# INLS 776\_01: Ethics, Values, and Society

# Instructor Information

Amelia N. Gibson

Email: [angibson@email.unc.edu](http://chrome-extension://bpmcpldpdmajfigpchkicefoigmkfalc/views/qowt.html)

Class meetings: Mondays, 5:45-8:30 pm, Zoom

<https://unc.zoom.us/j/96585735757?pwd=ay9peXg4UWIwKzdZT1J2eHJ6d2dXdz09>

Office hours: Mondays 4:30-5:30

<https://unc.zoom.us/j/95115818914?pwd=NDJBT2x5cVVGRXk1NklnRy9BVmg4UT09>

# Course Description and Objectives

How should our values and beliefs be expressed in our information and data systems and services? What impact does our work have on people (at different scales)? What is our responsibility to understand and respond to those impacts? How is power expressed in various sociotechnical information systems and how do the values that we (intentionally or unintentionally) build these systems help or harm? What is our obligation to “goodness,” “fairness,” “justice,” or “ethics?” What are the limitations of these frameworks?

Students who take this course in applied ethics will practice engaging in thought and discussion on issues related to information, data, knowledge, and technology in various individual, community, and societal contexts. Students will learn a series of formal frameworks for ethical reasoning and will examine issues relevant to information and data systems and services through collective consideration of recent cases.

**Caveat (stolen from Dr. Feinberg’s syllabus**): All sections of INLS 776 have adopted similar learning objectives, themes, and requirements, including participation in the semester-ending Symposium for Social Good. That said, each section will also differ in its precise subject matter, structure, and setup. Don’t expect exact alignment across sections!

## Course Materials

You are not required to purchase a textbook for this course. Course materials (including readings, videos, podcasts, and other media) are outlined in the weekly modules in Sakai and in the Weekly Schedule and Readings section of this document. If the reading is not posted, you are responsible for finding it using UNC Libraries or other means. Course readings may change based on changing current events.

# Course Policies

## Honor Code

The Honor Code, which prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the completion of assignments and exams is in effect in this class. Whenever you use the words or ideas of others, they should be properly marked as a quotation (and referenced) or the source of the ideas should be cited. APA citation format is required for assignments in this class. Please contact the instructor if you have any questions about the application of the Honor Code to your work in this class. You can learn more about the UNC Honor Code at <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/> and about the Instrument of Student Governance at <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>. I also expect that students will give proper credit to other researchers through proper use of citation. APA citation style will be used for this course.

## ****Community Standards in On-Campus Classes and Mask Use****

While we are amid a global pandemic, all enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in on-campus classrooms and other spaces. This requirement is to protect our educational community — your classmates and me – as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask in on campus spaces, your instructor may ask you to leave immediately, and submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCChapelHill&layout_id=23).  At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception.  For additional information, see [Carolina Together](https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/).

## Counseling and Psychological Services

The work that we will be engaging with this semester is difficult, and most of you will be unfamiliar with some or all of it. It is normal to feel confused or lost sometimes.  Additionally, we are living in challenging times, and we are all grappling with chronic stress and anxiety. It is common and natural to feel overwhelmed.

If you are interested in seeking resources from UNC CAPS you can visit their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. (source: Student Safety and Wellness Proposal for EPC, Sep 2018). Additionally, SILS alumni Jess Epsten, and Emily Simmons created a Toolkit for LGBTQQIA+ Young Adults Seeking Mental Health Services in North Carolina accessible through the CEDI Lab website [here](https://cedi.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/LGBTQQIA_Mental_Health_Toolkit-1.pdf).

## Accessibility Resources and Service Office

Should you encounter barriers to your learning—whether it's something that I'm doing or not doing, or challenges in your personal circumstances—I am here to help. Please set up an appointment so that we can work together towards your success.

Additionally, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. See the ARS Website for contact information: [https://ars.unc.edu](https://ars.unc.edu/) or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

If you need an accommodation but have not yet gone through the steps it takes to establish a formal relationship with University ARS, please let me know, and I will do my best to accommodate your needs.

