

Postgraduate Open Days 2025

Just Futures

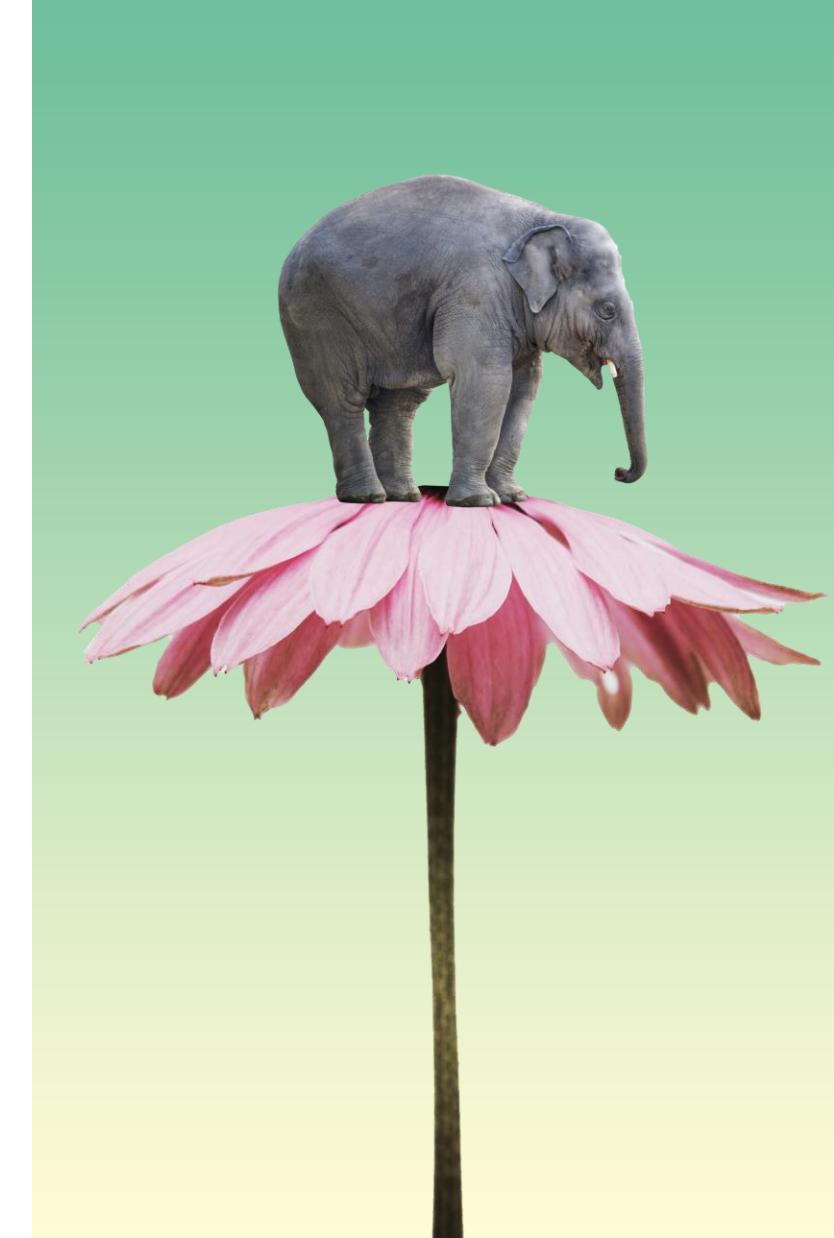


THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Futures Institute

Join us to **Challenge. Create. Change.**

With you today

- Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar, Director of Students
- Dr Ian Russell, MSc Data, Inequality and Society
- Dr Seongsook Choi, MSc Education Futures
- Professor Cristian Vaccari, MSc Future Governance
- Professor Shannon Vallor, MSc Data and AI Ethics
- Jo, MSc Education Futures Graduate
- Ashlynn, MSc Future Governance Student



Study at Edinburgh Futures Institute

Interdisciplinary

Bringing arts, humanities and social sciences together with sciences, engineering and medicine to address complex global issues.

Critical and research-led

Working on pressing social issues that require new ways of thinking. Mindful of the role of universities in confronting uncomfortable questions.

Participatory

Inviting diverse groupings to bring their ways of working and thinking together. Edinburgh Futures Institute extends this invitation to industry, the public and government.

