CS305

Social, Ethical, and Legal Implications of Computing

Spring 2021

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Course Description: (From the PSU course webpage) History of computing, social context of computing, professional and ethical responsibilities, risks and liabilities of safety-critical systems, intellectual property, privacy and civil liberties, social implications of the Internet, computer crime, economic issues in computing.

Outcomes: (From the PSU course webpage)

- Identify the ethical issues that relate to computer science in real situations they may encounter.
- Decide whether a given action is ethical as regards computer science professional ethics, and justify that decision.
- Look up relevant ethical standards as developed by the ACM.
- Prepare and deliver a (10-20 minute) professional-quality talk and QA or discussion session on a topic relating to ethical, legal, and social implications of computer science.
- Research and write a professional-quality paper about a topic relating to social, legal, and ethical implications of computer science.
- Recognize situations in which there may be legal issues as regards computer science and related topics such as intellectual property, and know some legal principles to apply.
- State several important impacts of computer science and related fields on contemporary society.
- State several examples of important ethical principles as they apply to computer science related situations.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Methodology:

- Asynchronous class centered on the D2L discussion forums with a weekly cadence. No regular lectures.
- Student-centric learning: You will decide what you want to learn and share what you've learned with your peers
- Short writing assignments, posted to the forum with class discussion
- One research paper
- One presentation and discussion
- Actively engage in class forum discussion each week

Textbook: None

Course Website: D2L (Winter 2020 version of course website for reference: `https://davidjlu.github.io/CS305/`)

Course Policies:

- **Academic Dishonesty** Students are expected to do their own work in this course. Naturally, you may come across work by others that you wish to use. That's ok! Cite it and give credit to the author.
- **Academic Accommodations** If you have now or develop during this semester a physical or a learning disability and you want your instructors to make reasonable accommodations, please visit the PSU disability resource center. They can guide you through the process of applying for academic accommodations.
- **How to Succeed**
  - Be an active participant on the forum
  - Read articles thoughtfully and purposefully
  - Practice your Google-fu
  - Keep a file on everything and anything that interests you

Task-based grading:
Your final grade is based on completing 4 tasks reasonably well.

- Forum participation–you are expected to participate in class discussion on the D2L forum
- Weekly short writing assignment–you are expected to write up a short blog article sharing an opinion or something interesting you found to the forum. (See weekly writing assignment for details.)
- Research paper–you are expected to submit a research paper. (See research paper assignment for details.)
- Class presentation–you are expected to give a presentation and lead a short class discussion or question and answer session. (See presentation assignment for details.)

Achieve all 3 and you get an A.
2 = B (note that the research paper and presentation are required to pass the class*)
1 = F
0 = F

I reserve the right to modify the grade with a + or - depending on quality of completed tasks.

*The research paper and class presentation requirements to pass the class are part of our ABET accreditation requirement for the course.

Plagiarism or cheating will result in nonachievement of the entire task category. Please, please don't plagiarize or cheat. It's totally ok to just cite ideas that you want to use and give credit where it's due.

Student-centered Learning As stated by the DOE, "student-centered learning has been defined most simply as an approach to learning in which learners choose not only *what* to study but also *how* and *why* that topic might be of interest. In other words, the learning environment has learner responsibility and activity at its heart, in contrast to the emphasis on instructor control and coverage of academic content found in [conventional teaching]." (lincs.ed.gov)

Learners

- Are active participants in their own learning
- Make decisions about what and how they will learn
- Monitor their own learning to develop strategies for learning
- Understand expectations and use peer/self-assessment measures
- Work in collaboration with other learners
- Produce work that demonstrates authentic learning

Instructors

- Recognize and accommodate different learning modalities
- Provide structure without being overly directive
- Listen to and respect each learner's point of view
- Encourage and facilitate learner's shared decision-making
- Help learners work through difficulties by asking open-ended questions to help them arrive at conclusions or solutions that are satisfactory to them