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Ethical Tech in Psychology: Syllabus

The pandemic has introduced us to a level of unprecedented dependency on technology to provide us with some semblance of a normal life. As expected, this extreme reliance on technology has created its own set of mental health problems, as well as exacerbated prior existing conditions. This course will examine the far-reaching effects of technology on the human psyche, as well as the ethical implications of a technologically-dominated world on the decidedly human mind.

We will dive deeper into the benefits of technology for psychological treatment as well as the shadow side of technology to mental health. This course will display the benefits and risks of how technology can affect mental health. As psychology and child development majors, we can look at the ethics of technology to see what will help and what will harm our clients.

Office Hours: We will have scheduled and unrecorded Zoom meetings. I will hold hours from 12pm-1pm every Tuesday and Thursday. Please email me if you have conflicts attending these hours, and we can schedule a meeting time that works for you.

This course provides an introduction to Ethical Technology and its practical application in psychology and child development.

Learning Objectives and Criteria:

Upon completion of the course students will:

- Understand how technology connects with various aspects in the field of psychology, such as research, treatment, and some interdisciplinary studies, and its positive and negative effects on mental health.
- Find a balance of technology to benefit the mental health of our clients.
- Identify key technological concepts that apply to the field of psychology and child development.

Key Ethical Concepts:
- Find the ethical balance in social media to enhance relationships with the self and others. How much social media will poorly influence self esteem and mental health? And how much will social media bring people together?
- How can innovative technology heal emotional trauma without the risks of exclusion towards minority groups? Bias in the creation of biotechnology taints the product's effectiveness towards people who tech companies failed to recognize.

Lecture Periods: Will occur twice a week over Zoom, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-4pm.

Resources:

We use a variety of resources including:

- The *Technically Human* Podcast: https://www.etcalpoly.org/the-technically-human-podcast
- *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*
- *The Social Dilemma*
- *Gattaca*
- Several peer reviewed articles. Find PDFs with the readings in the "Assignments" tab on Canvas
- Several web-based articles. Find links with the readings in the "Assignments" tab on Canvas

Course requirements: You must complete all course readings, as well as attend lectures, and complete all assignments and assessments. If you engage in class and complete the outside material you will do well in this class. I want you to succeed in knowing the learning objectives! Reach out if you need help or have questions.

Carefully study the assigned readings before the lecture for full engagement of material!

Course Schedule

		Readings and Materials:	Assignments
Week 1: The Basics of Ethics in Technology and Psychology	Meeting 1:	**Listen**: *Technically Human* Podcast Episode 2, "The Good Place"	Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm
	Meeting 2:	**Watch***: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*	
Week 2: Social Media and Psychology (Influence on Society and Individual Mental States)	Meeting 3:	**Read**: Selected excerpts of *The Attention Merchants* (p1-7,108-122, 289-302, 308-317, 335-339, 348-353).	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm -*The Social Dilemma* check-in quiz
	Meeting 4:	**Watch**: *The Social Dilemma*	
Week 3: Social Media and Psychology (Tech as Communication)	Meeting 5:	**Listen**: *Technically Human* Podcast Episode 4, "Blavity"	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm
	Meeting 6:	No new material	
Week 4: Applied Technology (Mental Health Applications)	Meeting 7:	**Read:** "Just Text Me: Using SMS Technology for Collaborative Patient Mood Charting" (PDF) -"Text messaging as an adjunct to CBT in low-income populations: A usability and feasibility pilot study" (PDF)	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm -*The Social Dilemma* midterm paper due
	Meeting 8:	"mHealth for Mental Health" (PDF)	
Week 5: Applied Technology (Crisis Hotlines)	Meeting 9:	**Read:** Someone To Listen: Increasing Youth Help-seeking Behavior Through A Text-based Crisis Line For Youth (PDF)	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm -New Crisis Hotline Assignment
	Meeting 10:	No new material for today	
Week 6: Applied Technology (COVID-19 and the Rise of Telehealth)	Meeting 11:	**Read:** "How Well Is Telepsychology Working?" -"What are Telehealth and Telepsychology?"	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm -Telehealth terminology check-in quiz
	Meeting 12:	No new material	

Week 7: Applied Technology (Biotech)	Meeting 13:	**Watch**: *Gattaca*	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm -*Gattaca* check-in quiz
	Meeting 14:	**Listen**: *Technically Human* Podcast Episode 13, "Biotechnically human"	
Week 8: Implications of Artificial Intelligence on Psychology and Tech	Meeting 15:	**Listen**: *Technically Human* Podcast Episode 8, "Making up our minds"	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm
	Meeting 16:	**Read**: Designing Emotionally Sentient Agents (PDF)	
Week 9: Technology in Psychological Research	Meeting 17:	No new material this week; the topic will be discussed in class. Use the extra time to work on your final paper.	-Weekly discussion post and reply due on Friday by 11:59 pm
	Meeting 18:		
Week 10: Review	Meeting 19:	No new material this week	-No discussion post this week -Rough draft of research paper due
	Meeting 20:		
Finals Week		No new material this week	-No discussion post this week -Final draft of research paper due

