOCIAL NETWORK
ANNIVERSARY MASHUP

Her (2013)

EX_MACHINA
THERE IS NOTHING MORE HUMAN
THAN THE WILL TO SURVIVE
COMING SOON

Experiential Ethics and Ethical Lenses

- **Why *Experiential* Ethics?**
- As individuals and members of society, you do ethics all the time.

- The purpose of Experiential Ethics is to help structure your thinking about these topics. Rather than convey a body of knowledge or ethical theories, Experiential Ethics gives you tools, concepts, and frameworks to help you think about ethical questions in more systematic ways.

- Ethics as a practice and a skill.

- **Ethical Lenses**

- Tool to help you start reasoning about ethical questions.

- When you approach an ethical question or challenging situation, the first step is to identify considerations or features of the situation that might be ethically relevant.

Ethical Lenses

Freedom:
Negative Freedom (Liberty): Are agents able to do as they see fit without undue interference from others? Do our practices protect individual rights (e.g. private property, bodily integrity)?

Positive Freedom (Autonomy): Are agents able to choose how to live their lives? Are they able to 'form, revise, and pursue' their own conceptions of the good, projects, and values? Are groups and communities able to govern themselves and have meaningful control over their norms and practices?

Care:
Do our practices and relations meet the needs of those involved and make their world habitable? Do they provide those who are vulnerable and in need of help with good quality care? Do our practices create healthy relations of dependence in which the well-being of care-givers and care-receivers are both promoted? Are the responsibilities and labors of care fairly distributed in our communities?

Justice:
Procedural Justice: Do our rules treat all agents fairly? Are anyone's interests, needs, or values prioritized over others' in our decision-making?

Substantive Justice: Do our activities disproportionately affect (positively or negatively) one group or individual over others in an unjustified manner? Do our practices place an agent or group at a systematic advantage or disadvantage (e.g. by reproducing structural injustice)?

Flourishing:
Do agents have a real opportunity to live a *good life* – meaning the resources and conditions to develop and exercise their powers and capacities? Are agents part of communities that afford them meaningful relationships, dignity, and control over their lives? Do our practices provide agents with an adequate education to develop their reasoning capacities, virtues, and self-respect?

Consequences:
What are the long- and short-term benefits and harms of our actions? Do our practices successfully enable us to cooperate and meet our goals? Do our practices make optimal use of our resources? Is there a way to rearrange our practices to make more of what we have – be more productive, cost-efficient, etc.?

Justice

Freedom

Flourishing

Care

Consequences

Activity 2: Using Ethical Lenses

- I will assign you to different breakout rooms.
- Open the following link.
- Discuss the following questions:
  - What are the most significant contemporary ethical challenges/ethical dilemmas confronting society writ-large or people working in their fields.
  - What makes these challenges or dilemmas *ethical*?
  - Who is involved and whose interests are at stake?
  - What ethical lenses might be helpful in illuminating the core ethical issue at stake in each of these?
- You have **12 minutes** for this task.