

## Implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

### Introduction



“We stand on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another. In its scale, scope, and complexity, the transformation will be unlike anything humankind has experienced before. We do not yet know just how it will unfold, but one thing is clear: the response to it must be integrated and comprehensive, involving all stakeholders of the global polity, from the public and private sectors to academia and civil society.”

So begins the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) official treatise on the *Fourth Industrial Revolution* – a name that WEF founder Klaus Schwab coined in 2016. In this course, you have already looked at some of the ways previous technological changes have impacted the workplace and society. But these changes will seem minor compared to the possibilities that lie ahead. If current trends continue as expected, the next phase of technological change will have implications so drastic that they raise the question of what it even means to be human.



<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>



In their ‘manifesto’, the World Economic Forum identifies four main areas that will be impacted – both positively and negatively – by new technologies:

1. Economic inequality
2. Business
3. Government
4. People

*“Sometimes I wonder whether the inexorable integration of technology in our lives could diminish some of our quintessential human capacities, such as compassion and cooperation. Our relationship with our smartphones is a case in point. Constant connection may deprive us of one of life’s most important assets: the time to pause, reflect, and engage in meaningful conversation.”* – Klaus Schwab, founder of WEF and inventor of the term ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’



What do you think? The future is hard to forecast but there can be no future unless we dream it first. How do you think emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and robotics will impact the four areas highlighted above?

- Define the *Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Briefly summarize the previous industrial revolutions and explain how this one is different.
- Pick two of the areas highlighted above (inequality, business, government, people) and explain how you think emerging technologies will have an impact. These may be positive, negative, or both.
- Give an example of the ways technology impacts society. Talk about one observation from your travel program and one general observation.
- How do you propose addressing the negative effects of the *Fourth Industrial Revolution*?



For this assignment, you have **two submission options**. Choose **one** of the following:



Write a **one to two page** essay responding to the questions above. Include at least **two photos** that you took on your travel program or found online. **Please cite any sources you use.**

**-OR-**



Create a presentation with at least **eight to ten slides**, responding to the questions above. Each slide should be accompanied with images that you took on your travel program or found online. **Please cite any sources you use.**