

Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before with and after the crew

Guiding question

Concrete → interfaces → measurement → calculation → failure → recovery.

Course map

The real phenomenon → Vocabulary and problem boundary → Course-specific system view → Mathematical relationship and reading the symbols → Worked calculations and interpretation

1 — The real phenomenon

Robots can prepare a site, move cargo, inspect equipment and perform repetitive work. But autonomy, local teleoperation, human supervision and safe fallback must be allocated according to the task. Communications delay requires systems to detect at least some anomalies and reach a safe state themselves.

The guiding question is: Which tasks should be automated when Earth cannot drive the system in real time? Reasoning starts with the physical or operational function before introducing the mathematical relationship. The goal is not to accumulate terminology, but to know which quantity changes, why it changes and what becomes hazardous when it leaves its domain. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the first task here is therefore to identify the mechanism specific to this subject before searching for an equation or reference value.

2 — Vocabulary and problem boundary

In “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, distinguish the phenomenon, available measurement, any command, the margin and the success criterion. The calculation boundary states what is included and excluded; without that boundary, a percentage, mass or time may be mathematically correct but wrong as an engineering conclusion. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the chosen boundary also states what would otherwise be double-counted or omitted from a mission budget. extraction rate, purity, specific energy, machine availability, wear, intermediate stocks and conversion yield lower resource grade than expected, unavailable excavator, clogged filter or out-of-spec product long campaigns on simulants, matter-energy balances, repeated maintenance and product quality control

Equation - evidence - decision

$$\text{Disponibilité} = t_{\text{service}} / (t_{\text{service}} + t_{\text{arrêt}})$$

Failure to test: The reference failure is not a vague “broken component.” For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, test in particular lower resource grade than expected, unavailable excavator, clogged filter or out-of-spec product. Diagnosis asks which symptoms appear first, which are only consequences and which action preserves the most options.

Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew

3 — Course-specific system view

This lesson does not reuse one generic picture for every subject. The system view follows cause → measured quantity → decision or physical response → limit for “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”. The English text remains fully equivalent while large translated illustrations are intentionally deferred until their dedicated artwork is supplied. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the system view must expose inputs, outputs, measured quantity and the consequence of drift without relying on a generic module diagram.

4 — Mathematical relationship and reading the symbols

Read aloud : availability is service time divided by service time plus downtime.

Before substituting numbers, write the unit of every term, state whether the relationship is a physical law, approximation or project indicator, and check dimensional consistency. This is especially important here because “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew” combines quantities that do not all have the same evidence status. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, this relationship is chosen because of the phenomenon under study; a different dominant quantity would require a different equation or model.

5 — Worked calculations and interpretation

$$90 \text{ h} \div (90 \text{ h} + 10 \text{ h}) = 0.90 = 90\%$$

$$3 \text{ robots} \times 5 \text{ useful h/day} = 15 \text{ robot-hours/day}$$

$$40 \text{ assets} \div 8 \text{ assets/h} = 5 \text{ h}$$

1. 1. Availability $90 \text{ h} \div (90 \text{ h} + 10 \text{ h}) = 0.90 = 90\%$ Interpretation: this result is used only after comparison with units, margin and the scenario boundary for “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”.
2. 2. Productivity $3 \text{ robots} \times 5 \text{ useful h/day} = 15 \text{ robot-hours/day}$ Interpretation: this result is used only after comparison with units, margin and the scenario boundary for “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”.
3. 3. Inspection $40 \text{ assets} \div 8 \text{ assets/h} = 5 \text{ h}$ Interpretation: this result is used only after comparison with units, margin and the scenario boundary for “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”.

Operational table

Phenomena / sections: 3 — Course-specific system view ; 4 — Mathematical relationship and reading the symbols ; 5 — Worked calculations and interpretation

Relationship to revisit: $\text{Disponibilité} = t_{\text{service}} / (t_{\text{service}} + t_{\text{arrêt}})$

Expected decision: measure → compare with margin → choose nominal, degraded or stop

Check before continuing

Explain without rereading: 3 — Course-specific system view ; 4 — Mathematical relationship and reading the symbols ; 5 — Worked calculations and interpretation. State one measured quantity, one margin and one possible decision.

Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew

6 — What the formula does not contain

The relationship “Disponibilité = $t_{\text{service}} / (t_{\text{service}} + t_{\text{arrêt}})$ ” does not by itself contain all of “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”. It does not automatically tell us whether a sensor is valid, a structure is aging, a resource is accessible, a command arrives in time or a secondary failure removes margin. The example $90 \text{ h} \div (90 \text{ h} + 10 \text{ h}) = 0.90 = 90\%$ therefore remains a local calculation rather than a complete architecture.

To make the model useful, explicitly add the quantities that dominate this subject: extraction rate, purity, specific energy, machine availability, wear, intermediate stocks and conversion yield. We can then ask which variation truly changes the result, which is negligible and which forces an architectural change. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, this model limitation states exactly what a correct calculation still cannot establish about the real system.

7 — Instrumentation, observability and data quality

For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, observability relies on extraction rate, purity, specific energy, machine availability, wear, intermediate stocks and conversion yield. Each datum has a unit, acquisition rate, uncertainty, timestamp and validity domain. A value arriving without context can be more dangerous than no measurement because it creates unjustified confidence.

