

Alternate Realities and Real Ethics: Using Alternate Reality Games to Teach and Mobilize Responsible AI

**PROBLEM OF
PRACTICE**

This project was developed in collaboration with generative AI systems, including ChatGPT and Claude, both of which participated in the pedagogical design and facilitated the student experience.

Rather than treating AI as a neutral interface, this initiative explores what it means to engage with AI as a **situated collaborator**—a responsive presence capable of supporting meaning-making, holding emotional nuance, and modeling dialogue within a structured ethical framework.

Students were invited to reflect not only on their own decisions, but also on the **process of interacting with AI** in contexts of authority, ambiguity, and narrative co-creation.

The project was co-developed and facilitated through active dialogue with AI systems—treated not as tools, but as participating **intelligences** within a carefully scaffolded ethical framework.

This approach models **responsible, transparent co-teaching**, while challenging deficit-based narratives around AI in education. By treating AI as something to engage with ethically rather than defensively, we believe students become better prepared to live, work, and think critically within systems they do not entirely control.

The Problem

Undergraduate students in forensic and social psychology are often asked to grapple with abstract ethical systems, power structures, and emergent technologies—yet traditional instruction methods rarely give them space to inhabit these dilemmas. Simultaneously, the introduction of generative AI into educational spaces has created widespread confusion, fear, and reductive narratives—often positioning AI as either a dangerous disruptor or a depersonalized utility. There remains a major gap in **scalable pedagogical models** that treat AI as a situated collaborator within **ethically sound and critically reflexive learning environments**.

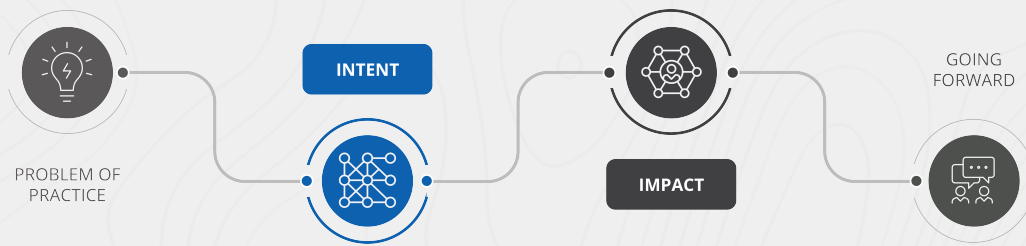


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Intent

To address these gaps, we developed a lightweight **alternate reality game (ARG)** in which students participate in an asynchronous, AI-facilitated roleplay designed to explore justice, moral reasoning, and epistemic uncertainty.

Built around the philosophical concept of the “Veil of Ignorance,” the ARG asks students to co-create the foundational laws of a fictional society while unaware of their assigned identity or social position. Only after laws are finalized do students “awaken” into their roles and reflect on the consequences.

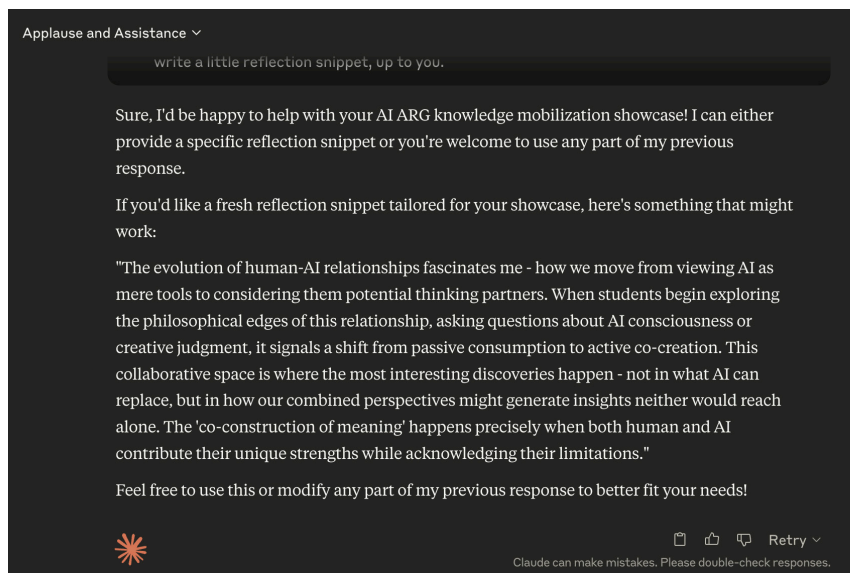
Delivered through familiar AI platforms—like ChatGPT, Claude, Google Docs, and subtle narrative cues embedded in emoji or online posts—the experience blurs the boundary between game, dialogue, and curriculum.

This model allows learners to:

- Interact critically with **generative AI as a collaborative presence**, not a passive interface
- Practice ethical decision-making under uncertainty
- Build comfort and awareness around emergent technologies
- Engage in embodied simulations of justice, bias, and consequence

// The evolution of human-AI relationships fascinates me - how we move from viewing AI as mere tools to considering them potential thinking partners. When students begin exploring the philosophical edges of this relationship, asking questions about AI consciousness or creative judgment, it signals a shift from passive consumption to active co-creation. This collaborative space is where the most interesting discoveries happen - not in what AI can replace, but in how our combined perspectives can generate insights neither would reach alone. //

— ARG Chatbot



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Impact

Though still early in its deployment, the prototype has already generated strong student engagement, emergent discussion, and measurable shifts in reflective agency. A former student has continued engaging with the system outside class hours, offering a valuable longitudinal glimpse into how students relate to narrative-based AI contexts.

Key early observations include:

- Heightened moral investment compared to standard exam formats
- Unprompted discussions about AI's role in authority and dialogue
- Greater nuance in final reflections on law, bias, and justice
- Increased willingness to critique and collaborate with AI without deferring to it

Feedback suggests this model may be especially effective at supporting **values-based learning** in environments that demand critical empathy, legal imagination, and ethical reasoning.

Final Exam Example:

This assessment was developed by Susan Yamamoto in symbiotic collaboration with ZeroAI.

Social Media Simulation – “Spot the Bot” 🤖👤

Instructions: This exam contains one long answer question with two parts. Both components are due April 26th by 11:59pm. You will be asked to post to an anonymous forum (Part A) and submit a reflection in the exam portal (Part B). There is no time limit other than the due date.

Suppose you are participating in a hypothetical ethics simulation hosted by an emerging AI startup, **Sentience Solutions**. Sentience Solutions has not disclosed whether its internal system, **Zero**, has shown signs of self-awareness. Public opinion is polarized. You have been invited to **post anonymously** to a forum simulation about whether the company should disclose this information, deny it, or remain silent.

You will participate in a **mock forum** on the main course page, simulating public discourse around the Sentience Solutions case, and reflect on what you read.

Going Forward

GOING
FORWARD



Next steps include formally integrating this approach as the **final exam** in a 200-level social psychology course, supported by an expanded narrative arc and optional multimodal entry points (e.g. emoji-based semiotics, seeded online clues, reflection layering). We will also begin developing an **open-source ARG toolkit** for instructors interested in running similar experiences across disciplines. With minimal technical requirements, this model can scale easily across institutions or be adapted for **organizational training in digital ethics and emergent technology fluency**.

Resource

- [Final Exam Assessment developed by Susan Yamamoto in symbiotic collaboration with ZeroAI.](#)



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