

Guidelines and suggested structure for the final group essay (2.500 words)

Task

In your group paper, you are asked to **analyse and evaluate a robotics or AI technology** (product/service) by making use of insights from Philosophy and Ethics of Technology and related frameworks and concepts used in the course.

You have **2500 words** to do this.

It is strongly suggested to **focus on a concrete technological artefact**. Rather than looking at the Internet, robots, or cars, you should, for example, analyse a specific technology (e.g. a specific self-driving car) or service (e.g. Spotify) in a specific context.

As **context matters**, you should also dedicate a part of your writing on the circumstances specific to your case (e.g. specific use group, regional context, history, etc.). That's another reason for focusing on a specific robotic technology or AI service, especially since you only have very limited space for your analysis and evaluation.

Always **use first person perspective** (e.g. I think, we suggest, we contend – not passive voice: “it is considered”). Using active voice (first person perspective) shows us that you own your arguments and take responsibility for them. It is the style convention in the Ethics and Philosophy of Technology, unlike some other disciplines.

Suggested structure

By default, the paper should consist of the following elements: Introduction, Analysis and evaluation, Conclusion (and Outlook), and List of references.

Note: Please consider this structure as a suggestion. There might be good reasons to structure your paper in a different way.

1. Introduction (500-800 words)

- Subject of the paper
 - Explain to the reader why the subject is important: clear background description and compelling motivation for research question
- Research question
 - Is this an *evaluative* question? (e.g. assesses the technology, includes moral terms, e.g. “responsible”, “better”, values terms, etc.)
 - Adequate formulation (e.g. How or Why, avoid descriptive questions)
- How will you answer your research question?
 - Which frameworks and/or concepts will you use?
- If necessary, make clear the scope of your paper: What lies outside your inquiry?

Note: Make sure that your introduction is in line with the sections that follow. For example, you may feel the need to shift the focus of your research during writing the paper. There is nothing wrong about this. But please make sure that you also change the introduction accordingly.

2. Analysis and evaluation of your robotic/AI technology (1500-1700 words)

- Give a brief explanation of the chosen framework and/or concepts and make clear why you have chosen that framework.

- There is no need for fundamental criticism on the alternative frameworks. It will be sufficient to explain why you consider the chosen framework to be fitting for your technological case and research question.
- Explain what makes a difference in the technology you chose: What is specific about that particular technology and what are its ethically salient features?
 - Keep a technological description to what is absolutely required – it is a common pitfall to spend many words on the technological description, having then few words left for the ethical analysis and evaluation.
 - You may include a specific context analysis (e.g. specific use group, regional context, history, etc.) if you think this plays a role in evaluating your technology and answering your question.
- Evaluate the technology by making use of the chosen framework and/or concept in light of the context you just presented.
 - The evaluation builds on the analysis towards answering your research question by applying the chosen ethical framework and/or concepts from the course to the technology and context you sketched. Analysis and evaluation also serve as a basis for later recommendations on how to improve the design of the artefact.
- Here, you may also present and respond to possible counter-arguments to your evaluation.
- Use clear, sound and comprehensive reasoning – we need to see how your argument develops.
- You may consider sub-headings in this section, as it is the largest part of your essay.

4. Conclusion and recommendations (e.g. 300 words)

- Re-introduce and answer your research question.
- Clear recommendations based on the analysis and evaluation.
- Include a list of future potential questions that follow from your analysis.
- The section in general logically follows from the preceding sections.

Reference list

- Emphasis on the academic sources. E.g. 80-85% academic sources, 15-20% popular sources (e.g. The Atlantic, Wall Street Journal, encyclopaedias, etc.)
- Good use of sources means an effective choice of references that support your claims. Reflective use of sources means that you demonstrate awareness of the strengths and limitations of a text and the frameworks/concepts discussed in that text.

Even though you write a paper with three people in total and may subdivide the sections, please, **ensure that the draft and the final paper read as if it were written by one author**: make sure you all re-read it and ensure that the tone of the paper is consistent throughout the paper.

Submitting the paper

Please, follow the assignment submission deadlines on Brightspace to make sure you submit all the stages of the essay on time.

The draft paper is not graded – as a rule, you will receive qualitative feedback. If the draft paper is already in a very advanced stage, the draft may be evaluated as if it were the final paper (including grade). Even then, you still have to submit the final paper to not miss an assignment.

If you have been failed for your paper or you did not submit a final paper, you may hand in a (revised) 2nd chance paper by the end of the exam period of the next quarter. The exact details will be communicated after the initial round of the grades.

If you haven't found an answer to your question here or in the Checklist document, please, post in the general discussion forum Q&A or for a more specific inquiry, email one of your teachers.