SOP77172 — AI and Society

Module Information	
Module Code	SOP77172
Module Title	AI and Society
Department	Sociology
Year Group	Postgraduate
Module Personnel	Prof Taha Yasseri
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	10 credits
Semester	Semester 2
Contact Hours	2 hours per week

Module Content	
Module Description	Artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping social, economic, and political life. This module introduces students to the foundational concepts of artificial intelligence, what AI is, how it works, and where it is applied, before examining its broader societal implications through interdisciplinary perspectives. The module explores key issues including algorithmic bias and fairness, automation and the future of work, privacy and surveillance, misinformation, governance, creativity, and human–AI interaction. Students engage with both conceptual explanations of core AI approaches (such as machine learning and generative AI) and critical social science perspectives. Through discussion, case studies, and engagement with foundational literature, students develop the ability to understand AI systems at a conceptual level and analyse their impact on institutions, decision-making, inequality, and public policy.
Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of this module, students should be able to: • Explain in accessible terms what artificial intelligence is, how core AI approaches work, and where they are applied; • Analyse ethical and policy challenges arising from artificial intelligence; • Evaluate the impact of AI on labour markets, governance,

Module Content	
	creativity, and social systems; • Identify risks related to bias, misinformation, surveillance, and safety; • Discuss human–AI interaction and its implications for decision-making; • Apply interdisciplinary perspectives to analysing the societal impact of AI; • Critically assess AI governance frameworks and responsible innovation approaches; • Demonstrate introductory understanding of key AI concepts relevant to societal analysis.
Indicative Reading / Resources	Bender, E. M., Gebru, T., McMillan-Major, A., & Shmitchell, S. (2021) On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots: Can Language Models Be Too Big? *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency.* Buolamwini, J., & Gebru, T. (2018) Gender Shades: Intersectional Accuracy Disparities in Commercial Gender Classification. *Proceedings of Machine Learning Research.* Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018) The Spread of True and False News Online. *Science.* Autor, D. (2015) Why Are There Still So Many Jobs? The History and Future of Workplace Automation. *Journal of Economic Perspectives.* Amodei, D. et al. (2016) Concrete Problems in AI Safety. *arXiv preprint.* Shum, H. Y., He, X., & Li, D. (2018) From Eliza to XiaoIce: Challenges and Opportunities with Social Chatbots. *Frontiers of IT & Electronic Engineering.* Escalante, J., Pack, A., & Barrett, A. (2023) AI-Generated Feedback on Writing: Insights into Efficacy and Student Preference. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education.* DiResta, R., & Shaffer, K. (2023) AI-Generated Disinformation and the Threat to Democracy. *Stanford Internet Observatory Report.* Miyazaki, K. et al. (2024) Public Perception of Generative AI on Twitter. *EPJ Data Science.* Nah, S. et al. (2024) When Trust in AI Mediates: AI News Use, Public Discussion, and Civic Participation. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research.*

Assessment	
Assessment Components	in-class presentations 30%, in-class discussions 20%, and end-of-the-term essay 50%
Assessment Details	Students are expected to present during the term in the class and actively participate in group discussions. In addition, an end of the term essay is to be submitted during the exam week.

Additional Information	
Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Any other information	None