Future-facing

Embracing the non-traditional, the untried and the unexpected. The Futures Institute defines challenges and co-creates responses to build better futures.



Sustainable Futures

- Planetary Health
- Sustainable Lands and Cities
- Circular Economy
- Future Infrastructure, Climate Change and Sustainability



Creative Futures

- Service Management and Design
- Creative Industries
- Narrative Futures: Art, Data, Society
- Cultural Heritage Futures



Just Futures

- Data and Artificial Intelligence Ethics
- Data, Inequality and Society
- Education Futures
- Future Governance



What's different about the Futures Institute?

- Interdisciplinary programmes taught by leading academics from different Schools and disciplines
- Equip you with the critical, data and creative skills needed to navigate a rapidly-changing world
- Apply leading-edge knowledge to live projects you care about
- We will connect you to our partners in the community, industry and government



Our approach

- Community-focused: bringing together students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines as a single cohort
- Collaboration: students regularly work together in small groups developing skills in communication, teamwork and co-creation
- Connected: employers work with us on the design and teaching of our programmes and help support projects



Future skills focused

Working in cross-disciplinary teams with students from other Futures Institute MSc programmes, you will learn critical data skills, ethical awareness, creative thinking, and methods to address complex issues:

- Collect, manage and analyse computational datasets
- Use emerging methodologies for mapping and designing possible futures
- Learn the fundamentals of data ethics
- Learn to use creative skills in the analysis and representation of data-informed and qualitative inquiry



The student experience

- Be part of a global and diverse cohort
- A very well supported experience with a student experience and support team
- Events and networks to connect with each other
- Meet our students!
 - **Jo**, MSc Education Futures Graduate
 - **Ashlynn**, MSc Future Governance Student



Just Futures: Interdisciplinary Masters

MSc Data, Inequality and Society

MSc Education Futures

MSc Future Governance

MSc Data and Artificial Intelligence Ethics



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Data, Inequality and Society

Dr Ian Russell
School of Social and Political Science

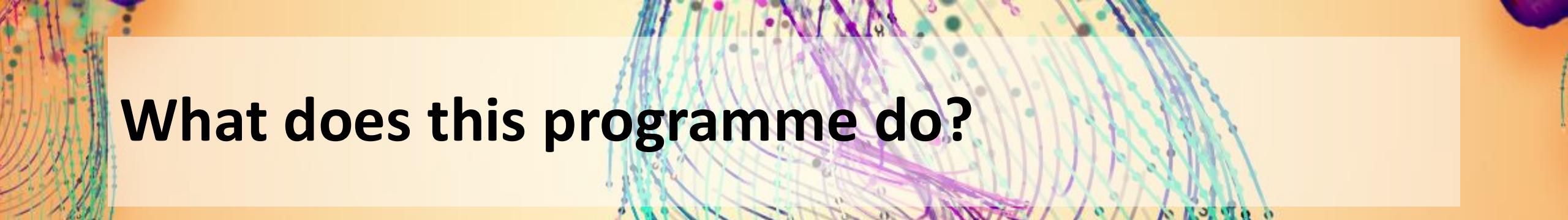
Dr Zeynep Oguz
School of Social and Political Science



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What does this programme do?

- Explore **inequalities**, the very core of the world's most wicked and complex problems: e.g., poverty, basic rights, forced displacement
- Through **data** – of various types – that help understand and act upon inequalities but also hide realities... and can create and entrench inequalities
- Our core questions:
 - How are inequalities created, and what do inequalities produce?
 - What makes societies inclusive?
 - What is the role of data in describing and producing inclusion or exclusion?



The ‘Toolbox’ – exclusion and inequality

- *Where do social, political, cultural, and economic exclusions and inequalities come from, and what are their effects?*
- Equip yourself with skills and knowledge necessary to understand and research exclusion and inequality
- Connect your learning to concrete issues related to health and healthcare, work and labour, resource flows, and the built environment