Evaluation:

Midterm Paper: Watch *The Social Dilemma* on Netflix. The film highlights the methods that large tech corporations use to captivate users, the psychological undermining of the human brain, and the ethical considerations that these design schemes pose. In your paper, discuss these design tactics and highlight the ethical implications they might present. In your opinion, are large tech corporations violating ethical principles? Additionally, examine these design schemes through a psychological lens. Identify specific psychological impacts that the design scheme of social media and social media itself can have on individuals or society as seen through the film. The paper should be 3-5 pages, written in APA format, with evidence to support your thesis from the movie included in your essay.

Final Research Paper: Examine the effects of technology on our mental states. Take a side: do the beneficial effects of technology outweigh the negative effects on our mental health? Think about the various ways technology can be used that we have discussed throughout the quarter. Make sure to incorporate specific instances of technology being helpful or hurtful into your paper. Keep in mind that you have limited space to make your argument, so keep background information to a minimum so that you can concentrate on supporting your thesis. Make sure that your thesis clearly states your position on whether you believe technology has been overall helpful or detrimental to the field of psychology. Support your argument with at least 5 peer-reviewed sources. Two of these sources must come from the quarter's reading materials. Make sure that you fully utilize your sources by analyzing their implications on this field and explaining how they support your argument- do NOT simply summarize their contents. The final paper should be 4-6 pages long, with an APA works cited page and title page. The title and works cited pages do NOT count towards your required minimum page total. An abstract is not necessary.

Weekly Journal Entries and Replies: Each week, you will write a reflection about the week's reading and/or lecture material, due on Canvas by 11:59 pm every Friday. The reflections must be at least 300 words. These entries can describe your reaction to the material, explore questions the course has provoked, and most importantly, be used as building blocks for developing your perspective on the positive or negative influence that technology has on mental health. Weekly discussions and journal entries about the reading material will ensure students' overall understanding of the impact of technology on mental health.

Material Comprehension Check-in Quizzes: There will be 3 total quizzes assessing your knowledge of course content, and assessing comprehension of the main themes throughout the course. Quizzes will be given during class time, on the last day of class for that particular week to give students as much time as possible to complete the learning materials. Each quiz will be multiple choice, and consist of ten questions.

Crisis Hotline Assignment: Read "13 suicide and crisis intervention hotlines to call or text when you need help"
(https://www.cnet.com/health/suicide-hotlines-crisis-hotlines-to-call-or-text-when-you-need-help/).
 There are countless crisis hotlines people in need can call in an emergency, but these resources are useless if they are not widely available, or if they do not serve the targeted group well. In at least 2 double-spaced pages, come up with your own hotline for a crisis that is not on this particular list, and describe why this new hotline would be a good resource for struggling individuals. Make sure to specify if your new hotline would be text or call-based, and explain your reasoning for this decision. You must incorporate at least two peer-reviewed sources to support your chosen crisis-prove that there is actually a need for help in this community that would be well-served by having a crisis hotline available to them. It may also be helpful for you to examine WHY this crisis was not included on the original list- is it too niche? Are not many people affected by this issue? Keep any possible problems in mind when writing your justification for this cause. NOTE: This list is NOT an all-encompassing resource for crisis hotlines, but please use it as your basis for deciding what topic you would

like to write about. Although no title page is necessary, please Include a works cited page. The works cited page will NOT count towards your minimum required page count.

Performance Evaluation:
- Weekly discussion/journaling assignments: 15%
- New crisis hotline assignment: 5%
- Material comprehension check-in quizzes: 20%
- Midterm paper: 25%
- Final research paper: 35%

Description of Grades (absolute scale):

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D+	67-69.99%
D	60-66.99%
D-	50-59.99%
F	<50.00%

Credit / No Credit Policy:

Each department has its own policy on whether or not Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) courses may be used to fulfill major or support course requirements, and whether or not Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) courses may be used to fulfill graduate degree requirements on the formal study plan. Fall 2020 CR/NC allowances are listed below.

If a class fulfills both a major/support and a GE requirement, it will be subject to the Credit/No Credit allowances of the major. Speak with your advisor before making any grading basis changes.

-Cal Poly Office of the Registrar

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement:

We belong to a diverse community and it is important to treat everyone with respect. This includes recognizing biases and working to be aware of them in the future and overcome them.

Academic Honesty:

Cal Poly will not tolerate academic cheating or plagiarism in any form. Academic dishonesty is addressed both as an academic issue and as a disciplinary incident under the CSU Standards for Student Conduct.

-Cal Poly Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities

Disability and Accommodations:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both myself and the Disability Resource Center, at (805) 756-1395, as early as possible in the term.

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