INLS 776: Ethics, Values, and Society

Professor Megan Winget (megan.winget@unc.edu)
Class Time: Tuesdays 5:45 – 8:30 pm
Zoom: https://unc.zoom.us/j/97350710942?pwd=TE1ibStFblkrS2JML3E5TXpqSG8zUT09
Office Hours: by appointment on Zoom: https://calendly.com/megan-winget/15min

About This Course:

In this course, we will explore ethical issues and questions relevant to the work and impact of LIS professionals: How should our values and beliefs be expressed in our information and data systems and services? What impact does our work have on people? What is our responsibility to understand and respond to those impacts? How is power expressed in various sociotechnical information systems, and how does power impact our conception of "knowledge?" How do the values that we (intentionally or unintentionally) build into these systems help or harm? What is our obligation to "goodness," "fairness," "justice," or "ethics?" What are the limitations of these frameworks?

Student Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Engage in a combination of public and private thought and discussion on issues related to information, data, knowledge, and technology in various individual, community, and societal contexts.

- Describe and apply a series of formal frameworks for ethical reasoning.

- Examine issues relevant to information and data systems and services through collective consideration of recent cases.

- Identify ethical problems in existing technologies/information sources being developed or uses of data/tech already in circulation.

- Design a poster or panel presentation for a research-based conference.

Course structure

This has been designed as an online course, meeting once a week for two hours and forty-five minutes.

Our time together will be oriented around discussion. Generally, the first half of class (5:45-6:45) will focus on the week's assigned readings, while the second half of class (7-8:15) will be oriented around practical dilemmas and debates—what-if scenarios, analysis of current events, and ongoing professional challenges related to the week's theme.

In the final five weeks of class, in preparation for the Symposium for Social Good, we will shift the structure. During these weeks, each project group will have one class session to

"workshop" your panel presentation. (More details are in the Symposium Project section of this syllabus.)

This class will use the Canvas learning management system.

The Semester Calendar (below) provides an overview of each week.

Evaluation / Grades

In collaboration with the other professors teaching this course, we have decided that students will receive either a P (Pass) or F (Fail) grade. We do this to alleviate stress and allow for a more equitable grading system across sections.

To pass the course, students must:

- Satisfy participation & mutual aid requirements (described below).

- Complete a group project to investigate 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 for Social Good.

- Attend two hours (in addition to your panel discussion) of the Symposium for Social Good conference to be held on Friday April 22.

Student Support

Please utilize me as a resource if you are having difficulty with the material or there are outside circumstances impeding your ability to learn (for example, housing insecurity, food insecurity, emotional insecurity, or need physical or mental health services). **You should also know that I am a mandatory reporter if you choose to confide in me**.

Mental Health: CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to 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)*

Basic needs security. Any student who faces challenges affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide other resources I may know of. Other resources you may find helpful:

- Student Support: Office of the Dean of Students
- Carolina Cupboard: Community Food Pantry (on-campus)
- Groceries for Neighbors in Need

Accommodations: 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 barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: https://ars.unc.edu or email ars@unc.edu.

Title IX: Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

Diversity & Inclusion: My intention as an educator is to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all learners. I work hard to include course materials and activities that promote diversity but Information & Library Science (and most disciplines in the academy) were founded by those from a privileged background. As a cisgender, straight, white, able-bodied woman, my standpoint may exclude important points of view. It is also possible that I will make unintentional mistakes. If this happens, please come, and speak to me directly. I promise to acknowledge your concerns as valid and learn from critiques. Likewise, I'm always looking for new scholarship by women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and non-Western thinkers – please share resources you think would be useful. Suggestions and improvements are encouraged and appreciated.

Email Policy

It's very difficult to explain course material via email. If you need help with course content or assignments, the first step is to make an appointment for office hours, which are always online, and can be made here: https://calendly.com/megan-winget/15min) I love to receive emails that share interesting information (videos, news as it relates to class).