The ‘Sandbox’ – inclusive society

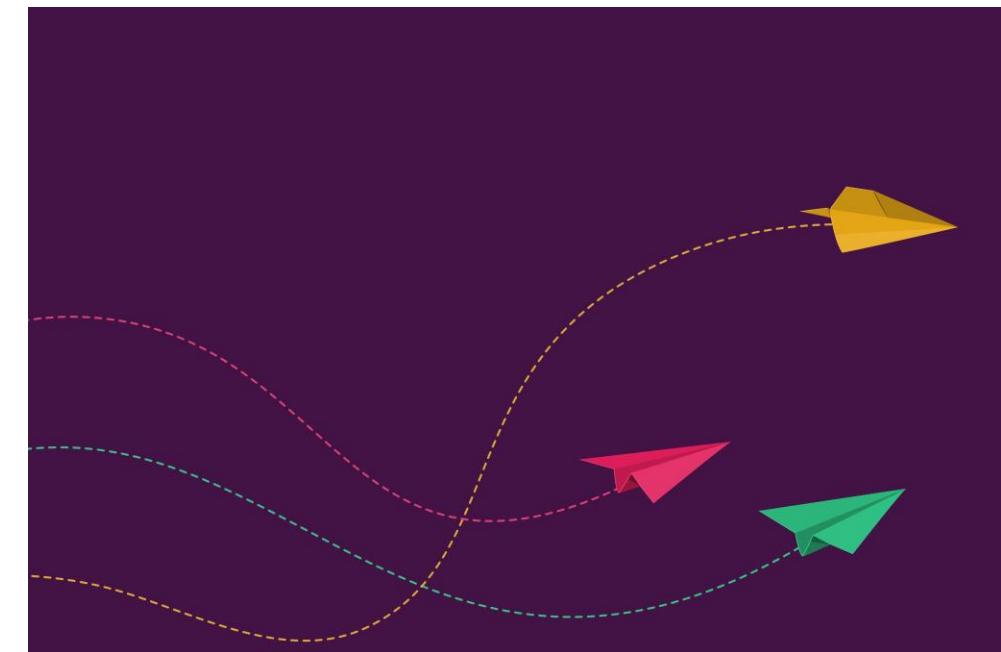


- *How are actors across the world addressing inequalities and exclusion?*
- Learn approaches to addressing exclusion and inequality from those leading projects of change
- Engage with initiatives that are concerned with citizen participation, data activism, working with vulnerable groups, and radical wealth and power redistribution initiatives

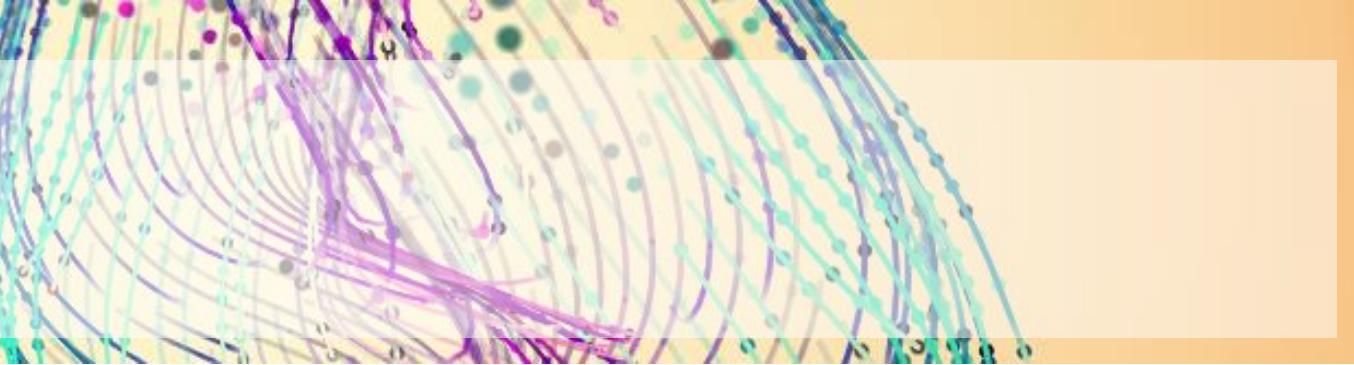


Elective courses

- Build your own academic journey using programme-specific electives such as:
 - Aftershock: trauma and recovery in an unequal society
 - Contemporary inequality issues in the Global South
 - Coloniality of data
 - Data science for society
 - Indigenous futures
 - Migration and forced displacement in a digital age
- Many more available from other EFI programmes!



Final project



- Bring together the knowledge and skills gained in the core courses and electives to explore a topic of your choice
- Use your data skills to interrogate inequality and exclusion
 - e.g., inequalities in access to healthcare, marginalisation of indigenous populations – or to better understand projects of inclusion
- Use your social science skills to interrogate the inequalities connected with data
 - e.g., algorithmic bias, information asymmetries



Who is this programme for?

