INLS 776: Ethics, Values, and Society

Tuesdays 11am – 1:45pm
Manning 307
Professor: Francesca Tripodi, PhD (she/her/hers)
Office: Manning 202 / or Zoom
Office Hours: Fridays 8:30 – 11:30am (if joining via zoom advanced scheduling required)
Email: ftripodi@email.unc.edu

If you are having trouble learning (for any reason) please come and see me or the Dean of Students.

Course Description

In this course, we will explore ethical issues and questions relevant to the work and impact of LIS professionals: In what ways do information and data systems/services embody our values and beliefs? 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 does power impact who gets to decide what counts as information (and misinformation)? 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?

By the end of this course, you will be able to (i.e. Course Objectives):
- Engage in thoughtful discussion on ethical considerations and complications related to information, data, knowledge, and technology.
- Apply sociotechnical frameworks to an existing ethical problem in LIS
- Identify and analyze potential and existing ethical problems in technologies/information sources being developed or in use/circulation.
- Design and present a panel for a research-based conference.
- Understand how ethical principles are applied into specific LIS subfields.

Class engagement & expectations

What I expect of you:
- That you will attend the Symposium and date of group presentation.
- That you will not miss more than two classes (if you need to miss more for excused reasons please let me know).

What you expect of me and each other:
- Any shifts in schedule or reading or location be communicated with as much advanced notice as possible.
- Give one another time to finish thoughts and not talk over one another.
- Give classmates and professor grace when expressing initial thoughts and be open to feedback and/or correction.
- Avoid arguments and statements that dehumanize others.
- Remember that people in the case studies are real people and that these things have happened.
- Timely feedback from all.
- Be respectful of one another's backgrounds and boundaries.
- Expect professor to serve as a facilitator and/or identify if discussion is not useful or productive.

- Active touch base on February 7th

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. Nonetheless, 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 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, Latine, LGBTQ+, non-white, and non-Western thinkers – please share resources you think would be useful. Suggestions and improvements to the syllabus are encouraged and appreciated.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Participation and Attendance

The structure of this course is dependent on active engagement. I expect everyone to come to class ready to discuss the assigned readings. I recognize that participation comes in many forms. Active listening, talking, sharing posts before class are all welcome. Missing more than two classes (unexcused) will result in a failing grade.

Semester Project: Investigating a professional matter of concern

This class centers around *an extended semester-long project* that constitutes both individual and group work. In small groups (no more than six per group) you will center research on a topic that provokes professional dilemmas involving ethics, values, and society. This involves two central components:

1. **Managing Class Discussion** - Once during the semester your group will lead discussion. The topic and readings will be determined by you. The first part of class should focus on an activity that touches on the assigned reading which identifies key stakeholders and allows us to identify and respond to the problems identified. The second part of class is meant to serve as a preparatory work for the Symposium. These *individual* presentations are meant to be works in progress not polished run-throughs.
2. **Symposium on Information and Social Good** (April 21) - All students in INLS 776 will participate in the Symposium consisting of 45-minute panel presentations, organized by groups of six students each. These panels are usually individual presentations from each participant on different subtopics, followed by time for question and answer. However, your group may decide to do one large presentation on a topic. Themes can take the form of centering around a current event, historical case, or other example of ILS ethics. Students must participate in their panel, attend the keynote lecture, as well as two other student panels. This is an all-day event and students should plan to attend the full event.

Important Due Dates/Project Milestones:

- By Feb 21 – Form a group (no more than six per group). **Class time on February 21st will be devoted to finalizing topics**. Suggest at theme for the symposium if you have one!
- March 10 – Draft One of Abstract for panel due. This is a 300-word abstract that will be printed in the program for the symposium. Prof. Tripodi will provide feedback on these drafts by March 20th.

- March 31 – Final abstracts due to Prof. Tripodi along with assigned reading.
- March 22 - April 19 – Lead Class Activity / workshop. "Workshopping" includes:
  - Creating an activity and discussion questions based on the readings selected for class.
  - Leading us through what you plan to present at the symposium.
  - Students will have the opportunity to provide peer-feedback on others in their group.
- April 21 from 8:30am – 5:30pm in the Student Union – Symposium. All students must attend most of the symposium. All SILS courses will be cancelled to accommodate this schedule. Please request this time off from your employer to attend the full day. If this is not possible, notify Prof. Tripodi ASAP. Individual annotated bibliographies due that morning (10 sources minimum).

Evaluation

Students who satisfy the course requirements will receive a P. To pass this class you must submit *all* assignments, receive a 75% or higher on the peer assessment in your group, attend the Symposium on Information and Social Good.

