



January 4, 2018

King's Lecture Series examines history, issues & future of humans & artificial intelligence

Noel Sharkey, BBC commentator and noted philosopher, among international speakers

Halifax | The University of King's College, with support from Dalhousie and Saint Mary's Universities, presents **Automatons! From Ovid to AI**, a nine-lecture series examining the history, issues and relationships between humans, robots, and artificial intelligence. The series runs from January 10 to April 4, and features leading scholars, performers and critics from Canada, the US and Britain.

"Drawing from theatre, literature, art, science and philosophy, our 2018 King's College Lecture Series features leading international authorities exploring our intimate relationships with machines," says Dr. Gordon McQuat, professor in the King's History of Science and Technology (HOST) and Contemporary Studies Programs.

Among the featured speakers is leading public intellectual and BBC commentator, Noel Sharkey, Professor of AI and Robotics and Professor of Public Engagement at the University of Sheffield, and an opponent of robot warfare. On March 21, Dr. Sharkey will debate Duncan MacIntosh of Dalhousie University on the ethics of autonomous weapons.

"From the myths of Ovid and the automatons of the early modern period to the rise of robots, cyborgs, AI and artificial living things in the modern world, the 2018 King's College Lecture Series examines the historical, cultural, scientific and philosophical place of automatons in our lives—and our future," adds McQuat.

All lectures are open to the public and start at 7 p.m. in Alumni Hall at King's College, **except for** the March 21 and March 28 events, which will take place at Saint Mary's and Dalhousie Universities respectively. (See below for details.)

January 10: Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* – Fritz Lang's classic 1927 silent film, *Metropolis*, with live electroacoustic music, opens the Public Lecture Series.

With musical accompaniment by the Upstream Music Association, the screening explores the intersection between electronics and improvisation, automation and real-time inspiration, featuring cinematic improvisors from Halifax's Upstream Music Association: Amy Brandon on guitar and electronics, Steven Naylor on keyboard and electronics, Lukas Pearse on bass and electronics, and Brandon Auger on synthesizer. (*Metropolis* also wraps up the [Open Waters Festival](#), which runs from January 5-10.)

January 17: Imagining Automatons

Teresa Heffernan of Saint Mary's University and Director of the "Social Robots Futures" project, delivers the opening lecture on the past and future of robots.

January 25: Ancient Automatons

Courtney Ann Roby, Cornell University, and author of *The Written Machine between Alexandria and Rome* (2016).

February 14: Panel discussion on "Big Data and Autonomous Vehicles"

With Brian Flemming, Senior Fellow with the Van Horne Institute, Calgary, and Stan Matwin, Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, Dalhousie University.

February 28: Imagined Puppet Life

Dawn Brandes, University of King's College and Halifax Humanities.

March 7: Asian Robots & Orientalism

Simon Kow, University of King's College.

March 21: War in the Age of Intelligent Machines

Renowned physicist and commentator Noel Sharkey debates Duncan MacIntosh, Dalhousie University, on the role of autonomous weapons. Venue: Scotiabank Auditorium, Saint Mary's University

March 28: *Frankenstein*—A special performance and lecture marking the 200th anniversary of the Mary Shelley classic

With Despina Kakoudaki, American University of Washington, and author of *Anatomy of a Robot: Literature, Cinema and the Cultural Work of Artificial People*. Venue: Fountain School of Performing Arts, Dalhousie University

April 4: Living Artificially

With King's alumna and University of Pennsylvania professor, Stephanie Dick. Author of *Of Models and Machines*

The 2018 Lecture Series is made possible with assistance from the University of King's College (Contemporary Studies Program, Early Modern Studies Program and History of Science and Technology Program), Dalhousie University and Saint Mary's University.

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