- Current students have a wide range of interests and experiences
- Those with a background/interest in data who want to learn about the role of data in both projects of inclusion and the perpetuation of inequalities
- Those with a background/interest in addressing inequality and exclusion who want to build their toolkit and data skills
- Those who are passionate about understanding and addressing the major inequalities and exclusions that exist today



Education Futures

Dr Seongsook Choi

Professor Jen Ross

Centre for Research in Digital Education
Moray House School of Education and Sport



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Education Futures

Education, in all its forms, is essential to a thriving society. How organisations, systems and people learn and change profoundly affects our lives, our surroundings and our futures.

Our programme is for those who wish to engage critically with educational possibilities for the future, and understand how educational knowledge, institutions and agents can positively shape society.



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Suited to those who...

- Thrive in learning situations characterised by **creativity, collaboration and criticality**.
- Are excited about experiencing different teaching approaches and are enthusiastic about **working with different types of academic material and knowledge**.
- Have a desire to **positively shape education** in the near future and beyond.
- **Work in, or aspire to, roles in** education leadership, policy and research, learning design, teaching and delivery, educational research and design, community, voluntary, corporate and private sector learning and development roles.



This programme responds to the need for creative, critical and experimental thinking across education in **schools, universities and colleges**, and learning within **communities, industries and organisations**.

You will explore the ways that knowledge, culture and skills are produced and reproduced, how people, organisations and systems learn, and how this influences global challenges and change.

Your studies on this programme will support you to think ambitiously about

- the future of education across all sectors,
- gain vital data and creative skills to support your future career,
- apply innovative methods to building a strong future for education and learning.



Ideas about the Future

As you encounter different possible, preferable, preposterous futures, we encourage you to ask:

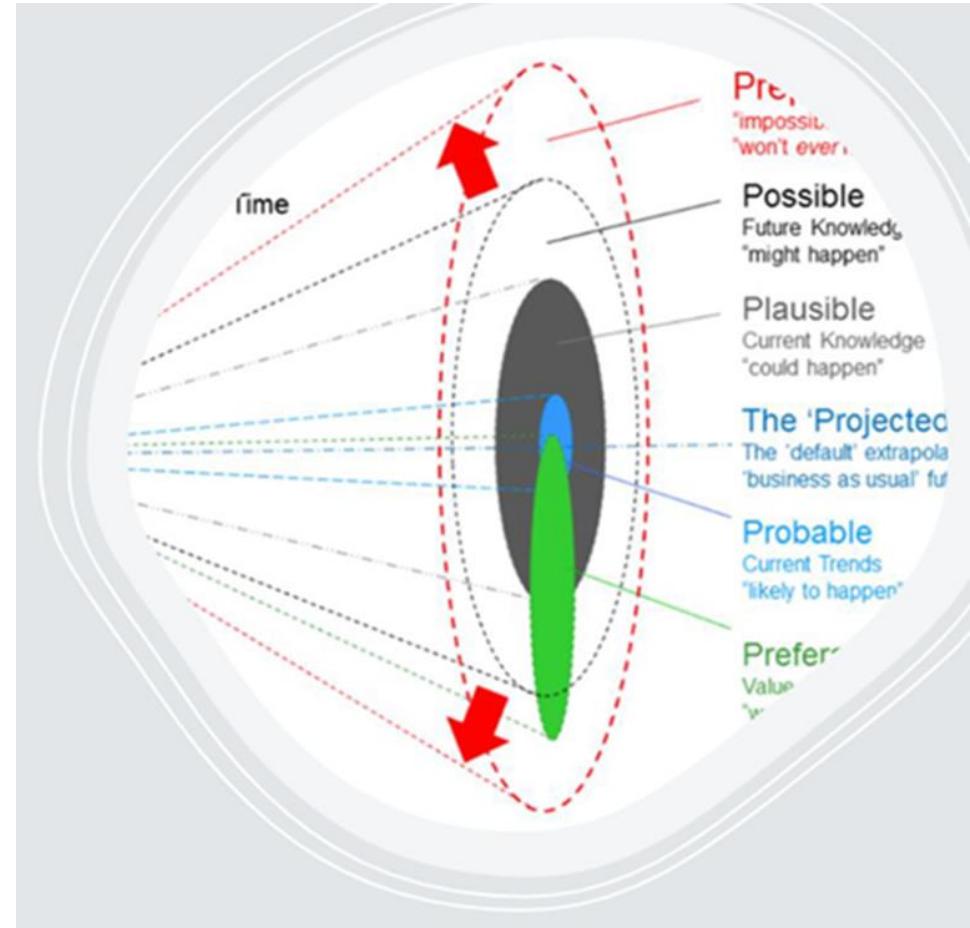
What could this future mean for education & learning?

