CS 4002-2022 Robots and Society  
Term Project, Assignment #1

Due: Tuesday, February 15 2022 9:30AM  
Late assignments are not accepted for credit.

Requirement:  
For your individual term project, you will research an issue about which you are initially undecided. Your final assignment for the course will be an argument in which you take a stand on this issue.

For this assignment, write a short letter (email) with the subject line "CS4002 tp#1 your_name Section A or B" and email a copy to arkin@cc.gatech.edu and cc your TAs. [We will acknowledge receipt within a reasonable time – if you don’t get an acknowledgment, let us know]. You should also always send a copy to yourself and keep for your records in case you need to prove it was submitted on time.

Your message should clearly:

(1) identify the issue that you have chosen (avoid mistakes 1 and below). Remember and review inclass exercise 1 as to how to identify an issue (an ought issue in this case). Do not write a topic area – you need to identify an ethical question within a topical area. The issue must involve both ethics and robotics.

(2) explain why you are interested in it, and

(3) state why you can’t make up your mind yet for sure which position you will take. (avoid mistake 3 below). If you have already made up your mind on this issue – try a different topic – you must be undecided at this time.

Use a separate numbered paragraph for each part!  
MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE ALL 3 POINTS.

If you don’t you will have to resubmit until this is approved so make sure you get it right.

Grading & Warning:  
This assignment is part of your term project. Its purpose is to help you narrow down your choice of topics and issues. It will contribute 10 percent of the term project grade. That's not much, and you only need to write a few paragraphs; however, you will have to live with your choice for the rest of the semester, so give your topic some careful thought.

Hints:  
Look through the syllabus and books for topics that interest you, narrowing them down to four or five themes. Then do the issue–brainstorming process described in class in which you start from one issue and generate a set of related issues. Now, instead of starting from a narrow claim, such as "If more robots were used in Afghanistan, fewer soldiers would have been killed" you will be starting from a topic, such as "Robots in warfare" Whereas an issue can be summarized in a sentence, a topic can be summarized in a word or phrase. Next, just generate as many interesting-sounding issues (ought-questions) as you can for a while, then leave your list alone. Then come back to your list and choose one as your major research issue for this course. During the term, keep a log of your research activities for your own use and be ready, in class discussion or in writing, to explain what kinds of arguments or evidence turned out to be most persuasive in helping you to take a stand.

Mistakes not to make!

1. Make sure your issue is about robots and ethics. It should not be about robots in general (e.g. state-of–the-art) nor should it be about ethical issues that do not specifically involve robots (e.g., disembodied AI or computers in general). If in doubt check with us in advance.

2. Make sure your issue (#1 above) is a question (not a topic), similar to the “oughts” in in-class exercise 1. Not the “is” statements. Do not submit a topic!

3. Do not take a position at this time – just identify the issue (i.e., do not state or defend whatever you choose is right or wrong at this time – that’s for later.

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT, MAKE SURE ALL 3 POINTS ARE ADDRESSED!