



# Ethical Restrictions in Human Sciences

## Lesson 3: Listening Task

**Focus:** *How does surveillance capitalism challenge our understanding of ethics, responsibility, and power in the human sciences?*

<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Analyze how human sciences (psychology, data science, behavioral economics) are used to manipulate behavior.</b></li><li>• <b>Evaluate how corporations, governments, and institutions exercise power through human sciences.</b></li><li>• <b>Reflect on whether ethical responsibility strengthens or weakens human sciences in the digital age.</b></li></ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Introduction (5 mins)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guiding Question: <i>“Are human sciences being used to understand us — or to control us?”</i></li><li>• Recap Lessons 1–2:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Lesson 1: Debate on ethics as limitation vs. strength.</li><li>◦ Lesson 2: Case studies of past ethical failures (Tuskegee, Stanford, Cambridge Analytica, AI bias).</li></ul></li><li>• Link: This lesson moves to the contemporary challenge — how human sciences drive surveillance capitalism.</li></ul></li><li><b>2. Listening Task</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video:  The Rise of Surveillance Capitalism   Mark Weinstein   TEDxIVC</li><li>• Students should actively map the speaker’s key arguments, counterarguments, and ethical claims about surveillance capitalism and human sciences.</li><li>• <b>Key Points to Listen For:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ How do tech companies (Google, Facebook, Amazon, etc.) use human sciences (psychology, data science, behavioral economics) to track and manipulate behavior?</li><li>◦ What examples show how our personal data is collected, packaged, and sold?</li><li>◦ How do corporations deliberately design addictive systems (e.g., phone checking, polarizing content) to maximize engagement and profit?</li><li>◦ What are the political and social consequences (e.g., Cambridge Analytica, China’s social credit system)?</li><li>◦ Who benefits from this use of human sciences, and who is harmed?</li><li>◦ What solutions or actions does the speaker suggest for reclaiming privacy and autonomy?</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Note-Taking Framework:</b></li><li>• <b>Main Arguments:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Surveillance capitalism uses human sciences to convert behavior into data, monetizing privacy.</li><li>◦ Corporations wield enormous power to manipulate emotions, decisions, and even democracy.</li><li>◦ Privacy and autonomy are fundamental rights under threat; responsibility for protecting them is unclear.</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Supporting Examples:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Facebook and Google profiting more from spying than from serving users.</li><li>◦ Cambridge Analytica using psychological profiles to sway elections.</li><li>◦ China’s Social Credit System punishing citizens for “undesirable” behavior.</li><li>◦ Devices like Alexa, smart TVs, and Fitbits transmitting private information.</li><li>◦ Polarizing content on social media served deliberately to increase engagement.</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Counterarguments / Critical Questions:</b></li></ul></li></ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are human sciences themselves the problem, or the way corporations and governments exploit them?</li> <li>○ Can regulation or universal ethical codes realistically restrain surveillance capitalism?</li> <li>○ Do individuals have enough power to resist, or is collective/global action required?</li> <li>○ From a perspective lens: is surveillance always unethical, or can it sometimes serve security and order (e.g., China)?</li> <li>○ Who holds ultimate responsibility — the corporations designing the systems, the governments regulating them, or the users participating in them?</li> </ul> <p><b>Kialo Discussion (30 mins)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In small groups, students create a new Kialo discussion around the guiding question: <i>“Does ethical responsibility strengthen or weaken human sciences in the age of surveillance capitalism?”</i></li> <li>● Alternatively, if students need more structure, clone and share <a href="#">this ready-made discussion</a> based on the thesis below, and use the suggested claims as prompts.</li> <li>● Students should use their listening analysis to select the strongest arguments.</li> <li>● They should add these to the Kialo discussion as arguments, counterarguments, examples, and evaluations.</li> <li>● Encourage students to frame their arguments with the TOK concepts of responsibility, power, and perspective.</li> </ul> <p>Example Claims:</p> <p><b>NAME: Do ethical responsibilities limit or strengthen the human sciences when applied to surveillance capitalism?</b></p> <p><b>THESIS: Ethical responsibilities strengthen the credibility and impact of human sciences.