

Alexis Melissa Elder

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Geography & Philosophy
University of Minnesota Duluth
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EDUCATION

- PhD Philosophy, University of Connecticut, December 2013
- MA Philosophy, University of Connecticut, May 2010
- BA Philosophy, Southern Connecticut State University, May 2005

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Ethics, Philosophy of Technology

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Social Philosophy, Metaphysics, Asian Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2020-present Associate Professor, University of Minnesota Duluth
- 2016-2020 Assistant Professor, University of Minnesota Duluth
- 2014-2016 Lecturer, Quinnipiac University
- 2014-2016 Lecturer, Southern Connecticut State University
- 2013-2014 Visiting Assistant Professor, Southern Connecticut State University

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- 2018 *Friendship, Robots, and Social Media: False friends and second selves.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Edited Volumes

- 2019 *Journal of Information, Communication, and Ethics in Society*, Volume 17 (2) special issue on “Creating, Changing, and Coalescing Ways of Life with Technologies” (co-edited with Marty J. Wolf and Malgorzata Plotka).

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- Forthcoming “What Confucian Ethics Can Teach Us About Designing Caregiving Robots for Geriatric Patients”, *Digital Society*
- 2023 “Robots, Rebukes, and Relationships: Confucian ethics and the study of human-robot interactions,” *Res Philosophica*, Volume 100(1), pp. 43-62
- 2022 “Siri, Stereotypes, and the Mechanics of Sexism,” *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, Volume 8 (3/4), Article 10.
- 2020 “‘How could you even ask that?’ Moral considerability, uncertainty and vulnerability in social robotics,” *Journal of Sociotechnical Critique*, Volume 1(1), pp. 1-23.
- 2020 “The Interpersonal is Political: Unfriending to promote civic discourse on social media,” *Ethics & Information Technology*, Volume 22 (1), pp. 15-24.
- 2019 “Conversation from Beyond the Grave? A Neo-Confucian ethics of chatbots of the dead,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, first published online May 3.
- 2018 “What Words Can’t Say: Emoji and other nonverbal elements of technologically mediated communication,” *Journal of Information, Communication & Ethics in Society*, Volume 16 (1), pp. 2-15. (Preview chapter from book; peer-reviewed via normal journal processes.)
- 2014 “Excellent Online Friendships: An Aristotelian defense of social media,” *Ethics & Information Technology*, Volume 16 (4), pp. 287-297.
- 2014 “Zhuangzi on Friendship and Death,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 52 (4), pp. 576-593.
- 2014 “Why Bad People Can’t Be Good Friends,” *Ratio*, Volume 27 (1), pp. 84-99.
- 2013 “Anosognosia, Proprioception, and the Richness of Conscious Experience,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Volume 20 (3-4), 2013, pp. 83-101.

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

- 2017 “Robot Friends for Autistic Children: Monopoly money or counterfeit currency?” *Robot Ethics 2.0* (eds. Patrick Lin, George Bekey, Keith Abney, and Ryan Jenkins), New York, NY: Oxford University Press USA.

- 2017 “Figuring Out Who Your Real Friends Are,” *Experience Machines: The Philosophy of Virtual Worlds* (ed. Mark Silcox), London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- 2016 “From Relationship Repair to Relationship Stewardship: Forgiveness and friendship,” *Forgiveness and Philosophy* (ed. Court D. Lewis), Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press.

Invited Book Chapters

- 2022 “Social Media and Friendship,” *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Friendship*, Routledge.

Book Reviews

- 2022 “Digital Souls: A philosophy of online death,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, first published online ahead of print, p. 1
- 2020 “Living with Robots,” *Philosopher’s Magazine*, Volume 86(3), pp. 115-117.