Relevant policy documents as they relation to registration and accommodations determinations and the student registration form are available on the [ARS website under the About ARS tab](https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/policies).

## Grading

To pass the course, you must:

* Satisfy participation requirements.
* Complete a group project to investigate and lead a discussion on a topic of your choice related to ethics, society, and values in the information professions, culminating in a panel presentation at the semester-end Symposium on Information for Social Good.

Students who complete these requirements will receive a P in the course.

# Assignments

This course is designed to encourage public and private engagement with topics in relation to current events. I am aware students have varying levels of comfort with public communication (especially on social media) and have designed the course so that this interaction can be accomplished within a combination of the course Teams site and publicly accessible media. **Please let me know if you have concerns about privacy and do not want your voice or name publicly associated with any course materials or assignments (outside of the class setting/Teams).**

## Attendance

Regular class attendance is a student obligation. The success of this course relies on active participation from class members. Missing more than two classes (unexcused) will result in a failing grade. If you need to miss more than 2-3 classes, please contact me so that we can arrange alternative ways for you to participate.

## Participation

Attendance, preparation, and active engagement are necessary for a successful course.

Each class session will include an activity or discussion of a scenario/current ethical question related to information or data. Successful participation (during in-class discussions, activities, and in Teams discussions) include the following criteria:

1. Discourse in our class should be respectful, empathetic, and demonstrate compassion for your classmates.
2. Respect for All Persons. While I expect robust discussion, disrespect for colleagues and/or the instructor will not be tolerated. Additionally, class time will not be spent debating the right of any person to exist.
3. Complete all readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them. Readings are meant to inform the discussions/activities that happen in class. When possible, ground your questions and comments in the readings and related materials.
4. Don’t be afraid to admit when you don’t understand. Bring questions for discussion if you have them (working through questions and ideas is an excellent way to start important discussions!).
5. Lean in/lean out – be mindful of how much you have participated in the day’s conversation, and “lean out” so that others have room to participate. Sometimes we need to sit and think about a question, and some of us find it difficult to interject unless there is a lull in conversation, so don’t feel tempted to speak just to fill awkward silences. Silences are all a part of the process.
6. Focus on the issue of the day - While discussions sometimes take necessary detours, keep the broader topic/question in mind as you decide on how to contribute. Focus on the substance of issues (and not your classmates) when you agree or disagree.
7. Disagree constructively. If someone else’s perspective is different from yours, try to understand it rather than dismiss it out of hand. Ask for examples, explanations, or clarifications. Offer counter-examples, or refer to readings, rather than dismiss/insult a colleague.
8. Remember that we all come to these issues with different levels of experience and are all working through different questions in different ways.

## Symposium on Information and Social Good Group Project

All students in INLS 776 will participate in the Symposium for Social Good. The symposium will consist of 45-minute panel presentations, organized by groups of six students each.  Panels often take the form of brief individual presentations from each participant, followed by time for questions and guided discussion with the audience.  If you would like to see examples of previous presentations, you can peruse the archives [here](https://info4socialgood.web.unc.edu/about-2017/) or look on Twitter for [#SILSSG2017](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23silssg2017&src=typed_query&f=top), [#SILSSG2018](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23SILSSG2018&src=typed_query), or [#SILSSG2019](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23SILSSG2019&src=typed_query&f=top). You may see more in-depth web presentations for the 2021 Symposium [here](https://tarheels.live/info4socialgood/).

**Leading Class Discussion**

To prepare for a successful panel at the symposium, your group will engage in a sustained investigation of your topic area over the course of the semester and lead a class discussion in the last few weeks of the semester to help you think more deeply and solicit class thoughts/feedback.

 Each symposium panel will:

* Describe a matter of concern: a topic area, professional dilemma, or current event.
* Outline pertinent problems or questions related to ethics and values.
* Identify associated stakeholders.
* Suggest a course of action, framework for understanding, mode of practice, or other mechanism to respond to the identified problems or questions.