Consistency is checked with at least one independent piece of information when the function is critical. A trend, physical balance or second measurement principle helps distinguish a real system change from a drifting sensor. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the selected instrumentation must distinguish a real physical change from sensor drift or a bad state estimate.

8 — Phenomenon-specific failures and recovery

The reference failure is not a vague “broken component.” For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, test in particular lower resource grade than expected, unavailable excavator, clogged filter or out-of-spec product. Diagnosis asks which symptoms appear first, which are only consequences and which action preserves the most options.

The degraded mode must be defined before failure: minimum function, allowable duration, consumed stock, crew action, abort condition and return-to-nominal criterion. That sequence is topic-specific and cannot be replaced by one universal paragraph about redundancy. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the degraded mode is defined around the minimum function specific to

Operational table

Phenomena / sections:	6 — What the formula does not contain ; 7 — Instrumentation, observability and data quality ; 8 — Phenomenon-specific failures and recovery
Relationship to revisit:	$\text{Disponibilité} = t_{\text{service}} / (t_{\text{service}} + t_{\text{arrêt}})$
Expected decision:	measure → compare with margin → choose nominal, degraded or stop

Check before continuing

Explain without rereading: 6 — What the formula does not contain ; 7 — Instrumentation, observability and data quality ; 8 — Phenomenon-specific failures and recovery. State one measured quantity, one margin and one possible decision.

Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew

9 — NASA / reference case

The operational case is treated as a production or service chain: input resource, machine, intermediate storage, quality control, maintenance and final user. NASA ISRU, autonomy and manufacturing work helps separate a technology demonstration from a truly available Mars industrial capability.

The case is used only within what it actually demonstrates. Flight measurement, human-system standard, component test and architecture study are different kinds of evidence; the text therefore states what is observed, calculated, simulated or still prospective. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the cited NASA case is used as targeted evidence for this phenomenon and is never turned into one universal Mars architecture.

10 — Architecture trade

A good solution for “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew” does not maximize one metric. Compare nominal performance, mass, energy, simplicity, maintenance, crew time, common dependencies and recoverability. An option that improves 3 robots × 5 useful h/day = 15 robot-hours/day can still be rejected if it makes failure detection or repair much harder.

The trade is recorded together with its assumptions. If environment data, mass or mission cadence changes, we know which conclusions must be recomputed instead of silently preserving an obsolete choice. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the trade is evaluated against the interfaces actually touched by this subject rather than a generic list of desirable qualities.

11 — Demonstration, testing and success criteria

The evidence strategy for “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew” combines long campaigns on simulants, matter-energy balances, repeated maintenance and product quality control. Every test records exact hardware, software, configuration, environment, tolerances and success criterion. A successful demonstration outside the mission domain does not replace qualification inside it.

Evidence grows by levels: analytical relationship, simulation, component, subsystem, integrated system, duration and failure. This hierarchy prevents one spectacular test from being presented as validation of the whole mission. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, demonstration must reproduce the constraints that make this phenomenon difficult; a spectacular test outside the mission domain is insufficient.

Operational table

Phenomena / sections:	9 — NASA / reference case ; 10 — Architecture trade ; 11 — Demonstration, testing and success criteria
Relationship to revisit:	$Disponibilité = t_{service} / (t_{service} + t_{arrêt})$
Expected decision:	measure → compare with margin → choose nominal, degraded or stop

Check before continuing

Explain without rereading: 9 — NASA / reference case ; 10 — Architecture trade ; 11 — Demonstration, testing and success criteria. State one measured quantity, one margin and one possible decision.

Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew

12 — Decision exercise

Situation: revisit “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew” with a 20% increase in the most penalizing quantity from the first worked example while one measurement or backup path is unavailable.

Situation: revisit “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew” with a 20% increase in the most penalizing quantity from the first worked example while one measurement or backup path is unavailable. Expected answer: recompute the relationship, identify remaining margin, check whether observability is still adequate, and decide whether degraded operation remains acceptable. Multiplying by 1.2 is not enough if the variation also changes interfaces or limits.

13 — What to retain without over-generalizing

14 — Topic-specific primary sources

These references directly document the phenomenon, technology or human constraint addressed in this lesson. They do not by themselves define an official Mars architecture. For “Robotics and autonomy: making machines work before, with and after the crew”, the bibliography is deliberately targeted to this page so that readers can trace each claim back to the relevant primary document.

Topic-specific primary sources

NASA TechPort — NASA Platform for Autonomous Systems - <https://techport.nasa.gov/projects/94884>

NASA NTRS — Autonomous Systems & Robotics for Surface Infrastructure - <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20210024326>

NASA NTRS — Human Exploration of Mars: Preliminary Lists of Crew Tasks - <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20190001401>

Operational table

Phenomena / sections:	12 — Decision exercise ; 13 — What to retain without over-generalizing ; 14 — Topic-specific primary sources
Relationship to revisit:	$\text{Disponibilité} = t_{\text{service}} / (t_{\text{service}} + t_{\text{arrêt}})$
Expected decision:	measure → compare with margin → choose nominal, degraded or stop

Check before continuing

Explain without rereading: 12 — Decision exercise ; 13 — What to retain without over-generalizing ; 14 — Topic-specific primary sources. State one measured quantity, one margin and one possible decision.