But also:

Why am I encountering *this* future?

What futures are *not* being discussed right now? Why not?

This helps you keep a **critical and questioning** stance, and **examine** what you are seeing through an education futures lens.



Programme Core Courses

The Future of Learning Organisations

- Examine how social, technological and ecological changes are shaping learning organisations.
- Work collaboratively through activities and discussions on agents & people, environments, evaluation.
- Imagine what learning organisation may look like in the near future.
- Take a cross-sectoral view of education futures to explore how people, practice and places of learning may evolve.

Educating for a Challenging Future

- Explore the role of education in addressing society's most complex, **wicked problems**.
- Consider whether *more and better education* can meaningfully respond to uncertainty and volatility.
- Engage critically and collaboratively with these questions.
- Wicked problems require cross-disciplinary and values-aware engagement
 - Involve multiple stakeholders with conflicting perspectives
 - Produce unpredictable outcomes
 - Require cross-disciplinary collaboration
 - Call for sensitivity to diverse values and emotions.



Electives & Option Courses

Choose option courses from



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Learning and Resilience

Explores the interplay of learning and resilience through data-driven intrapersonal development. You will learn how individual resilience can contribute to thriving learning organisations.

Education, Personalisation and Surveillance

Examines the origins and effects of personalisation and surveillance in education.

Educational Technologies (EdTech) and Entrepreneurship

Explores theories, processes, and critical debates in the domain of Education Technology, with a focus on customers, users, and various stakeholders. Critically evaluate and potentially start an ethical EdTech venture.

Interrogating Interdisciplinary Practice

Explores interdisciplinarity in action and enable participants to become more effective, analytical and reflective interdisciplinary collaborators and leaders.



Data and Artificial Intelligence Ethics



Circular Economy



Creative Industries



Planetary Health



Future Governance



Data, Inequality and Society



Service Management and Design



Cultural Heritage Futures



Sustainable Lands and Cities



Narrative Futures:
Art, Data, Society



Future Infrastructure,
Climate Change and
Sustainability

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What could an 'education futures' project tackle?

Examination of a current issue in education which explores in some depth the possible future implications of this (for practice, knowledge and so on).

Emerging issues or topics that may be significant for the future of education.

Applying futuring methods to work with participants, analysis of materials.

How futures work is being done in different education and learning settings.

Organisational or community change and how people or organisations learn in complex or shifting settings.

Exploring 'past futures' for education and what they may have to tell us now.



What current and former students value ...



- Incredible peers.
- Creative assessment and teaching methods.
- The ability to pursue questions and topics of importance to them, their communities and organisations.
- An opportunity to experience and contribute to a cutting-edge environment where education futures are being made and enacted every day!



Future Governance



Professor Cristian Vaccari
School of Social and Political
Science



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What is ‘Future Governance’?

- Response to shifting world with new and rapidly changing technologies and data sources.
- Transforming the parameters of governance: both in terms of how we are governed, what needs to be governed and who is involved in making these decisions.
- MSc Future Governance participants will gain the skills and knowledge required to evaluate and harness diverse data sources and emerging technologies and to understand, critique and shape the future of governance, policy-making and democracy.
- Interdisciplinary teaching teams (social & political science, computer science, design informatics, business, psychology, cognitive neuroscience, digital humanities) & cross-sectoral partnerships, addressing contemporary governance issues.



Who is it for?

- Full time postgraduate students transitioning from undergraduate studies and seeking to develop interdisciplinary knowledge and skills to carve out a niche in the rapidly transforming field of governance.
- Mid-career professionals from the private, public, and third sectors, aiming to lead on governance projects with a strong data aspect, or transition to such careers.
- Future Governance graduates will have a robust understanding of data-driven decision-making in governance processes; they will be ready to institute positive change in the decision-making environment.



