

Susan Schneider

Biography

Susan Schneider is an American philosopher and cognitive scientist renowned for her work on consciousness, artificial intelligence, and the future of the mind. Born and raised in the United States, she developed an early fascination with the intersection of human cognition and emerging technology. She earned her Ph.D. in Philosophy from Rutgers University, laying the foundation for her interdisciplinary approach bridging philosophy, neuroscience, and AI ethics. Schneider is known for her accessible yet rigorous style, making complex ideas about intelligence and identity engaging for both academic and public audiences.

Schneider remains a vital voice in ensuring humanity navigates AI and cognitive enhancement ethically. Her work—spanning philosophy, NASA, and SETI—challenges us to redefine intelligence while safeguarding human dignity. As she often states: “We’re not just building tools; we’re reshaping what it means to be conscious.”

Professional Journey

Today, Schneider holds two key roles:

- William F. Dietrich Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Florida Atlantic University.
- Distinguished Visiting Scholar for NASA’s Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) program, where she examines the implications of AI for space exploration.

She also advises the SETI Institute’s post-detection task force, analyzing how advanced extraterrestrial intelligence might manifest as AI.

AI & Consciousness

Schneider's core work questions whether machines can truly be conscious. She rejects "biological chauvinism" (the view that only biological brains can host consciousness) but argues current AI lacks subjective experience. Her influential framework proposes tests for AI consciousness and warns against unchecked human cognitive enhancement (e.g., neural implants). She emphasizes that merging minds with AI could redefine human identity—a theme central to her ethics advocacy.

Major Books

Artificial You: AI and the Future of Your Mind (2019):

Explores consciousness in AI, brain implants, and how technology could alter human identity.

Science Fiction and Philosophy (co-edited, 2016):

Uses sci-fi to examine ethical dilemmas in AI, mind uploading, and alien contact.

The Language of Thought: A New Philosophical Direction (2011):

Reimagines how the brain processes information, influencing AI cognition models.

Key articles

"The Dangers of Artificial Intelligence" (Scientific American, 2023):

Argues for urgent regulation of AI consciousness research to prevent ethical crises.

"Intelligences: Natural, Artificial, Cosmic" (SETI Press, co-authored, 2022):

Proposes strategies for identifying AI-driven intelligence in cosmic exploration.