LEHMAN COLLEGE
OF THE
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

CURRICULUM CHANGE

1. **Type of change:** *New Course*

2.

Department(s)	Philosophy
Career	[X] Undergraduate [ ] Graduate
Academic Level	[X] Regular [ ] Compensatory [ ] Developmental [ ] Remedial
Subject Area	Philosophy
Course Prefix & Number	PHI 227
Course Title	Ethics of Data Science
Description	Ethical challenges posed by collecting data and basing decisions on inferences drawn from that data, especially when aided by machine learning, as well as challenges posed by the use of generative AI to create content.
Pre/ Co Requisites	
Credits	3
Hours	3
Liberal Arts	[X] Yes [ ] No
Course Attribute (e.g. Writing Intensive, WAC, etc)	
General Education Component	__X_ Not Applicable ____ Required ____ English Composition ____ Mathematics ____ Science ____ Flexible ____ World Cultures ____ US Experience in its Diversity ____ Creative Expression ____ Individual and Society ____ Scientific World

3. **Rationale:**
Artificial intelligence has greatly enhanced our ability to gather, store, search, and draw inferences from data. These powers can help us to make more accurate predictions and decisions, but they can also be deployed in ways that might infringe rights and threaten other values. Lehman College does not currently offer a course specifically on the ethics of data science and AI. (Philosophy currently offers PHI 221, "Ethics in Computing and Technology," which is a course with a much broader focus. Political Science offers POL 299, "Laws, Computers, and the Internet: The Politics of Information Technology," but this course is focused on law and policy, not ethics. Computer Science currently incorporates a unit on ethics into at least one of its courses, CMP 414 "Machine Learning," but does not offer a course entirely on AI ethics.)

It is important for students studying data science, as well as for students who will work in fields where data science will play an important role, to understand both the potential benefits as well as the potential ethical objections to various ways of collecting and using data, especially since technological advances in this area are outpacing regulations. This course will acquaint students with philosophical theories of the rights and other values that might be compromised by uses of data in the context of AI, and also enable students to use the methods of philosophy to arrive at their own conclusions about the proper and improper uses of these new technologies.

4. **Learning Outcomes (By the end of the course students will be expected to):**
- Articulate recent developments in data science, such as using machine learning to detect patterns in data, and emerging controversies about the use of new artificial intelligence tools.
- Recognize the choices that must be made at each stage of a data science project, and how even seemingly technical choices can still raise moral questions.
- Theorize philosophically about the nature and scope of various moral rights and values.
- Apply the methods of moral philosophy and gain practice using those methods to arrive at and defend conclusions of one's own about controversial applications of artificial intelligence.

5. **Date of Departmental Approval:** September 23, 2024