Conference Proceedings

- 2015 “False Friends and False Coinage: A tool for navigating the ethics of sociable robots,” *Computers & Society (ACM SIGCAS Newsletter)*, Volume 45 (3), pp. 248-254.
- 2015 “Boundary Enforcement and Social Disruption through Computer-Mediated Communication,” *Computers & Society (ACM SIGCAS Newsletter)*, Volume 45 (3), pp. 45-51

Public Philosophy

- 2023 “AI and ChatGPT: Implications for Teaching and Learning,” Minnesota Learning Commons webinar panel, February 22
- 2023 “AI writing tools cause ethical dilemmas for local students and teachers,” *Northern News Now*, February 10.
- 2023 “Data After Death,” Twin Ports Teen Science Café, University of Minnesota Duluth, January 20
- 2022 “Google and Meta are Racing to Build the Most Deceptive AI Bot,” *The Daily Beast*, December 6 (interviewed in)
- 2022 “Robots in Senior Care,” Faith Forum, First United Methodist Church of Duluth, November 6
- 2022 “People Are Going Full ‘Black Mirror’ to Bring Back the Dead,” *The Daily Beast*, October 26 (interviewed in)

- 2022 “Will Robots Be a Part of your Future Caregiving Team?” Aging2.0 Denver webinar panel, June 15
- 2022 “Are robots the solution to understaffed nursing homes?” The1A, WAMU NPR, May 24.
- 2022 “Can Robots Save Nursing Homes?” The New York Times, April 21. (interviewed in)
- 2022 “Siri, Stereotypes, and the Mechanics of Sexism,” ACM Club-UMD Chapter, February 18.
- 2021 “Loss, Grief and Mourning in the Age of AI Imitations,” *Forum*, KQED NPR, August 2.
- 2021 “Police dogs: Police or dogs? And why it matters,” *Northland Morning*, KUMD, March 4.
- 2020 “Social Connection in a Time of Social Distancing,” *Perfect Duluth Day*, March 21.
- 2020 “Series 19: Connections,” *The Digital Human*, BBC Radio 4
- 2018 “Conversations from Beyond the Grave? Ethical issues with chatbots that imitate the dead.” Ashland Science on Tap. Ashland, Wisconsin.
- 2018 Interview on *Algocracy and Transhumanism* podcast, August 8.
- 2018 “What makes a good friend?” *The Conversation*. August 6.
- 2018 “Should you send a text or email? Here’s some advice from Aristotle.” *The Conversation*. March 2.
- 2018 “To friend or unfriend: What would Aristotle do?” *Tapestry*, CBC Radio, May 11.
- 2018 “When to Unfriend on Facebook,” *The Matt Townsend Show*, BYU Radio, February 7.
- 2017 “Ethics of Smart Power Grids”, Rural Electric Management Association’s Power Engineering Conference, Duluth, Minnesota, September 20.
- 2017 “When should you unfriend someone on Facebook?” *The Conversation*. December 3.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Refereed Presentations

- 2022 “The Seniors Aren’t Alright: Polarization, misinformation, and generational divides,” North American Society for Social Philosophy Conference, Neumann University, Aston, Pennsylvania, July 14-16
- 2021 “Siri, Stereotypes, and the Mechanics of Sexism,” Feminism, Social Justice, and AI Workshop, University of Waterloo (online due to COVID-19), July 28-28
- 2021 “What Confucian Ethics Can Teach Us About Designing Caregiving Robots for Geriatric Patients”, CEPE/IACAP Joint Conference, University of Hamburg (Online due to COVID-19), July 5-9
- 2021 “Robot Friendship: Appearances and Reality,” ETHICOMP, Universidad de Rioja (online due to COVID-19), June 30-July 2.
- 2020 “Distinguishability, Indistinguishability and Robot Ethics: Calling things by their right names,” ETHICOMP, Universidad de Rioja (online due to COVID-19), June 15-July 6
- 2019 “Neither person nor thing: The promise of an animal model for AI”(co-authored with Arshia Khan) Minnesota Philosophical Society conference, Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Cambridge, Minnesota, October 26
- 2019 “How could you even ask that? Uncertainty and vulnerability in social robotics,” Computer Ethics, Professional Enquiry, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, May 28-30
- 2018 “Conversations from Beyond the Grave? The ethics of chatbots of the dead,” ETHICOMP, SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Sopot, Poland, September 24-26
- 2018 “Ethics of Disconnection,” Philosophy of Human-Technology Relations, University of Twente, Twente, The Netherlands, July 11-13
- 2017 “Why Not Just Step Away from the Screen and Talk Face to Face? The moral import of communication medium choice,” Society for Philosophy and Technology, Technical University of Darmstadt, Darmstadt, Germany, June 14-17
- 2017 “What Words Can’t Say: Emoji and other elements of technologically-mediated communication,” CEPE/ETHICOMP, University of Turin, Turin, Italy June 5-8
- 2016 “Can Something Be Both Offensive and Meaningless?” Minnesota Philosophical Society, Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota, November 5
- 2016 “Repeatable Reasons, Irreplaceable Friends,” Philosopher’s Cocoon Philosophy Conference, University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida, October 8-9