Why?

- The impact of technology and the need for data-literacy for understanding and shaping governance processes is unlikely to abate.
- This unique programme will leave our data-literate graduates well placed to offer the cross disciplinary skills that are in demand from decision-makers and researchers in the public, private and third sectors.
- Exciting EFI vision, community & delivery model: International cohort, fusion teaching, flexible learning journey, intensive delivery model, future-oriented challenge-based approach.



Programme core courses

Digital Democratic Innovations

Explores how digital tools are transforming democratic engagement by enhancing citizen participation and influence in governance. Examines the rise of data-driven innovations, such as crowdsourced policymaking, participatory budgeting, and citizen assemblies, across various governmental and community platforms. Empowers students to assess global democratic innovations and develop strategies for collaborative governance.

Future Governance

Examines how technology and data are used within governance and public policy, in the policy process, in political communication, and more widely how big data, algorithms, and artificial intelligence are used within government. Engages critically with the interface between governance/public policy and technology, considers how technology is used in the delivery of public services, and addresses the limitations of these approaches.



Teaching Team



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Examples of Final Projects (2024-25)

AI, Data and Algorithmic Governance

- Ethical AI and Data Governance for Indigenous Languages
- Measuring Ethical Values in Large Language Models
- Using Large Language Models for Horizon Scanning in Policy Analysis
- Big Data Credit Scoring, Platform Governance and Financial Inclusion
- Cybersecurity, Data Protection and Resilience in Indonesia's Digital Payment Systems
- How AI Adoption Changes Jobs and Skills in Manufacturing Enterprises

Digital Cities and Urban Futures

- Bridging the Digital Divide in Edinburgh's Digital and Smart City Strategy
- Governing Smart-City Data: Balancing Efficiency and Rights in Shenzhen and Amsterdam

Governance of Emerging Technologies and Expertise

- Echo Chambers and Political Polarisation on Truth Social
- Governing Facial Recognition in Scottish Policing: Lessons from England and Wales
- Governing Knowledge Transfer between Expatriate Experts and Emirati Engineers in the Defence Sector



Data and Artificial Intelligence Ethics

**Professor Shannon Vallor and
Dr. Milo Phillips-Brown,,
Programme Directors
Department of Philosophy/
Centre for Technomoral Futures**



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What we offer

- An interdisciplinary degree within the Edinburgh Futures Institute
- Designed with the University's world-leading expertise in this area, drawing on philosophy, law, informatics, and science and technology innovation studies (STIS)
- Meets the urgent demand for interdisciplinary skills and knowledge in the ethical design, use and governance of artificial intelligence and other data-intensive technologies.



Academic Leadership



Academic Staff ·
Philosophy, CTMF Staff Team, MSc Data and AI
Ethics Programme Staff

Shannon Vallor

Co-Director of the Centre, Shannon Vallor is the Baillie Gifford Professor in Ethics of Data and Artificial Intelligence at the University of Edinburgh's Futures Institute and Department of Philosophy. Professor Vallor also chairs the University's AI and Data Ethics Advisory Board.

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Senior Research Affiliates, Academic Staff ·
Philosophy, MSc Data and AI Ethics Programme Staff

Milo Phillips-Brown

Milo Phillips-Brown is a Lecturer in the Philosophy of Technology at the University of Edinburgh and a Senior Research Fellow in Digital Ethics and Governance at the Jain Family Institute.

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Academic Staff ·
Philosophy, CTMF Staff Team, MSc Data and AI
Ethics Programme Staff

Cristina Richie

Dr Cristina Richie joined the Centre in August 2023. She is Lecturer and Cohort Lead for the MSc in Data and Artificial Intelligence Ethics at the University of Edinburgh's Futures Institute. Her research is driven by a global vision of clean, just, and ethical health care and technology through the development of strategies and policies.

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Academic Staff ·
CTMF Staff Team, MSc Data and AI Ethics
Programme Staff, Law School

Claudia González-Márquez

Claudia González-Márquez is a Teaching and Research Fellow in Artificial Intelligence, Data, and the Rule of Law. Claudia is Programme Staff on the interdisciplinary MSc in Data and Artificial Intelligence Ethics, and serves as course organiser for 'Data and Artificial Intelligence Ethics, Law and Governance'.