Resources

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 are in need of 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)*

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.

Other important items

Email Policy
I love emails that share interesting information (videos, news as it relates to class) or if you have an emergency that requires immediate assistance. If you need help understanding course content or assignments, the first step is to come to office hours (Fridays from 8:30 – 11:30). Emails sent to me about class materials should pertain only to setting up a 1:1 meeting outside of office hours (in person or via Zoom). In-person office hours do not need an advanced appointment.

Academic Honesty
Academic honesty and trustworthiness are essential. More information on the UNC Honor Code 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.

Part One: Foundational Concepts

Week One (January 10) - Why are we here? What is ethical reasoning?

What does "ethics" mean to you? Will it ever be taken seriously and does "intent" really matter?

Reading for this week
- n/a

Class Activity – Break into Groups / Case Studies (Book Challenges, Facebook, and ChatGPT)

Week Two (January 17) – Ethics 101 + Professional Codes in LIS

What do we mean by ethical reasoning? How is this applied in our field?
Reading for this week (read before class)
- Tom Regan. 2005. Introduction to moral reasoning. In Information Ethics: Privacy, Property, and Power, edited by Adam Moore. University of Washington Press.
- 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
- http://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/
- https://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/trustees/orgtools/policies/ALA-code-of-ethics.pdf

Class Activity - What Does the Future Look Like?
Will existing codes hold up? Why or why not? How might we modify these codes?

Week Three (January 24)– Values in Design

In what way do existing systems reflect old biases? Is it possible to create a neutral system?

Reading for this week (read before class)

- Hoffmann, A.L., (2017). Making data valuable: Political, economic, and conceptual bases of big data. Philosophy & Technology, 31, 209-212.
- Langdon Winner. 1980. Do artifacts have politics? (https://www.jstor.org/stable/20024652?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)
- Lucas D. Introna, Helen Nissenbaum (2000) Shaping the Web: Why the Politics of Search Engines Matters, The Information Society, 16:3, 169-185, DOI: 10.1080/019722 40050133634
- Katie Shilton. 2013. Values levers: building ethics into design. (https://journals-sagepub-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/doi/10.1177/0162243912436985)

Class Activity – Pulling the Lever

In small groups identify a product that could have used more value levers. What happened and how could it have been stopped? What would your lever look like?

Part Two: Applying Ethical Concepts

Week Four (January 31) – The right to be forgotten in a scored society

Should we be able to fall off the grid? And if so, what would this do to our financial standing?

Reading for this week (read before class)

- Youm, Kyu Ho and Ahran Park. 2016. The 'Right to Be Forgotten" in European Union Law: Data Protection Blanced With Free Speech? *Journalsim and Mass Communication Quarterly.*
- Tamara K. Nopper, 2019. "Digital Character in "The Scored Society":FICO, Social Networks, and Competing Measurements of Creditworthiness", Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life, Ruha Benjamin
- O'Neil, Cathy. 2016. Chapter 8: Collateral Damage: Landing Credit in Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy.

In Class Activity – Google Yourself

In small groups we will search for ourselves and our friends/family to see what we find. We will consider what credit scores mean and why they are important.

Week Five (February 7) – How should information professionals address systemic bias in information systems and spaces?

Reading for this week (read before class)

- Keyes, O. (2019). Counting the countless: Why data science is a profound threat for queer people. Retrieved from https://reallifemag.com/counting-the-countless/
- Marijel Melo (2020). How Do Makerspaces Communicate Who Belongs? Examining Gender Inclusion through the Analysis of User Journey Maps in a Makerspace.
- Emily Drabinski. 2013. Queering the catalog: queer theory and the politics of correction. *Library Quarterly* 83(2): 94-111
- Francesca Tripodi. 2021. Ms. Categorized: Gender, notability, and inequality on Wikipedia. *New Media and Society*

Week Six (February 14) Wellness Day / No Class

Week Seven (February 21) – Institutionalized Racism & Information Systems

Can information professionals remediate and/or repair institutionalized racism? What would this look like and who is responsible? How are existing racial hierarchies coded into new systems?

Reading for this week (read before class)
- 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.
- R. Joshua Scannell, 2019. "This Is Not *Minority Report*: Predictive Policing and Population Racism", Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life, Ruha Benjamin
- 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
- Harrington, C. N., Garg, R., Woodward, A., & Williams, D. (2022). "It's Kind of Like Code-Switching": Black Older Adults' Experiences with a Voice Assistant for Health Information Seeking. Proceedings of the 2022 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 1–15
- Sareeta Amrute. 2020. Bored Techies Being Casually Racist: Race as Algorithm. Science, Technology, & Human Values. 45(5):903-933. doi:10.1177/0162243920912824

Class Activity - Watch & Relate to Reading
- Black Power Mixtape [Documentary] 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_dCL2F571. While we watch – consider the following:
  - Focus on a problem of most interest to use. Who are the stakeholders involved? What are their roles? What role do information, and information professionals, play in this problem?
  - Choose an ethical framework and outline the problem in terms of that framework.
  - Consider readings for this week. What would/could a solution look like?
- After screening we will break into groups to discuss issues.