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty and trustworthiness are important to all of us as individuals and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system. More information is available at http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html. The web site identified above contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

Late work

Typically, in my classes there are no penalties for late work. However, participation in the Symposium for Social Good and your associated class workshop session are live events that will occur at specified times, which makes late submission impossible. If an

emergency requires that you miss one of these events, alternate submissions will need to be negotiated individually with the instructor.

Assignments:

There are three major components to this class:

1) Participation & Mutual Aid;
2) Case Study / Class Management (part of the Symposium Project); and
3) Symposium on Information and the Social Good

Participation & Mutual Aid

Our time together will be oriented around discussion. Generally, the first half of class (5:45-6:45) will focus on the week's assigned readings, while the second half of class (7-8:30) will be oriented around practical dilemmas and debates. I expect everyone to participate in these discussions to the extent possible, and participation in these discussions must be respectful, well-reasoned, and should demonstrate knowledge of the topic (and/or the readings). This kind of participation is integral to the success of this class **and** will not be formally assessed. My expectation is that because we all want to have a successful, interesting, engaging class – each of us will do our best to participate in the discussion. Some guidelines for successful discussions (thanks Melanie Feinberg!):

- Complete all readings before class and be ready to discuss them.
- Adopt the Step Up/Step Back principle: consider who has been speaking and how often, and "step back" if you've been talking more than your share, or "step up" if you haven't been contributing.
- Contribute actively to discussions:
  - Initiate conversations by asking questions of others.
  - Volunteer your thoughts, feelings, impressions, and examples.
  - Where appropriate, support your opinions and claims with evidence.
  - Speak up when you are confused or uncertain. (For instance, it's absolutely fantastic to begin a conversation by saying "I'm not sure about the difference between ethics and values, can someone help me out?")
  - Retain focus on matters germane to the course.
  - Maintain confidence that your contributions are valuable, no matter your background or level of previous knowledge or expertise.
- Listen carefully and respond thoughtfully.
  - Maintain respect and compassion for your classmates.
  - Demonstrate that you value others' contributions. (For instance, use verbal and nonverbal cues to show that you're paying attention to your classmates. When someone makes a good point, say so.)
  - If someone else's perspective is different from yours, attempt to understand it rather than dismiss it. (For instance, ask questions or request explanations.)
  - Disagree constructively. (For instance, volunteer a counter-example to consider or refer everyone to the text of a reading.)

Again, I'm just going to assume that everyone will participate in the discussions to the extent possible. I don't have a list with checkmarks to see who is talking and who isn't.

To assess participation more formally, I've tried to re-think why I think it's important to participate in a class, and therefore what it means to develop community. Towards that end, I'm trying out the idea of measuring what I'm calling "Mutual Aid." At the end of the semester, students will be asked to give themselves points based on the ways they take care of each other in class.

Some examples of how to get mutual aid points:

- **Scribes**: Every class, we have two notetakers who will come together and post their notes online. This will include keeping track of discussion, finding any links mentioned in discussion, and providing an overview of upcoming due dates. Sign up at this link:
- **Timekeeper**: I will post the "Script" for a class session up with the timing of each step at the beginning of class, and this person will help me stay on-time. I'll ask at the beginning of class who wants to be the timekeeper. First to answer gets the job that week.
- **Class Contract**: Participate in making a class contract for shared expectations for how we all want to be treated (this is facilitated in the first two classes)
- **Work with me**: This involves doing the reading, thinking about it, and meeting with me before class (15-30 minutes) to have a brief discussion about what the class discussion questions might be. If class is on Tuesdays, best meeting day is Monday, but I'm flexible. Two people per class session. Sign up here:
- **Email an author** of a text and share how it changed your thinking. Please copy me on the message.
- **Suggest readings.** If you know of an interesting reading (or ethical standard that I've missed) please let me know and I'll look it over and add it to the syllabus!
- **Write a letter to future students**: on the last day, write a letter to next semester's students with tips and tricks for navigating the course (& my teaching/grading style) you wish they knew at the start.
- **Any form of mutual aid** e.g. proof reading, showing the library, etc.
- **"Previously" narrator**: Summarize what we did last class at the start of class
- **Annotator**: Many people read texts better when they are marked up with highlights, definitions, notes, etc. Submit a PDF that is annotated for other readers and future classes & peers. Instructions here: https://slideplayer.com/slide/10656558/
- **Unanticipated awesome person**: Do something that helps your peers that this list did not anticipate. I am sure that we will have more items for the list every semester!