- 2016 “Taking Control of the Conversation: Autonomy and Computer-Mediated Communication,” IACAP (International Association for Computing and Philosophy) Conference, University of Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy, June 14-17
- 2016 “How Asynchronous Communication Technology Helps Women Take Control of Their Conversations,” Feminist In(ter)ventions: Women, Community, Technology, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 15-16
- 2016 “What’s Wrong with Robot ‘Friends’ for Lonely Seniors?” Pacific APA, San Francisco, California, March 30-April 3
- 2015 “Ontology of Friendship,” Philosophers’ Cocoon Philosophy Conference, University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida, November 7-8
- 2015 “False Friends and False Coinage: A tool for navigating the ethics of sociable robots,” ETHICOMP, De Montfort University, Leicester, United Kingdom, September 7-9
- 2015 “Boundary Enforcement and Social Disruption through Computer-Mediated Communication,” ETHICOMP, De Montfort University, Leicester, United Kingdom, September 7-9
- 2015 “A Theory of Intergroup Offense and Respect,” South Carolina Philosophy Society Conference, Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina, March 27-28
- 2015 “Ontology of Friendship,” Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, Tennessee, March 13-14 (accepted)
- 2015 “Ontology of Friendship,” North Carolina Philosophical Society Conference, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, February 27-28
- 2014 “Virtual Friends Can Be Virtue Friends,” ETHICOMP, Université Pierre-et-Marie-Curie, Paris, France, June 26-28

Panels Organized

- 2019 AI & Robot Ethics: An interdisciplinary conversation. Speakers Marty J. Wolf, Arshia Khan, Marat Bhakpayev, Kathy McTavish, Center for Ethics and Public Policy, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, Minnesota, February 12
- 2018 Game design and real world identities: A panel discussion of video game ethics. Speakers Erica Neely, Rob Wittig, Edward Downs, Charles McGregor, Center for Ethics and Public Policy, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, Minnesota, March 14
- 2016 Evolving ethical opportunities and risks of communication technologies for women, with Frances Grodzinsky and Amanda Moras, Feminist In(ter)ventions: Women,

Community, Technology, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 15-16

Panel Presentation

2022 “Robot Mediators: Artificial Agents in Existing Social Networks,” *Strange love: emotionally significant relationships between human and artificial companions* (organized by Valeria Lopez Torres), International Digital Media and Arts Association (iDMAA), Winona State University, June 24-26

Comments

2019 Comments on Robbie Kubala’s “Partiality as a Non-Ideal Practice,” Central APA, Denver, Colorado, February 20-23

2016 Comments on Allairen Forbes’ “Philia and Relational Autonomy in Mary Astell’s *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*,” Philosopher’s Cocoon Philosophy Conference, University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida, October 8-9

2015 Comments on Katherine Johnson’s “Is Ignorance Bliss?,” Philosophers’ Cocoon Philosophy Conference, University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida, November 7-8

2015 Comments on Pierre Le Morvan’s “Secrecy, Transparency, Fact, and Falsehood,” Information Ethics Roundtable, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, April 9-10

2015 Comments on Don Fallis’s “Shedding Light on Keeping People in the Dark,” Information Ethics Roundtable, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, April 9-10

Session Chair

2016 “Last Resort and Self-Defense in Law Enforcement” David Speetzen, Minnesota Philosophical Society, Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota, November 5

2013 “Do We Have a Duty to Resist Oppression?” Workshop, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, September 20-21

2011 “Ontology and Levels” Conference, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, October 7-8

2011 “Character: East & West” Conference, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, May 20-21