Week Eight (February 28) – Data Collection (and Refusal)

In an era of "datafication" – what should be collected? How do these collections/archives impact access? What does refusal look like?

Reading for this week (read before class)
- Ruha Benjamin. (2016). Informed refusal: Toward a justice-based bioethics. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 41(6), 967-990.
- Feminist Data Manifestno: https://www.manifestno.com/
- Liang, C., Hutson, J. A., & Keyes, O. (2020). Surveillance, stigma & sociotechnical design for HIV. *First Monday*, *25*(10). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v25i10.10274

- Tonia Sutherland. 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
- Vaidhyanathan, Siva. *The Googlization of Everything:* Chp. 5 – The Googlization of Knowledge: The Future of Books

Class Activity - Watch & Relate to Reading
- How to Survive a Plague [Documentary] (2012) – while we watch, consider the following:
  - Focus on a problem of most interest to use. Who are the stakeholders involved? What are their roles? What role do information, and information professionals, play in this problem?
  - Choose an ethical framework and outline the problem in terms of that framework.
  - Consider readings for this week. What would/could a solution look like?
- After screening we will break into groups to discuss issues.

Week Nine (March 7) – The Limits of Justice, Fairness, and Equality

Reading for this week (read before class)
- Hoffmann, A. L. (2019). Where fairness fails: data, algorithms, and the limits of antidiscrimination discourse. *Information, Communication & Society, 22*(7), 900-915.
- Raji, I. D., Gebru, T., Mitchell, M., Buolamwini, J., Lee, J., & Denton, E. (2020). Saving Face: Investigating the Ethical Concerns of Facial Recognition Auditing. Proceedings of the AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society, 145–151.
- Meredith Broussard.2018. Artificial unintelligence: how computers misunderstand the world. Chapter 5, Why Poor Schools Can't Win at Standardized Tests.
- Adam Moore. 2016. Privacy, speech, and values: What we have no business knowing. *Ethics and Information Technology, 18*(1), 41-49. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10676-016-9397-x

Class Activity - Watch & Relate to Reading
- Kantayya, S. (Director). (2020). Coded Bias [Documentary]. 7th Empire Media. (Netflix)
- While we watch – consider the following:
  - Focus on a problem of most interest to use. Who are the stakeholders involved? What are their roles? What role do information, and information professionals, play in this problem?
  - Choose an ethical framework and outline the problem in terms of that framework.
  - Consider readings for this week. What would/could a solution look like?
- After screening we will break into groups to discuss issues

Week Ten (March 10) – Spring Break

Before we leave for break - Groups must be formed and reading/activity for your week must be submitted.

Week Eleven (March 21) – Multicultural Considerations of Ethics

What do ethical considerations look like outside of a US focus/context?

Reading for this week (read before class)
- Haiqing Yu. 2022. Living in the era of codes: a reflection on China's health code system. BioSocieties. (early cite in advance of publication): https://doi.org/10.1057/s41292-022-00290-8
- Wenhong Chen, Gejun Huang, and An Hu. 2022. Red, yellow, green, or golden: the post-pandemic future of China's health code apps. Information, Communication, and Society 25(5): 618-633
- Michele A.L. Villagran et al., Information Ethics from a Multicultural Perspective: Content Analysis of selected Library and Information Science Publications. Journal of Education for Library and Information Science.
- Vivien Weiwei Xu (2022) WeChat and the Sharing of News in Networked China, Digital Journalism, 10:9, 1441-1463, DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2022.2053335

Class Activity –
Guest lecture / Yiping Xia – Postdoctoral Scholar at the Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life (https://citap.unc.edu/people/)

Part 3 – (Un)Ethical Action – Case studies, examples, symposium workshops
Week Twelve (March 28) Group 1 & Group 2 Lead Class
Week Thirteen (April 4) – No Class / Chapel Hill City Schools Spring Break
Week Fourteen (April 11) – Group 3 & Group 4 lead Class
Week Fifteen (April 18) – Group 5 Leads Class + Symposium Recap

Part 4 – Symposium on Information for Social Good
April 21 – 8:30am – 5:30pm – at the UNC Student Union