Global Collaboration Exercise

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Year 2026 main topic: How can we shape the future of society with AI?

Course Overview

On November 20th and 21st 2026, the University of Tokyo will host the annual Tokyo Forum in collaboration with the Chey Institute of Advanced Studies, where global leaders gather to address some of the most pressing issues of our time. This year's theme, "AI as Transformative Technology," will focus on how artificial intelligence is reshaping society, economies, and governance situating these developments in historical context by stepping back from the rapid pace of technological change.

This course, which will become an integral part of the Forum as the "youth session," is closely aligned with the annual theme and explores how AI can empower the next generation of leaders in Japan and Korea. The course invites students from the University of Tokyo and leading universities in South Korea to examine how AI might redefine our life and open new possibilities for global collaboration.

Focusing on AI as this year's central theme, the course investigates how partnerships across academia, business, government, and civil society can leverage AI for social innovation and systemic transformation while emphasizing the role of critical inquiry in examining these transformations beyond immediate technical dimensions. Through lectures, critical dialogue, and project-based learning, students will engage with creative and practical approaches to harnessing AI responsibly while critically examining its risks, limitations, and potential unintended consequences. By the end of the course, participants will present proposals on how cross-sector collaboration can drive the responsible and impactful use of AI in Japan, Korea, and beyond.

Course Objectives

1. Examine how AI is transforming contemporary social and economic systems in both local and global contexts with attention to broader historical and societal dynamics.
2. Understand the fundamental role of cross-sector collaboration in addressing social challenges.
3. Develop innovative proposals that use AI to enhance social inclusion and well-being.
4. Collaborate effectively across disciplines and across different cultural and social backgrounds to co-create viable solutions.

Course content

Each class session will focus on a particular aspect of AI and its implications for some of the most important issues facing society today—such as diversity, sustainability, ethics, and governance. Students are expected to come prepared to engage in discussions with one another based on the assigned readings. We will also invite guest lecturers from academia and industry to broaden our perspectives and deepen our understanding of the social significance of AI.

- All classes will be conducted online.
- Students must attend ALL classes given the collaborative and discussion-based nature of this course.

- One or two additional class sessions may be added (will be held from 19:30 to 21:00). Any change will be informed in advance.

Weeks	Topics	Details
Pre-Travel Session (August 7th, 18:00-21:00)		
Week 0	Understanding the Social and Global Significance of AI (Science and Technology Studies / STS)	• Exploring collaboration as a tool for addressing social challenges • Introduction to AI as a transformative technology • Team building exercise • Travel instructions
Visit to Seoul (August 18th – 21st) UTokyo students will visit Seoul, Korea, and have direct interaction with their Korean counterparts. There will be lectures, company visits, and fieldwork as well as group discussions. Details will be provided later.		
Week 1 (Sep. 2) 19:30-21:00	AI for Diversity and Inclusion	• Understanding social inequality, exclusion, and structural disparities through real-world social cases • Examining how AI systems can both reinforce and mitigate social bias and exclusion • Group discussion on inclusive AI design and its implications for education, work, and public services
Week 2 (Sep. 16) 19:30-21:00	AI for Sustainable Development	• Understanding environmental and sustainability challenges through global and local case studies • Exploring how AI can support sustainable development while also creating new environmental issues • Group discussion on the role of AI in addressing sustainable development
Week 3 (Sep. 30) 19:30-21:00	AI, Ethics, and Governance	• Understanding ethical challenges and governance issues surrounding AI in contemporary societies • Examining questions of responsibility, accountability, transparency, and power in AI-driven systems • Group discussion on how AI should be governed across public, private, and civil society sectors
Week 4 (Oct. 21) 19:30-21:00	Pre-final Presentation and Feedback	• Sharing initial research findings and receiving feedback to refine problem definitions and project directions
Week 5 (Nov. 11) 19:30-21:00	Final Presentations and Feedback	• Presenting projects to peers and instructors • Receiving feedback for further improvement
Tokyo Forum (November 18th – 22nd)		

Guest lecturer from a related industry, fieldwork and presentation at Tokyo Forum Youth Session
Last year's presentation video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1KAaeCeD90

Final Presentation: Public Event at Tokyo Forum

Students will present their group proposals at Tokyo Forum, a public event attended by researchers, business leaders, and invited guests. Presentations will be given in English and should offer clear, actionable strategies for how public and private sectors can respond to the evolving challenges of AI and help shape the future of society.

Format:

- 7-minute team presentations
- Delivered in English
- Followed by Q&A and feedback from company representatives
- Proposals may include campaigns, services, tools, or policy suggestions

Scenario Setting:

In your group, choose a specific social issue, tension, or emerging opportunity related to the growing use of AI in society. This could be a challenge where AI is reinforcing inequality, exclusion, or environmental pressures, or alternatively, a promising initiative, application, or model where AI is contributing to inclusion, sustainability, or social innovation.

Your task is to analyze:

• How AI is being used today in this context and how it is shaping practices or experiences

• Who is taking part in these AI-driven changes and how different stakeholders are affected

Then, design one concrete initiative—such as a policy proposal, service, platform, tool, business model, or cross-sector collaboration—that demonstrates how AI could be used more responsibly, inclusively, and sustainably to address the issue or strengthen the positive potential you have identified.

Textbooks

No specific textbooks are required for this course. Instead, relevant handouts will be distributed during class sessions. Reading materials will be provided before each class, tailored to the expertise and focus of the guest speakers.

Required Readings (These readings provide a shared foundation for class discussion.)

- Joyce, K., Smith-Doerr, L., Alegria, S., Bell, S., Cruz, T., Hoffman, S. G., ... & Shestakofsky, B. (2021). Toward a sociology of artificial intelligence: A call for research on inequalities and structural change. *Socius*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023121999581
- Mohamed, S., Png, M. T., & Isaac, W. (2020). Decolonial AI: Decolonial theory as sociotechnical foresight in artificial intelligence. *Philosophy & Technology*, *33*(4), 659-684. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-020-

00405-8

- Sartori, L., & Theodorou, A. (2022). A sociotechnical perspective for the future of AI: narratives, inequalities, and human control. *Ethics and Information Technology*, *24*(1), 4. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-022-09624-3
- Sartori, L., & Bocca, G. (2023). Minding the gap (s): public perceptions of AI and socio-technical imaginaries. *AI & society*, *38*(2), 443-458. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-022-01422-1

Recommended Readings (For students who would like to explore the topic in more depth.)

- Lee, K. F., & Qiufan, C. (2021). *AI 2041: Ten visions for our future*. Crown Currency.
- Mitchell, M. (2019). *Artificial intelligence: A guide for thinking humans*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Mollick, E. (2024). *Co-intelligence: Living and working with AI*. Penguin.
- Tegmark, M. (2018). *Life 3.0: Being human in the age of artificial intelligence*. Vintage.

Useful Links & Resources

(Additional materials that may be helpful for understanding current debates and cases related to AI.)

United Nations. *Artificial intelligence*. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/artificial-intelligence

The New York Times. *Artificial intelligence*. https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/artificial-intelligence

TED. *Search results for "artificial intelligence"*. https://www.ted.com/search?q=Artificial%20intelligence

Grading Criteria

Active participation and reflection papers (30%), Group presentation (40%), Final report (30%)