**The symposium will be held on Friday, April 22, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with both in-person and digital sessions. Students will be expected to attend at least two hours of the symposium, in addition to the time when you are presenting.**

Project milestones will include:

1. Forming a panel/group and selecting a shared topic that connects your individual presentations/questions.
2. Writing a 300-500 word abstract for your panel.
3. Preparing a content outline and annotated bibliography of sources.
4. “Workshopping” your panel by facilitating discussion for one session of our class:
5. Selecting/assigning a set of appropriate readings.
6. Leading us through your panel.
7. Guiding the class in discussion based on the readings you selected and the ideas that you shared.
8. Presenting the panel at the symposium.
9. Writing a concluding reflection based on your experiences working on the panel and attending the symposium.

### Assessment

#### Participation

At two points during the semester—midway through and at the conclusion of the course—you will review your own participation by providing a brief (1-2 page) self-assessment of your performance, based on the participation success criteria described in this syllabus. For the interim self-assessment, you will additionally list a set of personal participation goals for the rest of the semester, and for the final self-assessment, you will evaluate your progress towards those goals.

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| ***Participation milestones*** | ***Due date*** |
| Interim Participation Assessment | Sunday, February 20 |
| Final participation assessment | Monday, May 2 at 7 pm |

You will receive written or oral feedback on all project components. The feedback will be based on the success criteria and deliverables for each component (available via Canvas).

Should a submission be incomplete or unacceptable for some reason, you will be invited to resubmit it.

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| ***Group project milestones*** | ***Due date*** |
| Group formation and topic selection (with a 3-5 sentence initial description) & date request | Sunday, February 20 |
| Completed abstract | Friday, March 11 |
| Content outline and annotated bibliography | Friday, March 11 |
| Workshop panel in class | Classes 10-14 (March 21-April 18) |
| Attend and present at Symposium for Social Good | Friday, April 22 |
| Symposium and project reflection | Monday, May 2 at 7 pm |

# Weekly Schedule

### **Class 1 (01/10/22):** What are we doing here?

Before This Session

#### READ

1. Iliadis, A., & Federica R. (2016). Critical Data Studies: An Introduction. Big Data & Society, 3(2): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951716674238>
2. Brown University Science & Technology Studies. (n.d.). A framework for making ethical decisions.  <https://www.brown.edu/academics/science-and-technology-studies/framework-making-ethical-decisions>

Choose one:

1. Boyd, D., & Crawford, K. (2012). Critical questions for big data: Provocations for a cultural, technological, and scholarly phenomenon. Information, Communication & Society, 15(5), 662-679.
2. Samek, T. (2014). Librarianship and Human Rights: A Twenty-First Century Guide. Oxford: Chandos. (Read Chapter 1: An Urgent Context for Twenty-first Century Librarianship)

#### WATCH

[Timnit Gebru: How Can We Stop Artificial Intelligence From Marginalizing Communities? | TED Talk](https://www.ted.com/talks/timnit_gebru_how_can_we_stop_artificial_intelligence_from_marginalizing_communities)

### Class 2 (01/17/22 – No class on this day): How do we operationalize value & values?

Before This Session

#### **READ**

1. ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (<http://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/>)
2. <https://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/trustees/orgtools/policies/ALA-code-of-ethics.pdf>
3. Society of American Archivists Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics ([SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics | Society of American Archivists](https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics))

##### Aspirational statements/codes (choose one):

1. Feminist Data Manifestno: <https://www.manifestno.com/>
2. Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency in Machine Learning. (n.d.). Principles for accountable Algorithms. <https://www.fatml.org/resources/principles-for-accountable-algorithms>

#### **WATCH**

Benjamin, R., Barrentine, A., Copeny, J., Gebru, T., &  Honeycomb Petty, T. [Data4BlackLives]. (2019). What is a movement scientist? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMgjeXyINtk> (1 hour, 6 minutes)

**Weekly Activity (in this week’s channel chat)**: What elements are shared among these codes? What is missing from each (or all?)? What would you add/take away?