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Academic Leadership



Academic Staff ·
Informatics, CTMF Staff Team, MSc Data and AI
Ethics Programme Staff

Zeerak Talat

Zeerak Talat joined the Centre in November 2024. They are Chancellor's Fellow in Responsible Machine Learning and AI. Their research centres on if, and how, machine learning and AI technologies can be used towards fair and equitable futures to answer how machine learning and AI should look, if we must live with them in our societies.

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Senior Research Affiliates ·
Informatics, MSc Data and AI Ethics Programme
Staff

James Garforth

James Garforth teaches ethics, social responsibility and teamwork to undergraduate students in the School of Informatics, and supervises projects to develop tools and practices supportive of responsible development.

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Postdoctoral Affiliates ·
Science Technology and Innovation Studies

Benedetta Catanzariti

Dr Benedetta Catanzariti is a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow in Science, Technology and Innovation Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Her work explores the social, ethical, and political dimensions of data-driven technologies, with a focus on machine learning and its related data practices. She is also a core member of the Edinburgh-based network AI Ethics & Society.

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Academic Staff ·
MSc Data and AI Ethics Programme Staff,
Philosophy, CTMF Staff Team

Ben Schwartz

Ben Schwartz is a Teaching Fellow in the Department of Philosophy. His research focuses upon the impact of recent and emerging technologies on human flourishing.

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What you'll learn

- **Key challenges** for the ethical design and use of AI and data
- How to **map** ethical values, principles, and practices onto AI & Data, and how they relate to regulation, policy, and design
- How to **identify and evaluate practical interventions** to align AI and data-intensive tools with ethical norms.
- How to **translate and clearly communicate** ethical concepts and framings for diverse audiences and across multiple domains of data/AI application.
- How to **lead and work collaboratively** with others to **produce** clear, accessible, and actionable guidance and tools for ethical design and governance of AI & data technologies



Who needs the skills you'll get

- **Industry:** Policy, compliance, trust and safety, UX, privacy and data governance, risk management, DEI, responsible innovation and product review/management teams
- **Public Sector:** Auditing, digital transformation and strategy groups, policy, regulatory and advisory bodies
- **Third Sector/Civil Society:** Citizen advocacy groups, philanthropic foundations, think tanks, watchdog orgs, human rights organisations, non-profit public services and research organisations



Programme core courses

- **DATA & AI ETHICS, LAW & GOVERNANCE**

Examines how ethical norms work alongside law, policy and other modes of AI and data governance to steer the production and use of these technologies to align with justice and the reduction of harm, as well as the realisation of benefits for individuals and society.

- **DATA ETHICS AS A PRACTICE**

Exposure to concrete methods, skills and techniques for putting AI and data ethics into practice, individually and in teams. Through case studies, you'll learn about using tools like model cards and datasheets, practice building ethical risk and threat models, and co-develop ethical design briefs and/or ethical research or product reviews.



Electives and optional courses

Algorithmic Bias, Fairness and Justice

Translational Data and AI Ethics

Ethics of Robotics and Autonomous Systems

Environmental Sustainability and Artificial Intelligence

***Courses below are provided as examples only; actual course offerings may vary by year**

Digital Influence

Coloniality of Data

Work Futures

Education, Personalisation and Surveillance

Narratives of Digital Capitalism



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Project component

Develop, propose, justify and self-critique an ethical intervention (in design, deployment, or regulation) that could facilitate the:

- ethical design of 'smart' and sustainable cities
- ethical use of AI to optimise allocation of health care resources
- ethical use of data to identify bias/discrimination in the judicial system
- ethical use of analytics to identify at-risk children in the social care system
- ethical use of biometric data to predict and manage disease outbreaks
- ethical design of robots for use to support elder care
- ethical design of 'open data' tools to increase government transparency
- ethical design of AI tools for content moderation/disinformation detection



Recent Project Titles

The Personalization-Privacy Paradox: An exploratory study of privacy disclosure in targeted advertising on Douyin

Methodology: Structured survey (Structural Equation Modelling) & interviews

Building Business-Specific AI Ethics Framework: A Toolkit for Start-ups to Foster AI Ethics as a Social and Continuous Practice

Methodology: placement based, with literature review and 'double-diamond' design process developed a toolkit on AI ethics for the company to use in education.