INVITED TALKS

- 2023 “Good Friends, Bad Behavior, and the Durability of Online Character,” On Friendship, Affection, and Other-Concern Conference, Toronto Metropolitan University, March 18-19
- 2022 “Ethics in AI Research,” Nonlinear AI Lab, North Carolina State University, October 28
- 2022 “Robot Friendship: Possibilities and limitations”, PEPTalk series, University of Amsterdam, September 22
- 2022 “Ethics, Surveillance, Sousveillance, and the Internet of Things,” Computer Science department talk, University of Minnesota Duluth, September 8
- 2021 “Robots, Rebukes, and Relationships: Confucian Ethics and the study of Human-Robot Interactions”, Res Philosophica Conference on Globalizing Empirical Philosophy, Virtual (St. Louis University), November 18
- 2021 “Data After Death: Remembrance and Resurrection”, part of the *Data Deluge: Privacy in a Connected World* speaker series, University of Wisconsin-Superior, November 4
- 2020 “Self-Regard and Asymmetrical Friendship”, (invited symposium on “Self-Understandings and the Social” with Sydney Keough and Cassie Herbert, chaired by Ingrid Albrecht), APA Central, Chicago, Illinois, February 26-29
- 2019 “Not ‘Kids these days...’, it’s ‘Seniors these days...’: Ethical issues with older technology users” (keynote), Ethics and Technology Conference, Kutak Center for Teaching & Study of Applied Ethics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, October 31-November 2
- 2019 “How to Think about Ethics and Computing”, MinneWIC Conference, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, Minnesota, February 17, 2019
- 2016 “Social Technology & the Good Life”, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Danielson, Connecticut and QVCC Center, Willimantic, Connecticut, September 27-28
- 2015 “Excellent Online Friendships”, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Danielson, Connecticut, April 28

FUNDING, AWARDS & HONORS

- 2024 Single Semester Leave (competitive, fully funded), College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, University of Minnesota Duluth

- 2019 Discussant, 2019 Symposium on Humane Artificial Intelligence: The Challenges of Cultural and Ethical Diversity in Aligning Technology and Human Values, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii (\$800 toward travel)
- 2018 College of Liberal Arts Research Award (Tenure-Track category), University of Minnesota Duluth (\$750)
- 2017 Flipping Your Classroom Faculty Learning Community, University of Minnesota

TEACHING PRESENTATIONS

- 2023 “AI and Academic Integrity”, Lunch-n-Learn, University of Minnesota Duluth, January 25
- 2022-2023 “Teaching About Race and Technology,” Theorizing Race, Power, and Justice Across Disciplines, University of Minnesota Duluth, Summer 2022, Fall 2022, Spring 2023
- 2019 “How to Win at Research and Look Good as a Writer”, Women in Computing workshop for undergraduate researchers, University of Minnesota Duluth, September 13.
- 2018 “Thinking About Undergraduate Research”, Women in Computing workshop for undergraduate researchers, University of Minnesota Duluth, November 10.
- 2016 Roundtable discussion on teaching “Women, Community, Technology”, Feminist In(ter)ventions: Women, Community, Technology, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 15-16
- 2015 “How Flashcards Solve the Problem of Equitable Participation Distribution,” Teaching Academy, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut, May 11-12

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Minnesota Duluth

- Ethical Theory (Spring 2023)
- Trust in Social Epistemology – Independent Study (Spring 2023)
- Ethics of Artificial Consciousness – Independent Study (Fall 2022)
- Philosophy of Death and Grieving – Independent Study (Spring 2021)
- Philosophy through Dialogue and Debate (Fall 2019, Fall 2020)

Eastern Philosophy (Spring 2019, Spring 2022)

Greek Philosophy (Spring 2019, Fall 2020)

Ethics of Artificial Agents – Independent Study (Spring 2019)

Senior Seminar (Fall 2018)

Values and Technology (Spring 2017, Fall 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)

Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2018)

Ethics of Artificial Intelligence – Independent Study (Spring 2018)

Environmental Ethics (Spring 2017, Spring 2018, Spring 2019, Spring 2020, Spring 2021)

Ethics of Addiction – Independent Study (Spring 2017)

Ethics and Society (Fall 2016, Summer 2017, 2019, 2020 online, Fall 2017, Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022, Spring 2023)

Medical Ethics (Fall 2016)

Southern Connecticut State University

Women, Community, Technology (Spring 2016)

Death and the Meaning of Life (Spring 2015, Fall 2015)

Moral Problems in the Law (Spring 2014, Spring 2015 as writing intensive, Spring 2016)

