Course Outline for: PHIL 1190 Ethics for the Digital Age

A. **Course Description:**
1.   Number of credits: 3
2.   Lecture hours per week: 3
3.   Prerequisites: None
4.   Corequisites: None
5.   MnTC Goals: Goal 6 Humanities and Fine Arts
                              Goal 9 Ethical and Civic Responsibility

Big data and information technology impact all areas of life. Rapid advances in technologies such as AI and machine learning, as well as the evermore sophisticated advances in the collection, analysis, and use of data, have created opportunities for individual and social good. But ethical frameworks for assessing the impacts of these advances lag behind. Does the use of predictive analytics in health care, employment, and policing reinforce or reduce bias and discrimination? Is privacy dead—and should we care? Are algorithms morally neutral? Should big tech be regulated? Does Facebook cause more harm than good?   These are some of the questions we will address as we explore the ethical dimensions of data and information technology. Through understanding the theories and concepts in moral philosophy, we will learn how to reason about and critically assess ethical issues in data and information technology.

B. **Date last reviewed/updated:** March 2023

C. **Outline of Major Content Areas:**
1.   Ethical theory (including Utilitarianism, Kantianism, Virtue Ethics)
2.   Theories of justice and rights; equality; governmental regulations
3.   The nature and ethical dimensions of privacy
4.   Applications of ethical theory and moral concepts to topics such as privacy rights, bias and discrimination in the use of big data in areas ranging from education to health care to crime prevention and policing (among other areas), artificial intelligence, social media, and other areas related to data and technology.
5.   Case Studies related to data and technology in business and employment, education, health care, education, crime prevention and policing, social media, and politics.

D. **Course Learning Outcomes:**
Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:
1.   Identify major ethical theories and traditions within moral philosophy. (Goals 6a, 9b)
2.   Use ethical theories and concepts to analyze and resolve moral dilemmas regarding data and information technology. (Goals 6a, 6b, 9b)
3.   Evaluate and respond to the ethical dimensions of privacy as it relates to the collection, analysis and use of data. (Goals 2a, 6b, 9c, 9d, 9e)

4. Describe and ethically assess the legal rules and regulatory mechanisms regarding the collection, analysis and use of data. (Goals 9c, 9e)
5. Assess when data analytics and algorithms raise ethical, legal, and social justice concerns and formulate personal views on such issues. (Goals 2a, 6b, 9a, 9b, 9c)
6. Explain the factual, social, and political dimensions relevant to ethical problems regarding data and technology, and evaluate the implications that follow from them. (Goals 2a, 6b, 9b, 9c)
7. Recognize and assess the ethical aspects involved in the diverse approaches to data ethics issues taken by differing social, economic, cultural, and political perspectives. (Goals 2b, 2d, 6b, 6e, 9d)
8. Formulate, analyze, and critically assess one's own ethical perspectives on contemporary issues regarding the collection, analysis and use of data. (Goals 2d, 6c, 6e, 9a, 9e)
9. Use diverse ethical views to imaginatively generate alternative solutions to ethical dilemmas regarding data and technology. (Goals 2b, 6a, 6b 6e, 9b, 9d, 9e)
10. Formulate and describe responses to ethical issues on both theoretical and personal levels. (Goals 2d, 6a, 6b, 6e, 9a, 9e)

E.   Methods for Assessing Student Learning:
Assessments may include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. Essays and papers
2. Exams and Quizzes
3. Homework Assignments
4. Discussion Projects
5. In-class assignments and participation

F.   Special Information:
None