### Class 3 (01/24/22): Is info/data neutral?

#### **READ**

1. Hoffmann, A. L. (2018). Data violence and how bad engineering choices can damage society. Medium. <https://web.archive.org/web/20190421005839/https://medium.com/s/story/data-violence-and-how-bad-engineering-choices-can-damage-society-39e44150e1d4>
2. Langdon Winner. 1980.  Do artifacts have politics? (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20024652?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents>)
3. Todd Honma. 2005. [Trippin’ over the color line: The invisibility of race in library and information studies](https://escholarship-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/uc/item/4nj0w1mp). Interactions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies, 1(2) [Teams]
4. Noble, S. (2013). [Google search: hyper-visibility as a means of rendering black women and girls invisible](http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/google-search-hyper-visibility-as-a-means-of-rendering-black-women-and-girls-invisible/) | invisible culture: an electronic journal for visual culture.  InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture, No. 19.
5. Tripodi, F. (2019). [Devin Nunes and the Power of Keyword Signaling | WIRED](https://www.wired.com/story/devin-nunes-and-the-dark-power-of-keyword-signaling/)

### Class 4 (01/31/22): **How do we embed our biases into systems?**

#### **READ**

1. Marijel Melo (2020). How Do Makerspaces Communicate Who Belongs? Examining Gender Inclusion through the Analysis of User Journey Maps in a Makerspace. [Teams]
2. Gibson, A. N., Hanson, D., & Bowen, K.\* (2021). We need to talk about how we talk about disability: A quasi-systematic literature review. In The Library With the Lead Pipe. <https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2021/disability/>
3. Tripodi, F. (2021). [Ms. Categorized: Gender, notability, and inequality on Wikipedia](https://journals-sagepub-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/doi/10.1177/14614448211023772). *New Media and Society*[Teams]
4. Nopper, T. (2019). Digital Character in “The Scored Society”: FICO, Social Networks, and Competing Measurements of Creditworthiness, In [Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life](https://apps-crossref-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/coaccess/coaccess.html?doi=10.1215%2F9781478004493), Ruha Benjamin (editor) [Teams]

### Class 5 (02/07/22): Power

#### READ

1. Allen, A. (2016). Feminist Perspectives on Power, Section 1: Defining Power. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/>
2. Miranda Fricker. 2007. *Epistemic injustice: power and the ethics of knowing.* Oxford University Press. (Chapter 3: Prejudice in the Credibility Economy.)
3. Benjamin, R. (2016). Informed refusal: Toward a justice-based bioethics. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 41(6), 967-990.
4. Keyes, O. (2019). Counting the countless: Why data science is a profound threat for queer people. Retrieved from <https://reallifemag.com/counting-the-countless/>
5. Collins, A. M. (2018). Language, power, and oppression in the LIS diversity void. *Library Trends*, *67*(1), 39-51. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/706987>

### Class 6 (02/14/22): How do we balance between rights and accountability?

#### **READ**

1. Tannenbaum, M. (2013). ‘But I Didn’t Mean It!’ Why It’s So Hard to Prioritize Impacts over Intents. Scientific American, 14. Retrieved from <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/psysociety/e2809cbut-i-didne28099t-mean-ite2809d-why-ite28099s-so-hard-to-prioritize-impacts-over-intents/>
2. **Brandes, R. (2022, January 4). Batman or Penguin? How Andrew Frame’s Citizen App Is Turning Every City Into Gotham. Los Angeles Magazine.** [How Andrew Frame's Citizen App Is Turning Every City Into Gotham (lamag.com)](https://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/batman-or-penquin-how-andrew-frames-citizen-app-is-turning-every-city-into-gotham/)
3. D. Clark, M. (2020). DRAG THEM: A brief etymology of so-called “cancel culture.” Communication and the Public, 5(3–4), 88–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057047320961562>
4. Mateescu, A. (2021). Electronic Visit Verification: The Weight of Surveillance and the Fracturing of Care. [EVV\_REPORT\_11162021.pdf (datasociety.net)](https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/EVV_REPORT_11162021.pdf) (Teams)

#### **WATCH**

1. Data4BlackLives. (2019). We are the Leaders We Have Been Looking For: Organizing for Algorithmic Accountability. [1 hour 25 minutes; 1st panelist starts about 24 minutes in] <https://youtu.be/ayjxlu_UAT8>