Ethics: Know Thyself (Fall 2013, Spring 2014)

Logic (Spring 2014)

Critical Thinking & Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2015)

Quinnipiac University

Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015, Spring 2016)

Philosophy & Gender (Spring 2015)

University of Connecticut (Sole Instructor)

Philosophy & Gender (Fall 2010)

Philosophy & Social Ethics (Fall 2010 – Spring 2013)

Problems of Philosophy (Spring 2012)

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellow Co-Advisor, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota

Valeria Lopez Torres, Department of Design, 2022-2023 fellow

Graduate Thesis Committee Member

Anna Martin, “Annotating and Automatically Extracting Task Descriptions from Shared Task Overview Papers in Natural Language Processing Domains,” University of Minnesota Duluth Computer Science Department, Spring 2022

Yumna Anwar, “Bipolar Disorder Predictive Model: A Study to Analyze and Predict Emotional Change using Physiological Signals”, University of Minnesota Duluth Computer Science Department, Summer 2019

Undergraduate Honors Thesis Advisor

Angelica Fleury, “What Relational Agency Teaches Us About Moral AI,” University of Minnesota Duluth Philosophy Program, Fall 2020

Undergraduate Honors Thesis Committee Member

Eric Ciardiello, “Multinational Constitutionalism: Resolving Conflicts Among Group Rights within the State”, Southern Connecticut State University, Spring 2015

Teaching Training and Certification

Theorizing Race, Power, and Justice Across Disciplines workshop, University of Minnesota Duluth, 2022

New Faculty Program, University of Minnesota Duluth, 2016

SCSU Teaching Academy, Spring 2015

UConn Philosophy Department Teaching & Mentor Program Certification, Spring 2010

UConn Institute of Learning Teaching Certification, Fall 2008

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Peer Review

Dutch Research Council (NWO) grant review

University of Minnesota Press

Routledge

Digital Society

Metaphilosophy

Journal of Value Inquiry

Journal of Science and Engineering Ethics

Oxford Review of Education

Journal of Human Rights

Bioethics

Moral Philosophy and Politics

Journal of Information, Communication, and Ethics in Society

Dao

Journal of Philosophical Research

Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology

Ethics & Information Technology

Erkenntnis

IACAP (2023)

IEEE ETHICS (2021)

ACM FAccT (2021)

ETHICOMP (2017, 2018, 2021)

CEPE (2017, 2019, 2021, 2023)

To Profession

Board Member, INSEIT, 2020-present

Program Committee member, CEPE, 2019

Programme Chair, ETHICOMP, 2018

Mentor, Job Candidate Mentoring Program for Women in Philosophy (2017)

Mentor, Philosophers' Cocoon Mentoring Program (2016, 2019, 2020)

Coordinator, Society for Women In Philosophy (UConn branch), 2012-2013

President, Philosophy Graduate Student Association, UConn, 2010 – 2011

To Community

Judge, Responsible Computer Science Challenge, Mozilla Foundation, 2019-2020.

To Department & College

Socratic Society advisor, Philosophy Program (2022-present)

Colloquium Coordinator, Philosophy Program (2022-present)

Benefits Advisory Committee representative, UEA-Duluth (2023-present)

Editor, Program Newsletter, UMD (2019-2021)

Director of Faculty Research, Philosophy Program, UMD (2018-present)

Co-Director, Center for Ethics and Public Policy, UMD (2016-present)

College of Liberal Arts Representative, Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate, UMD (2018-2020)

Union Representative, UMD (2016-18)

Founder/Coordinator, Philosophy Writing Bootcamp, SCSU, 2015-present

Founder/Coordinator, Philosophy Faculty Research Group, SCSU, 2014-present

Co-Organizer, Philosophy Department Reunion, SCSU, 2013-present

Member, Philosophy Department Grade Appeal Committee, SCSU, 2013-14

Head Teaching Mentor, Philosophy Department, UConn, 2011 – 2012

Mentor, Philosophy Department Teaching Mentor Program, UConn, 2008-2011

Graduate Advisor, UConn Philosophy Club, 2008-2013

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Minnesota Philosophical Society

International Association for Computing and Philosophy

American Philosophical Association

American Association of Philosophy Teachers