UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Philosophy of Technology

2026/2027

Code: 108439
Credits: 6

Degree programme	Type	Course
Philosophy	OB	4

Contact lecturer

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Group languages

You can consult this information at the end of the document.

Prerequisites

There are none.

Objectives

How can we think philosophically the material constitution of the worlds we inhabit? In which ways the design and use of technical objects and systems embody social relations, ideas and values? How do they exercise power and materialize relations of domination or mutual freedom? What role does technology play in the construction of bodies, affects, identities and subjectivities? What ethical, political and ontological issues are on stake? The goal of this subject is to provide tools for a critical thinking of technology, as well as putting them to work through the situated analysis of specific artefacts and technological systems. The toolbox that will be used in the course contains conceptual instruments, empirical materials and analytical techniques from various origins. The course will introduce students to the central debates in philosophy of technology, an approach that will be combined with perspectives from disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology or STS, as well as critical analysis and practices from outside the walls of academia.

Learning outcomes

- CM20 (Compare different paradigms of knowledge, recognising the complexity and plurality of contemporary philosophical thought in its relationship with science and technology.) Compare different paradigms of knowledge, recognising the complexity and plurality of contemporary philosophical thought in its relationship with science and technology.
- CM21 (Value the uses of knowledge, questioning its forms of legitimation, exclusion or manipulation today.) Value the uses of knowledge, questioning its forms of legitimation, exclusion or manipulation today.
- CM22 (Develop a critical, articulated and reflective vision of knowledge in its multiple dimensions: epistemic, linguistic, scientific and technological and evaluate the challenges that these imply.) Develop a critical, articulated and reflective vision of knowledge in its multiple dimensions: epistemic, linguistic, scientific and technological and evaluate the challenges that these imply.
- KM23 (Cite the philosophical foundations of knowledge, as well as the historical, linguistic, scientific and technological conditions that shape it, identifying the relations and power structures that result in epistemological biases. .) Cite the philosophical foundations of knowledge, as well as the historical, linguistic, scientific and technological conditions that shape it, identifying the relations and power structures that result in epistemological biases. .
- KM24 (Identify the role of language and technology in the production, circulation and legitimisation of knowledge.) Identify the role of language and technology in the production, circulation and legitimisation

of knowledge.
- KM25 (Explain the main contemporary theories and debates about truth, justification, rationality, meaning, objectivity and progress.) Explain the main contemporary theories and debates about truth, justification, rationality, meaning, objectivity and progress.
- SM24 (Evaluate scientific and technical discourses from a philosophical perspective, detecting assumptions, tensions and social effects in human and post-human viewpoints.) Evaluate scientific and technical discourses from a philosophical perspective, detecting assumptions, tensions and social effects in human and post-human viewpoints.
- SM25 (Analyse philosophical texts and arguments on knowledge, science, language and technology and the social impact of their development with conceptual rigour.) Analyse philosophical texts and arguments on knowledge, science, language and technology and the social impact of their development with conceptual rigour.
- SM26 (Use diverse philosophical approaches in the interpretation of current problems related to truth, communication, epistemic authority and technological innovation.) Use diverse philosophical approaches in the interpretation of current problems related to truth, communication, epistemic authority and technological innovation.

Contents

1. What is (not) technology?

2. Design: The social construction of technology

3. Interactions: Agency, mediation and programs of action

4. Subjectivation: Bodies, emotions and identities

6. Control: Cybernetics, automatization and governmentality

7. Obsolescence: Prometheic shame, banalization and the blindness of apocalypse

8. Technicity: On the mode of existence of technical objects

9. Autonomy: Materiality, power and forms of life

Learning activities and methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Tutoring	3	0.12	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26
Reading and autonomous work	48	1.92	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26
Discussion seminars	22	0.88	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26
Theoretical classes	23	0.92	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26

This subject combines theoretical classes with discussion seminars around chosen texts and topics. It is expected that students will have read the assigned readings and participate actively in the collective discussion. Each theme will deal with one or several philosophical, historical, anthropological or sociological perspectives on technology, that will always be discussed in relation to specific tools, artefacts or technological systems.

Annotation: within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous assessment activities

Title	Weight	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Written exam	40%	1.5	0.06	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26
Oral or audiovisual exercice	25%	4.5	0.18	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26
Written exercice	40%	40	1.6	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26
Active participation in the discussion seminars	10%	8	0.32	CM20, CM21, CM22, KM23, KM24, KM25, SM24, SM25, SM26

This course contemplates two types of assessment: continuous and single.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Continuous assessment will consist in:

A) A written exam (40%). The format will be announced in due course.

B) A written exercice (25%). The format will be announced in due course.

C) An oral or audiovisual exercice (25%) consistent in the group analysis of an artefact or a technological system. This exercice cannot be reassessed.

D) Active participation in the discussion seminars (10%).

To pass the course the minimum mark is 5. The student will be given the grade of "non-assessable" if less than 30% of the assessment activities are submitted.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

For their admission to reassessment, students must have been previously assessed from a set of activities that are equivalent to a minimum of 2/3 parts of the whole qualification. The minimum average grade of the assessed activities cannot be inferior to 3,5 nor higher than 5. The 10% corresponding to the active participation in the discussion seminars, as well as those assessment activities in which irregularities have been committed, cannot be reassessed.

Reassessment will consist in repeating the failed partial exams and submitting again the exercices in which the student failed (except in the oral/audiovisual exercice, which cannot be reassessed). The format will be announced with enough anticipation.

This subject entirely prohibits the use of AI technologies in all of its activities. Any submitted work that contains content generated using AI will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade will be awarded a zero, without the possibility of reassessment. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

Any change related to assessment, methodology, etc., will appear at the Virtual Campus in due course.

SINGLE ASSESSMENT

Single assessment will consist in:

A) A final exam (70%).

B) A written exercice (30%) that will be submitted the day in which the final exam will take place. The format will be announced in due course.

To pass the course the minimum mark is 5.The student will be given the grade of "non-assessable" if less than 30% of the assessment activities are submitted. The same applies regarding AI.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

The minimum average grade of the assessed activities cannot be inferior to 3,5 nor higher than 5. Reassessment will consist in repeating the assessment activities in the same format.

Bibliography

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Software

Not necessary.

Course groups and languages

The information provided is provisional until November 30. After this date, you will be able to consult the language of each group through this link. To access the information, you will need to enter the course CODE

Type of teaching	Group	Language	Semester	Shift
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed