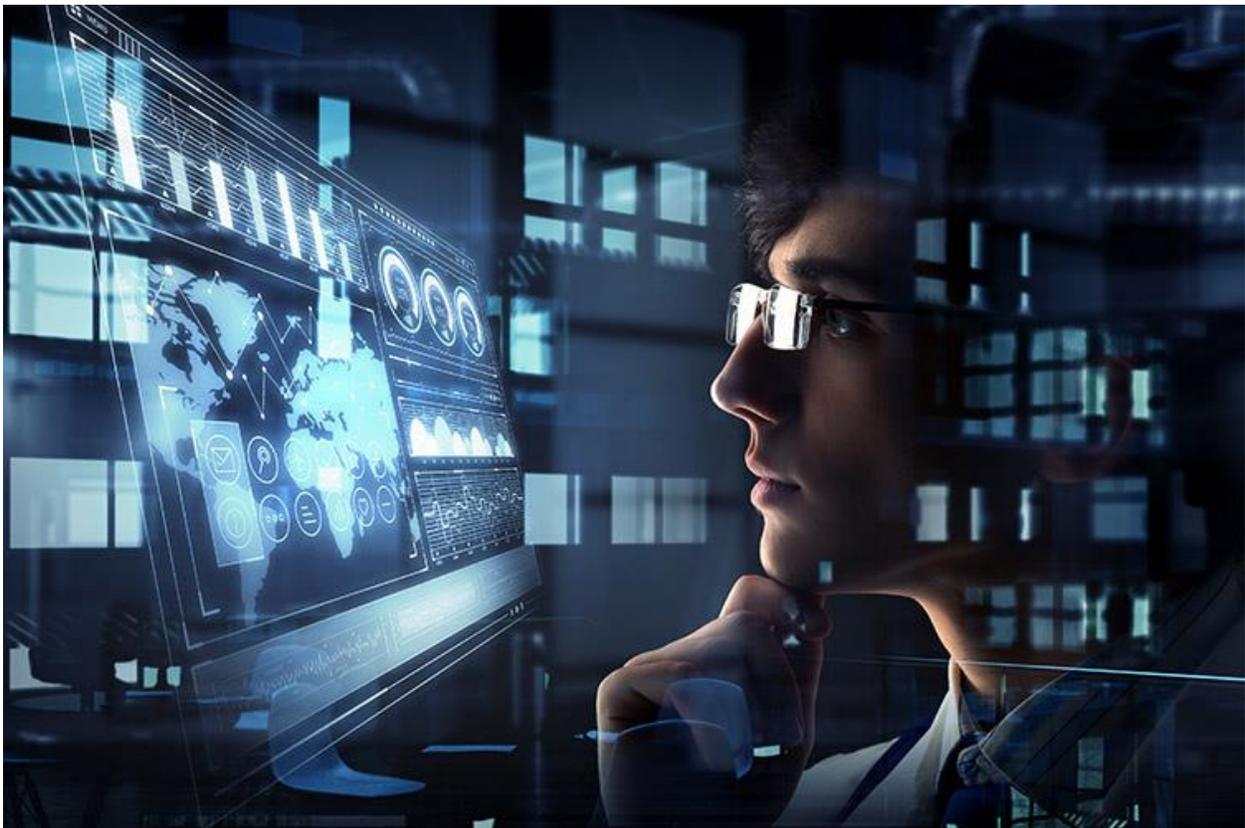# Major in the Future of Humanity?

Philosophy launches new programs in business, innovation and technology

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

-
-
-

The UNH [Philosophy Department](#) has long been home to leading researchers in artificial intelligence, neuroscience, evolution, business ethics, and the ethical, social and political dimensions of emerging technology. The Department has now launched

both a three-course cognate and a major specialization in the [philosophy of business, innovation and technology](#) to capitalize on these strengths.

Philosophy faculty say they increasingly have found students eager to discuss the whirlwind of technological change that they experience. Where is all of this innovation headed? Are these developments in artificial intelligence, social media or biotechnology always good, even if they are profitable? One question seems especially urgent to college students preparing for the job market: how should global economies address the increasing automation of labor?

> ## "There are many students interested in the really 'Big Questions' about how technology will impact the future of humanity and who want to make a living innovating in ways that enhance human well-being."

Under the mentorship of department faculty, philosophy students have been producing impressive work on the cutting edges of technology, economics and justice. Recent graduate Andrew Ware '18, for example, researches [how artificial intelligence can address global economic issues](#), leading him to study at the University of Cambridge and present his findings to the U.K. House of Lords. Current major Dylan Wheeler conducts grant-funded research into artificial intelligence and disinformation campaigns. Philosophy Department graduates regularly land in Silicon Valley and Wall Street — including enviable positions at Apple and Google — and many attend top law schools and build legal careers in tech and finance.

"There are many students interested in the really 'Big Questions' about how technology will impact the future of humanity," says department chair [Nick Smith](#), "and who want to make a living innovating in ways that enhance human well-being." Consider someone like Alex Freid '13, a philosophy major who founded the [UNH Trash 2 Treasure program and who now leads the Post Landfill Action Network](#). "Alex provides an excellent example of an incredibly driven innovator who used his intensive philosophical training in reading, writing and presenting complex ideas to transform how universities and college students across the country address waste," explains Smith.

The new major specialization and cognate provide pathways for students to systematically study the relationships between markets, science, technology and human well-being within the broader training provide by the Philosophy Department. The Department expects many students will elect this option in conjunction with another area of study.

"Andrew, Dylan and Alex were all double majors — in economics, information technology and political science, respectively," says Smith, "so we expect this initiative to further enhance our collaborations with other programs across UNH." He adds: "Consider nuclear weapons, super intelligent robots, social media or space colonization missions: our colleagues in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences can help build them and our friends in the Paul College of Business and Economics can work on

financing, but hopefully there is a philosopher involved to help figure out if project is good for humanity."

For more information, visit https://cola.unh.edu/pbit.

- COMPILED BY:

  Susan Dumais '88 '02G | College of Liberal Arts

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Follow us on YouTube

Follow us on Instagram

Find us on LinkIn

UNH Today RSS feeds