COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION

Course unit title	Code
Technology, AI, and Culture: Critical Introduction	

Annotation
This course offers a comprehensive exploration of the dynamic interplay between emerging technologies, societal dynamics, and cultural phenomena, with a specific focus on artificial intelligence (AI). Through an interdisciplinary lens, students delve into the multifaceted impacts of AI on various aspects of human culture, including art, media, politics, and everyday life. Drawing on theoretical frameworks and case studies, participants examine critical issues such as algorithmic bias, digital surveillance, and the ethics of AI deployment. By critically analysing the intersection of technology and culture, students gain insights into how AI shapes perceptions, behaviours, and power dynamics within contemporary societies.

Lecturer(s)	Department, Faculty
Coordinating: Paulius Petraitis **Other:**	Vilnius University, Faculty of Communication Saulėtekio al. 9, LT-10222 Vilnius

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
Second	Optional

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Face-to-face	Spring semester	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: Proficiency in English (reading, writing, and discussion)	**Co-requisites (if relevant):**

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	130	36 (16 hours of lectures, 4 hours of consultations, and 16 hours for seminars)	84

Purpose of the course unit: programme competences to be developed		
Develop critical thinking skills in analysing the societal impact of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence; foster an understanding of the ethical, social, and cultural implications of technological advancements; cultivate the ability to evaluate and discuss the relationship between technology and society from interdisciplinary perspectives; enhance awareness of the ethical responsibilities associated with the AI technologies; encourage reflection on the role of technology in shaping contemporary societal structures and norms.		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	**Teaching and learning methods**	**Assessment methods**
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the ethical implications of AI algorithms in decision-making processes, such as those related to security, transportation, and criminal justice - Critically reflect on the role of AI in perpetuating or challenging societal biases and inequalities,	Problem-oriented teaching, analysis of examples, group discussions, active-learning methods	Questionnaire (with open and closed questions)

particularly in areas such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status - Critically assess the role of AI algorithms in shaping information dissemination, media consumption, and public discourse, recognizing the potential for bias, manipulation, and misinformation - Analyse historical examples of technological advancements and their impact on culture and society, identifying key technological innovations that have shaped human civilization		
- Apply interdisciplinary perspectives to explore the cultural representations of AI in literature, film, art, and popular media, examining themes such as artificial intelligence, human identity, and the future of humanity - Speculate on potential future trajectories of technological development, considering both utopian and dystopian visions of the future and their implications for society, culture, and individual lives	Group discussions and active-learning methods	Questionnaire (with open and closed questions) Creative task in groups and presentation
- Have a critical understanding o the use of images as tools of persuasion, propaganda, and cultural expression, analyzing historical and contemporary examples of visual media in shaping public opinion and influencing social narratives - Fostering creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills while encouraging students to explore the societal implications of emerging technologies	Research methods (information analysis, literature review, presentation preparation and delivery)	Creative task in groups and presentation

Course content: breakdown of the topics	**Contact hours**							**Individual work: time and assignments**	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship/work	**Contact hours,**	**Individual work**	**Assignments**
1. Course introduction: study plan, programme content and working procedures, key topics, literature, assignments	1						**1**	**2**	Initial preparation for creative task
1. What is Technology? A Brief History of Technologies that Defined Culture	2		2				**4**	**8**	Reading academic literature (Heilbroner, 53-65; Virilio, 1-14)
2. Where We Are Now: Overview of Our Sociotechnological Landscape	2		2				**4**	**10**	Reading academic literature (Greenfield, 9-29; Bridle, 47-76)
3. The Politics of AI	2		2				**4**	**10**	Reading academic literature (Noble, 15-63; Crawford 1-22); home task

4. Is Seeing Neutral? Computer Vision and Perception	2		2				**4**	**10**	Reading academic literature (Bridle, 135-160 and "The stupidity of AI")
5. Technological Anxiety	1		1				**4**	**8**	Case study analysis; home task
6. Do We Control Anything? Algorithms and „Black-Boxing"	2	2	2				**6**	**10**	Debates
7. Art and Technology: Navigating the Technological Landscape through Artistic Insight	2		2				**4**	**8**	Visiting art exhibition; case study analysis
8. A War of Images	1		1				**4**	**10**	Case study analysis; preparation for creative task
9. The Shape of the Future	1	2	2				**5**	**8**	Reading academic literature (Greenfield 259-299)
Total	**16**	**4**	**16**				**36**	**84**	

Assessment strategy	**Weight %**	**Deadline**	**Assessment criteria**
Work at home and in the classroom during seminars - performing tasks (discussion of independently read texts, group discussion)	25%	During the semester	Pass: Actively analyses and interprets literary sources and examples from exhibitions, participates in discussions, answers questions and makes critical comments; Not pass: hardly participates in discussions or misses more than 1/3 of seminars.
Creative task in groups and presentation	25%	At the end of semester	Creative Task: Future Scenario Development In groups, participants will be tasked with envisioning a future scenario based on the integration of one key technology within a chosen cultural field. The objective is to explore the potential impact of this technology on society, culture, and individuals. Assessment Criteria: Creativity and Originality (10%): - Demonstrates originality in the selection of the key technology and its integration into the chosen cultural field. - Presents innovative and imaginative ideas for future scenarios that go beyond conventional thinking. Clarity and Coherence (30%): - Clearly articulates the chosen technology and its potential impact on the selected cultural field. - Develops a coherent narrative for the future scenario, ensuring that all elements are logically connected and plausible. Integration of Course Concepts (30%): - Demonstrates a deep understanding of course concepts related to technologies, society, and AI by effectively integrating them into the future scenario. - Shows evidence of critical engagement with course readings and discussions to inform the development of the scenario.

			Presentation Quality (30%): - Delivers a well-structured and visually engaging presentation that effectively communicates the future scenario to the audience. - Utilizes multimedia tools, visuals, and storytelling techniques to enhance the presentation's clarity and impact. - Encourages audience interaction through compelling storytelling, thought-provoking questions, and opportunities for discussion and feedback.
Questionnaire: test with open and closed questions	50%	Exam	The test grade is calculated by multiplying the score by the question value factor (e.g. 10 / 15 questions = 0.66). The score is obtained by adding together correct answers (1 point), incomplete answers (0.5 points) and incorrect answers (0 points).

Author	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication; pages	Publishing house or internet site
Required reading				
Safiya Umoja Noble	2018	*Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*	15-63 pp.	New York University Press
James Bridle	2018	*New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future*	47-76, 135-160 pp.	Verso
Kate Crawford	2021	*Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*	1-22 pp.	Yale University Press
Adam Greenfield	2017	*Radical Technologies: The Design of Everyday Life*	9-29, 259-299 pp.	Verso
Paul Virilio	2007	*The Original Accident*	1-14 pp.	Polity
James Bridle	2023	"The stupidity of AI"		https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/mar/16/the-stupidity-of-ai-artificial-intelligence-dall-e-chatgpt
Robert L. Heilbroner	1967 /1994	"Do Machines Make History?" in *Does Technology Drive History? The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*, eds. Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx	53-65 pp.	MIT Press
Recommended reading				
Kate Crawford and Trevor Paglen	2019	"Excavating AI: The Politics of Training Sets for Machine Learning"		https://excavating.ai/
Jean Baudrillard	2014	"Information at the Meteorological Stage" in *Screened Out*	93-98 pp.	Verso
Nicholas Mirzoeff	2016	*How to see the world*		Pelican Books