

PHL 353: Philosophy and Technology Assignment

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Assignment Notes: For use in an upper-level philosophy or related course focused on technology or AI.

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Overview: In this assignment, students will engage in a philosophical dialogue with Claude AI to explore key questions in philosophy of technology, particularly focusing on artificial intelligence, consciousness, and ethics. Through an argumentative essay, students will analyze both the content of Claude's responses and the nature of the interaction itself.

Purpose: This assignment is designed to help students think critically about the nature of artificial intelligence and human interactions with it. The dialogue will enable students to learn how to effectively use and communicate with generative AI. Developing an argumentative essay based on their dialogue will help them synthesize complex philosophical concepts and apply them to a real-world interaction with an AI system. Instead of just theorizing about AI, this assignment encourages students to reflect on what their interaction with AI reveals about its epistemic and ethical status.

Duration: 2 weeks

Learning Objectives

By the end of this assignment, students will be able to:

1. Examine philosophical questions about AI consciousness, intelligence, personhood, and ethics through direct engagement with an AI system (Claude AI).
2. Analyze how AI systems engage with abstract philosophical concepts.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking about the relationship between human and artificial intelligence through philosophical dialogue and argumentation.
4. Critically evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, and relevance

Generative AI Tool for Assignment

For more in-depth information on this AI tool, see attached model card.

- Tool Name: Claude AI
- Tool Purpose: Claude has many applications from writing and editing to data analysis, math, and programming. This pedagogical application will use Claude as a writing and editing tool.
- Developer/Version: Developed by Anthropic / Version 3.5
- Known Limitations/Biases:
 - Claude may generate incorrect or misleading information or produce offensive or biased content. It is trained on datasets that reflect negative stereotypes and biases about particular groups. It is also limited to the English language.
 - Claude retains personal data for as long as reasonably necessary. User has ability to delete conversations. Training data like web-based data may contain publicly

available personal data. Users have the right to request a copy of their personal data, to object to the processing of their personal data or request that it be deleted.

Assignment Structure

Part 1: Philosophical Dialogue (1000-1200 words)

Conduct a philosophical conversation with Claude focusing on a topic of your choice, or one of the following themes:

- The nature of consciousness and whether AI can be conscious
- The relationship between intelligence and understanding in AI systems
- The moral status of AI systems
- The relationship between humans and AI
- The boundaries between human and machine intelligence

Your dialogue should:

- Begin with clear philosophical questions
- Include follow-up questions that probe Claude's responses
- Challenge or request clarification of Claude's assumptions
- Explore potential contradictions or limitations in the responses

Part 2: Critical Analysis (1500-1800 words)

Analyze your dialogue, addressing the following:

1. Content Analysis

- What philosophical positions did Claude take?
- How did these align with or differ from philosophical arguments explored in class texts?
- What assumptions were revealed in Claude's responses?

2. Interaction Analysis

- How did Claude handle abstract philosophical concepts?
- What patterns or limitations did you notice in its reasoning?
- How did the dialogue format affect the philosophical exploration?

3. Meta-Analysis

How did the experience of philosophical dialogue with AI inform your understanding of:

- The nature of intelligence and understanding
- The relationship between human and artificial reasoning
- The nature of human-AI interactions

Discuss ethical considerations related to using generative AI for this assignment, including:

- Privacy
- Bias/limitations
- Academic honesty
- Impact on learning

Part 3: Documentation

You must **document your dialogue** with Claude by providing a complete transcript of your conversation following your essay.

For protecting your privacy, be sure that you open a new chat when beginning your dialogue with Claude and that you are sharing your transcript from your dialogue for this assignment.

Submission Guidelines

- Format: Word Document or PDF
- Length: 2500-3000 words (or 10-12 pages double-spaced)
- Citation Guidelines: Chicago

Grading Rubric

Criteria

- **Dialogue Quality (30 pts)**
 - Depth of philosophical inquiry
 - Strategic follow-up questions
 - Engagement with Claude's responses
 - Exploration of complexities and contradictions
- **Analysis Quality (40 pts)**
 - Insight into philosophical implications
 - Critical evaluation of AI capabilities
 - Connection to philosophical concepts and debates
 - Quality of evidence and examples
- **Writing & Organization (30 pts)**
 - Clear structure and flow
 - Effective use of evidence
 - Professional writing style
 - Proper citations
- **Total 100 pts**

Tips for Successful Dialogue

- Start with broad questions and narrow down based on responses
- Ask for clarification or elaboration when needed
- Challenge assumptions and test for consistency
- Pay attention to how Claude handles abstract concepts
- Consider how the format affects the philosophical discussion