Navigating the Ethical and Legal Terrain of AI-Generated Art: A Comparative Study of Copyright and Creativity in the UK and France

Methodology: Legal Doctrinal Analysis



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Recent Project Titles

Future Frequencies: Ethical Impacts of AI's Music Revolution

Methodology: *Interviews with legal experts in intellectual property (IP) law, musicians and representatives of the Scottish AI Alliance. Legal, ethical and policy analysis.*

Hello World 2.0: Introducing Corporate AI Ethics to Tech Start-Up Environments (with the Bayes Centre, AI Accelerator Programme)

Methodology: *Literature review and interviews*

AI in Tax Administration: Exploring the Ethical Dimensions and Impact in China

Methodology: *Open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews*



Recent Project Titles

Revolt of the (Software) Engineer: An Investigation of Moral Disengagement, Ethical Agency, and Corporate Culture of the Software Engineer

Methodology: Literature review, case studies, and semi-structured interviews

Analysing Ethical AI Opportunities in Software Engineering Practices: Evolution, Not Revolution

Methodology: Narrative literature review and translation to actionable software design practice

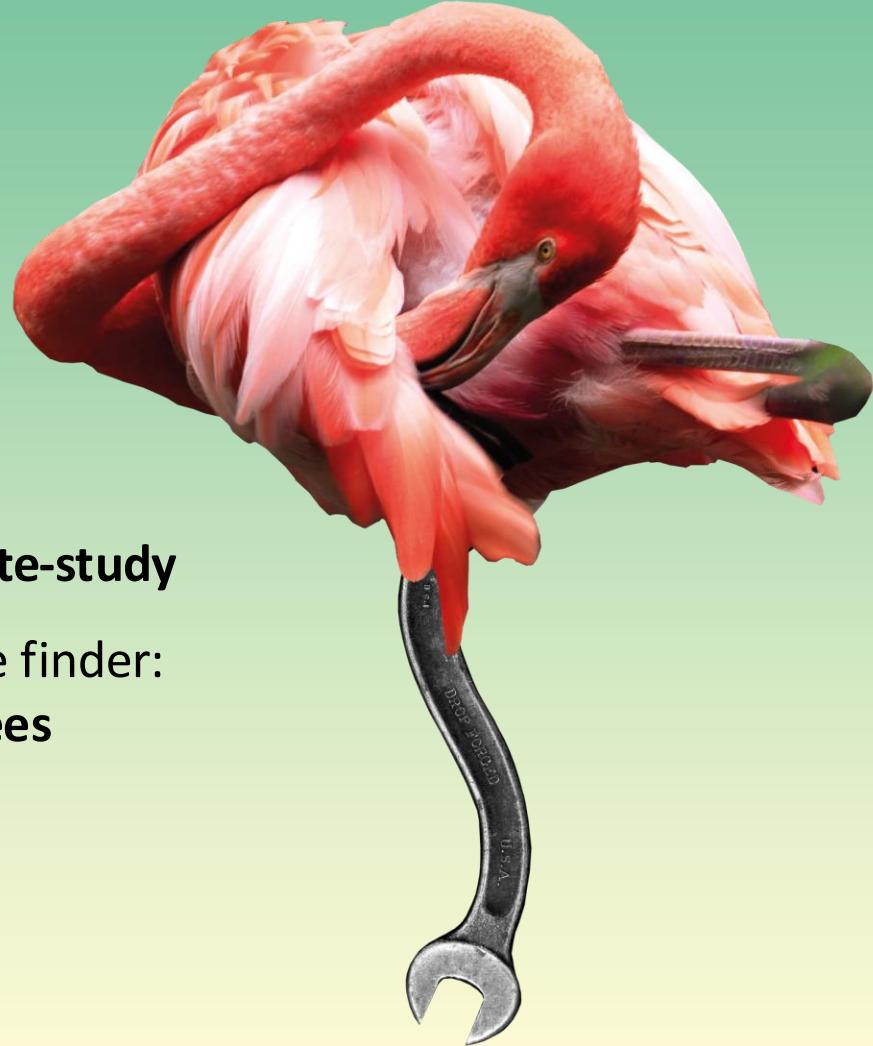


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Questions?

- for further queries contact: efi.education@ed.ac.uk
- visit the EFI website: <https://efi.ed.ac.uk/postgraduate-study>
- search for 'Edinburgh Futures Institute' on our degree finder:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/degrees>



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