</b></p> <p><b>PROS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Protecting participants builds trust in human sciences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: The video highlights how surveillance capitalism erodes trust by secretly exploiting users’ data; transparency and consent would restore legitimacy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Human sciences without ethics risk becoming tools of exploitation rather than knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: Psychologists and data scientists at Facebook deliberately manipulated emotions to keep users online longer — a practice criticized as unethical brainwashing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Global ethical standards can prevent abuses and protect democracy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: Cambridge Analytica used psychological profiling to influence elections; stronger responsibility mechanisms could have prevented this.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>CONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ethical restrictions reduce the scope of experimentation and innovation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: Companies argue that large-scale data harvesting allows breakthroughs in targeted medicine and consumer efficiency, which might be stifled by tighter rules.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Powerful actors will always find loopholes; ethics may only slow research, not prevent misuse. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: The GDPR in Europe was meant to protect privacy but was described in the video as ineffective, institutionalizing surveillance instead of dismantling it.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Different perspectives create conflicting standards, weakening global research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: China’s Social Credit System is justified as promoting “order,” while Western societies condemn it as oppressive — whose perspective should dominate?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<p>Discuss the following reflection questions in open discussion or exit ticket format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What surprised you most about how human sciences are applied to manipulate behavior in surveillance capitalism?</li> <li>● Does this change your trust in human sciences as a way of producing knowledge?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role should institutions (like governments, tech companies, data regulators) play in maintaining ethical responsibility in human sciences research?</li> <li>• Can we expect fairness when the same corporations profit from the data they collect and analyze?</li> <li>• How should educators, policymakers, or citizens prepare people to navigate conflicting or manipulative uses of human sciences?</li> <li>• Is it more dangerous to overtrust human sciences when misused, or to distrust them completely?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<p>Lesson Slides</p> <p>Kialo Discussion: <a href="#">Does ethical responsibility strengthen or weaken human sciences in the age of surveillance capitalism?</a></p> <p>Debate video:  The Rise of Surveillance Capitalism   Mark Weinstein   TEDxIVC</p>
<b>TOK Concepts</b>	<p><b>Responsibility:</b> What responsibilities do corporations, governments, and researchers have when applying human sciences to collect and use personal data? Should the pursuit of knowledge and profit ever outweigh the duty to protect privacy and autonomy?</p> <p><b>Power:</b> How does surveillance capitalism shift power between individuals, corporations, and states? Who ultimately decides what uses of human sciences are “ethical” or acceptable?</p> <p><b>Perspective:</b> How do different cultural and political perspectives (e.g., China’s social credit system vs. Western democracies) shape debates about surveillance, privacy, and manipulation? Can ethics ever be universal in human sciences, or are they always context-dependent?</p>
<b>Critical Thinking Concepts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Confronting Biases &amp; Assumptions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Recognizing Institutional Bias: Acknowledge how corporations, governments, and platforms may skew research and data collection to serve profit or political power.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Exploring Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Stakeholder Analysis: Question the costs and benefits of personal data being harvested, analyzed, and sold.</li> <li>◦ Cultural Impact: Explore how surveillance and data manipulation affect public trust, behavior, and social stability across different societies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Responsiveness and Flexibility of Thought:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Adapting Judgments: Articulate how assumptions about the neutrality of human sciences and “free” digital services are challenged by new evidence and analyses.</li> <li>◦ Evaluating Multiple Perspectives: Describe how views shift when considering perspectives from corporations, regulators, governments, activists, and citizens.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Extrapolation &amp; Reapplication of Principles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ethical Reasoning: Evaluate the ethics of exploiting psychological profiling or behavioral data for profit, control, or political gain.</li> <li>◦ Modern Connections: Apply these lessons to current issues — e.g., TikTok bans, AI-driven hiring systems, predictive policing.</li> <li>◦ Digital Literacy &amp; Responsibility: Identify the responsibilities of citizens and consumers to critically evaluate the influence of human sciences in digital spaces.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>