I will add to this list in Sakai, as the semester progresses. Students will keep track of their mutual aid points throughout the semester and provide a review at the end of class. I will not be keeping track of these mutual aid points! Minimum level of expectation will be 6 points.

(These ideas for grading mutual aid come from Dr. Max Liboiron on twitter: https://twitter.com/MaxLiboiron)

Symposium Project

All students in all sections of INLS 776 will participate in the Symposium for Social Good. The symposium will consist of 45-minute panel presentations, organized in 5 groups of 6-7 students each.

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.

Panels often take the form of brief individual presentations from each participant, followed by time for questions and guided discussion with the audience.

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 you are presenting.

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.

Project milestones will include:

1. Forming the group and selecting a topic.

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:

   a. Selecting a set of appropriate readings.

   b. Leading us through your panel.

   c. Guiding the class in discussion based on the readings you selected and the ideas that you shared.

5. Presenting the panel at the symposium.

6. Writing a concluding reflection based on your experiences working on the panel and attending the symposium.

Important Dates

Group formation	Sunday, February 6
Symposium Topic Selection	Sunday February 20
Symposium Abstract, Annotated Bibliography & Reading List for Workshopping	Friday March 11
Workshop Panels in Class	March 22 – April 19
Attend Symposium & Present	Friday April 22
Last day of class (no class)	Tuesday April 26
Reflection on Symposium	Friday April 29
Mutual Aid Points	Friday April 29

Schedule

Part One: Foundational Concepts

Week 1 (January 11) – Introductions & Syllabus

- Syllabus
- hooks, b. (2014). *Teaching To Transgress*. (Chapter 1) (PDF)
  https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203700280

Week 2 (January 18): Frameworks for moral reasoning & ethical decisions

- Tom Regan. 2005. Introduction to moral reasoning. In *Information Ethics : Privacy, Property, and Power*, edited by Adam Moore. University of Washington Press. (PDF)

- Rachels, J., & Rachels, S. (1986). *The elements of moral philosophy*. Temple University Press. (Chapter 1) (PDF)

- 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

- Can it/will it ever be taken seriously? The case of Timnit Gebru

  o Watch her Ted Talk https://www.ted.com/talks/timnit_gebru_how_can_we_stop_artificial_intelligence_from_marginalizing_communities

  o Read this op-ed - https://www.wired.com/story/prominent-ai-ethics-researcher-says-google-fired-her/)

Week 3 (January 25) – Professional Codes of Ethics

What do the codes of ethics look like today in Library/IT. **Choose 2.**

- ACM: http://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/

- AAAI Artificial Intelligence: https://www.aaai.org/Conferences/code-of-ethics-and-conduct.php

- ALA: https://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/trustees/orgtools/policies/ALA-code-of-ethics.pdf

- SAA: https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics

- Public History: https://ncph.org/about/governance-committees/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct/

- Museums (America): https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/
- Museums (International): https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf
- Museums – "Collections Professionals": https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Code_Ethics_Collections_Professionals_2021_02_24.pdf

What if it's more complicated than that?

- Adam, G. B. (2011). The problem of administrative evil in a culture of technical rationality. *Public Integrity*, *13*(3), 275–286. (PDF)

Week 4 (February 1) Values in Design

- Hoffmann, A.L., (2017). Making data valuable: Political, economic, and conceptual bases of big data. Philosophy & Technology, 31, 209-212. (PDF)
- Langdon Winner. 1980. Do artifacts have politics? (PDF)
- Lucas D. Introna, Helen Nissenbaum (2000) Shaping the Web: Why the Politics of Search Engines Matters, The Information Society, 16:3, 169-185, (PDF)
- Katie Shilton. 2013. Values levers: building ethics into design. (PDF)

