

COURSE DETAIL

VIRTUAL REALITY

Country

Germany

Host Institution

Humboldt University Berlin

Program(s)

Humboldt University Berlin

UCEAP Course Level

Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)

Philosophy

UCEAP Course Number

134

UCEAP Course Suffix**UCEAP Official Title**

VIRTUAL REALITY

UCEAP Transcript Title

VIRTUAL REALITY

UCEAP Quarter Units

4.50

UCEAP Semester Units

3.00

Course Description

The technological advances associated with Virtual Reality (VR), as well as its close cousins such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Extended Reality (XR), represent a fundamental shift in how humans experience the digital realm. Using devices such as VR-headsets, we can now access digital environments full of computer-generated simulations in a way that allows for a more intuitive kind of interactive experience than is typically afforded by more familiar uses of computers. In recent years, via devices such as the Oculus Rift, VR-technology has become increasingly accessible in the home and it is anticipated to become even more ubiquitous in the near future.

This class aims to examine a range of philosophical questions associated with VR. As we shall see, VR gives us new ways to both articulate classic philosophical problems and also to sharpen those problems. The relevant philosophical questions are wide-ranging, encompassing topics in epistemology (“Can you know you are not in a virtual world?”), metaphysics (“Are virtual worlds real?”), and value theory (“Can you live a good life in a virtual world?”). In examining these issues, we will focus on David Chalmers’ (2022) treatment of VR in his pioneering book *Reality+*, where Chalmers argues for a range of bold answers to these questions (and others): that we cannot know that we are not in a virtual world, that virtual worlds are just as real as non-virtual worlds, and that it is possible to lead a meaningful and valuable life in a virtual reality. By the end of the class, students will not only have been introduced to many of the most central philosophical problems, but will have further evaluated both the ways in which technology can shed light on old problems in philosophy and the ways in which philosophy can shed light on new problems about technology.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number

51030

Host Institution Course Title

VIRTUAL REALITY

Host Institution Campus

Humboldt University

Host Institution Faculty**Host Institution Degree****Host Institution Department**

Institut für Philosophie

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