Date: 10/23/2024
Speaker's name: Robin Murphy, Catharina Laporte, Martin Peterson, Yoonsuck Choe, Steven M. Smith
Title of the talk: Societal implications of Artificial Intelligence

I certify that I have personally composed and written the remarks below, and that I have not plagiarized, self-plagiarized, or used AI-generated text (e.g., chatGPT).

Your UIN: 534002320
Your name: Shreyas Shivakumar Kasetty

Background: AI is rapidly evolving in our society and there is a pressing need to understand its implications from different perspectives. AI is no longer confined to the field of computer science, it touches fields as diverse as cognitive science, anthropology, and philosophy. The panelists of this seminar had their own views and implications of AI, whether positive or negative. Together, their perspectives set the stage for a rich and interdisciplinary discussion on the future of AI and its societal implications.

The problem: The main problem this seminar stressed about is the societal impacts of AI and its diverse applications across different domains, highlighting both benefits and the risks. While it offers opportunities that seem transformative, it also raises a concern about its negative uses and unintended consequences.

Discussion Summary: All of the panelists presented their own perspectives on what impacts AI could possibly have in their fields. Dr. Smith believed that while AI is an amazing tool it is still far from achieving human-like decision making based on heuristics and rules. Making these AI systems bigger does not necessarily make them better at what they do, he highlighted. He believes that in order to make them good we need to understand human cognition deeply. Dr. Choe on the other hand believed that AI tools lack true understanding because they are not embodied. It is important to embody the AI in real-world interactions to allow it develop a form of understanding beyond mere pattern matching. Dr. Laporte highlighted the ethical use of these AI tools. She stressed on the need for sustainability in these AI tools and to ensure that innovation doesn't cause inequality or harm. She pointed out that AI could lead to societal divides between those who control AI and those left behind by it. Finally, Dr. Peterson focused on the moral and ethical dimensions of AI. He argued that AI should be aligned with human values, but questioned what those values should be and how we can determine if AI is truly aligned with them. Also, he answered questions on AI's role in decision-making processes like criminal justice and raised doubts about whether AI can ever fully grasp human morality.

Conclusions: The seminar highlighted both the opportunities and the challenges that AI can have across different domains like Cognitive science, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Computer Science. The key takeaway was that while AI can drive innovation and solve problems it raises concerns about bias, ethical use, sustainability, and value alignment. We need to make sure that innovation and responsibility is balanced.

Your critique: While there are many challenges and negative implications of AI—that it might replace jobs, that it could be misused, or that it can have a global divide—I believe AI can transform how humans live. They have the power to enhance our understanding of the world around us and can definitely make us more productive and solve complex problems. Every new invention human has made has been misused in one or the other way. We just need to proactively think about how we can address these negative impacts while we are innovating and making big AI systems. Currently, there has been a rapid advancement in these innovations, and no one is thinking about establishing an ethical framework and regulatory guidelines. So there has been a gap in accountability and transparency. We have to think about how to align AI's capabilities with human values. While current AI systems haven't reached their full potential in terms of reasoning and thinking, I believe in the near future they will be able to be creative, and we need to progress in a balanced manner, being both responsible and driving innovation.

Feedback: I really enjoyed the discussion amongst the panelists for this seminar. I found this structure of talks to be better.
1) There is a big debate on the usage of AI in education by students. How do you think AI will transform the way we learn? Should we adapt to the new changes or stick with the old way of learning?
2) Do you think in the future AI will create more jobs than actually taking them from us?