Assignment Class 1 - Thursday Sept. 3, 2020

Robots are increasingly connected to human society. In the past, science fiction posited robots interacting with humans. Isaac Asimov was one of the first to propose rules of ethics that would be programmed in robots. This interaction is now a reality. It is now directly impacting the military and the way wars are fought. But it is also becoming an issue that will impact us and our students as they get older and move into the workplace. [The article](#) focuses on robots with embedded codes of conduct. The author divides this into two classes of robots: Service robots and military robots. Military robots present particularly vexing ethical problems because many robots are designed to kill humans. A fifth of combat units will consist of automated robots by the end of this year. Who is deciding on the how their algorithms will function and what rules will be imbedded in the code? Some argue that lethal robots are per se unethical. But others disagree, saying that robots will perform their mission on the battlefield better and more ethically than humans.

These issues are now also appearing in the realm of service robots. For example, in autonomous vehicles, how will the software handle complex moral issues, such as when a vehicle is knocked into a crowd of people. How will the vehicle decide to maneuver? Will it simply try to minimize the number of people it might injure, or will it take other factors into consideration? Robots are becoming increasingly more prevalent. The author argues that we need to establish moral guidelines for such robots now, before they proliferate in society. Engineers should be held ethically responsible for their designs and the impact of their robots.