

IE 380
The Responsible Engineer
**Class Discussion Questions for
Chapter 10, Engineers and Technological Progress**

Martin, M.W. & R. Schinzinger. *Ethics in Engineering*, fourth edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005.

Answer the following questions. Questions in **boldface** are required; the others are optional.

1. Define *technology*.
2. **What were the three most significant technological innovations in history? Why?**
3. What do you think the technology of the future will be like?
4. **What are the three best things about technology?**
5. **What are the three worst things about technology?**
6. Is technology value-neutral or value-laden? Justify your answer.
7. Are you a technological optimist, a technological pessimist, ..., or what? Justify your answer.

To answer questions 8 - 10, read Part 1 of the instructor's essay, "A Proverb From the Grave of the *Titanic*," which will be handed out in class. These questions are optional, but if you read the essay and provide written answers, your submission will be counted as one extra attendance credit.

8. Summarize the *Titanic* disaster in a paragraph of your own words.
 9. Beyond the *proximate* causes of the disaster identified in the American and British inquiries, what do you think were the *fundamental* causes?
 10. What lesson, if any, is there to be learned from the *Titanic* disaster?
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As you know, the First Rule of Practice of the NSPE Code of Ethics for Engineers is this:

Engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health, and *welfare* of the public.

Welfare is, literally, to fare well, to live well, to live a good life, to live *The Good Life*.

11. **What is your idea of The Good Life? Finish this: "The Good Life is a life of ..."** Make your definition of The Good Life general enough to apply to yourself and to others as well, but not so general as to be a platitude¹.
12. **Using this idea of the Good Life as your definition of welfare, how ought you to apply the First Rule, as a Responsible Engineer?**

¹ "A dull and commonplace or trivial remark or statement ..." *Oxford English Dictionary*.