### Class 7 (02/21/22): **How do we understand what is “(un)true?”**

#### **READ**

1. D'Ignazio, C., & Klein, L. F. (2020). The Numbers Don't Speak for Themselves. Data Feminism. <https://data-feminism.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/czq9dfs5/release/1>
2. Lazer, D., Kennedy, R., King, G., & Vespignani, A. (2014). The parable of Google Flu: traps in big data analysis. Science, 343(6176), 1203-1205
3. Williams, R. (2020). [View of Falsified Incompetence and Other Lies the Positivists Told Me | Canadian Journal of Disability Studies (uwaterloo.ca)](https://cjds.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cjds/article/view/696/951)

#### **WATCH**

1. Ball, P. (2017). The Data is Always Lying: How to Distinguish Insight From Snake Oil. At AI Now 2017 [YouTube] 5 minutes, 20 seconds.  <https://youtu.be/_v_Me6wMejw>

### Class 8 (02/28/22): How do we reckon with racism in information professions and systems?

1. Scannell, R. J. (2019). This Is Not Minority Report: Predictive Policing and Population Racism, In [Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life](https://apps-crossref-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/coaccess/coaccess.html?doi=10.1215%2F9781478004493), Ruha Benjamin (editor) [Teams]
2. Brock, A. (2020). [Distributed Blackness](https://nyu-universitypressscholarship-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/view/10.18574/nyu/9781479820375.001.0001/upso-9781479820375). Chapters 4 & 5 (Black Online Discourse Parts 1 and 2). (This is not license to use the N-word in class).
3. Sutherland, T. (2017). Making a Killing: On Race, Ritual, and (Re)Membering in Digital Culture. Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture 46 (1). 32-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/pdtc-2017-0025> [Teams]
4. McMillan Cottom, T. (2020). Where platform capitalism and racial capitalism meet: the sociology of race and racism in the digital society. Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 6(4), 441-449. [Where Platform Capitalism and Racial Capitalism Meet: The Sociology of Race and Racism in the Digital Society - Tressie McMillan Cottom, 2020 (sagepub.com)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2332649220949473)

#### Watch

1. Amrute, S. (2021). [Racist Tropes and Labor Discipline: How Tech Inherits and Reproduces Global Imaginaries of Race and Work - Microsoft Research](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/research/video/racist-tropes-and-labor-discipline-how-tech-inherits-and-reproduces-global-imaginaries-of-race-and-work/) (Video: 58 minutes)

### Class 9 (03/07/22): The Politics of Information

#### READ

1. Hamraie, A., and Fritsch, K. (2019). [Crip Technoscience Manifesto | Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience (catalystjournal.org)](https://catalystjournal.org/index.php/catalyst/article/view/29607) (Teams)
2. Shannon C. McGregor, Bridget Barrett & Daniel Kreiss (2021): Questionably legal: Digital politics and foreign propaganda, Journal of Information Technology & Politics, DOI: 10.1080/19331681.2021.190289
3. [Frontiers | Coming Out to Play: Privacy, Data Protection, Children’s Health, and COVID-19 Research | Genetics (unc.edu)](https://www-frontiersin-org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/articles/10.3389/fgene.2021.659027/full)
4. [Facebook Hosted Surge of Misinformation and Insurrection Threats in Months Leading Up to Jan. 6 Attack, Records Show — ProPublica](https://www.propublica.org/article/facebook-hosted-surge-of-misinformation-and-insurrection-threats-in-months-leading-up-to-jan-6-attack-records-show)

## Spring Break – March 12-20, 2022

### Class 10 (03/21/22): TBA (Student Managed Discussion) Class 11 (03/28/22): TBA (Student Managed Discussion)

### Class 12 (04/04/22): TBA (Student Managed Discussion)

### Class 13 (04/11/22): TBA (Student Managed Discussion)

### Class 14 (04/18/22): TBA (Student Managed Discussion)

### Class 15 (Friday April 22, 2022): Symposium on Information and Social Good