Distributed by UW News Service, March 17, 2025

Link to original story: <https://www.uwlax.edu/news/posts/navigating-the-ai-frontier/>

**Navigating the AI frontier**

**UWL’s new AI Ethics Certificate prepares students for leadership in AI-driven world**

Written by UW-La Crosse University Marketing & Communications

The rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming industries from healthcare to banking, offering new opportunities to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and accelerate research. However, as AI’s influence grows, so too do the ethical dilemmas it presents for businesses, governments and society at large.

To help students navigate these challenges, UW-La Crosse is launching a [new Artificial Intelligence Ethics Certificate](https://www.uwlax.edu/academics/artificial-intelligence-ethics-certificate/), which is being offered for the first time in the spring semester of 2025. This 12-credit program is designed to equip students with the philosophical and analytical tools needed to address the ethical complexities of AI technology while fostering critical thinking skills. Graduates will be prepared to champion responsible innovation and contribute to the development of thoughtful policies in the rapidly evolving tech landscape.

The certificate, housed within the Philosophy Department, is designed to complement any major or career interest. It offers flexibility with an expanding list of non-philosophy electives, such as professional writing, to help students tailor the program to their personal and professional goals.

“We saw a clear need for this in the broader culture and society,” says Stewart Eskew, assistant teaching professor of Philosophy and head of the new program. “We thought that philosophy, given its history and the relationship to the development of AI, was uniquely positioned to address the issues related to emerging AI technology.”

The curriculum explores how AI intersects with key philosophical areas such as meta-ethics, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind. Through these courses, students will deepen their understanding of how AI challenges traditional concepts of cognition, agency, justice, and moral responsibility.

“Philosophers have been thinking about and studying AI since the first half of the 20th century,” says Sam Cocks, philosophy professor. The certificate will allow students to engage with these longstanding philosophical questions in the context of contemporary AI technologies.

Core courses and philosophical electives will be offered annually, making it easy for students to integrate the certificate into their broader academic goals. The program is an ideal complement to majors in fields such as computer science, business, healthcare and communication. As employers across STEM industries increasingly seek graduates with strong ethical reasoning and systems thinking — especially for roles that involve AI applications — this certificate will provide students with the non-technical skills necessary to excel.

Beyond its professional benefits, Cocks emphasizes the personal significance of the program. “This field offers a unique opportunity to explore how AI shapes society, affecting everything from workplace practices to individual lives,” says Cocks. “Students will engage with the evolving challenges at the intersection of business development and societal change, empowering them to lead responsibly in an AI-driven world,” he says.