

SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT

Friday November 10th, 2023

at 02:45 pm

Room "Aula U24C01" - Zifera Building (U24)

Person, Thing, Robot

Speaker

Prof. David J. Gunkel

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Abstract

Robots and AI systems are a curious sort of thing. On the one hand, they are designed and manufactured technological artifacts. They are things. Yet, and on the other hand, these things are not quite like other things. They seem to have social presence. They are able to talk and interact with us. And many are designed to mimic or simulate the capabilities and behaviors that are commonly associated with human or animal intelligence. Robots and AI therefore invite and encourage zoomorphism, anthropomorphism, and even personification. In my new book *Person, Thing, Robot* (MIT Press, 2023), I will set out to answer the vexing question: What exactly is a robot? Rather than try to fit robots into the existing moral and legal categories by way of arguing for either their reification or personification, however, I argue for a revolutionary reformulation of the entire system, developing a new approach to technology ethics that can scale to the unique opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century and beyond.

Short Bio

David J. Gunkel is an award-winning educator and scholar, specializing in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics with a focus on ethics and social impact of these technologies. He is the author of over 100 scholarly articles and book chapters published in the fields of communication, information technology, philosophy, cultural studies, interdisciplinary humanities, and computer science. He has published fourteen influential and widely cited books and has delivered award-winning papers and research presentations throughout North and South America, Asia, and Europe. He currently holds the position of Presidential Research, Scholarship and Artistry Professor in the Department of Communication at Northern Illinois University, and his teaching and research has been recognized with numerous awards, including NIU's Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the Presidential Teaching Professorship, and the Presidential Research, Scholarship and Artistry Professorship.

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