Week 5 (February 8) The politics of information

- Nopper, T. K. (2019). Digital Character in "The Scored Society": FICO, Social Networks, and Competing Measurements of Creditworthiness. In R. Benjamin (Ed.), *Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life*. Duke University Press.
- Adam Moore. 2016. Privacy, speech, and values: What we have no business knowing. *Ethics and Information Technology, 18*(1), 41-49. (PDF)
- Nanna Bonde Thystrup. 2010. The politics of mass digitization. MIT Press. Chapter 2, The trials and tribulations of Google Books. (PDF)
- Michael Powell. 2021. In Texas, a battle over what can be taught, and what books can be read. New York Times, December 10, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/10/us/texas-critical-race-theory-ban-books.html?searchResultPosition=1

Part Two: Applying concepts

Week 6 (February 15) – How do information professionals embed systemic bias in information systems?

- Marijel Melo (2020). How Do Makerspaces Communicate Who Belongs? Examining Gender Inclusion through the Analysis of User Journey Maps in a Makerspace. (PDF)

- Emily Drabinski. 2013. Queering the catalog: queer theory and the politics of correction. *Library Quarterly* 83(2): 94-111 (PDF)

- Francesca Tripodi. 2021. Ms. Categorized: Gender, notability, and inequality on Wikipedia. *New Media and Society*

- Safiya Noble. 2013. 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.

Week 7 (February 22) – Can information professionals remediate and/or repair institutionalized racism within the profession? (1)

- Todd Honma. 2005. Trippin' over the color line: The invisibility of race in library and information studies. Interactions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies, 1(2)

- Tonia Sotherland. 2017. Archival amnesty: in search of Black American transitional and restorative justice. *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1(2). doi: 10.24242/jclis.v1i2.42

- Gibson, A. N., Chancellor, R. L., Cooke, N. A., Dahlen, S. P., Lee, S. A., & Shorish, Y. L. (2017). Libraries on the frontlines: Neutrality and social justice. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*.

- Sareeta Amrute. 2020. Bored Techies Being Casually Racist: Race as Algorithm. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*. 45(5):903-933. doi:10.1177/0162243920912824

- Watch: Amrute, S. (2021). Racist Tropes and Labor Discipline: How Tech Inherits and Reproduces Global Imaginaries of Race and Work - Microsoft Research (Video: 58 minutes)

Week 8 (March 1) – Can information professionals remediate and/or repair institutionalized racism within the profession? (2)

- 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, Ruha Benjamin (editor)

- Gibson, A. N., Chancellor, R. L., Cooke, N. A., Dahlen, S. P., Patin, B., & Shorish, Y. L. (2020). Struggling to breathe: COVID-19, protest and the LIS response. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-07-2020-0178
- 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
- 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)

Week 9 (March 8) – Data collection: restriction and facilitation

- Ruha Benjamin. (2016). Informed refusal: Toward a justice-based bioethics. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 41(6), 967-990.

- Os Keyes. 2019. Counting the countless: Why data science is a profound threat for queer people. https://reallifemag.com/counting-the-countless/

- Liang, C., Hutson, J. A., & Keyes, O. (2020). Surveillance, stigma & sociotechnical design for HIV. *First Monday*, *25*(10). https://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/10274/9729

- Marika Cifor, Patricia Garcia, T.L. Cowan, Jasmine Rault, Tonia Sotherland, Anita Say Chan, Jennifer Rode, Anna Lauren Hoffman, Niloufar Salehi and Lisa Nakamura. 2019. Feminist Data Manifest-No. Retrieved from: https://www.manifestno.com/

Week 10 – Spring Break!

Part 3 – (Un)Ethical Action – Case studies and examples in LIS

Week 11 / March 22 – Group 1 Leads Class

Week 12 / March 29 – Group 2 Leads Class

Week 13 / April 5th – Group 3 Leads Class

Week 14 / April 12th – Group 4 Leads Class

Week 15 / April 19th – Group 5 Leads Class

Week 15½ / April 22 – Symposium!

Part 4 – Symposium

Week 16 / April 26th - No classes