INLS 776 - Ethics, Values and Society

- **Class Time:** Thursdays 2-4:45pm / Manning 307
- **Schedule an office hours meeting with me via Calendly!** [https://calendly.com/megan-winget/15min](https://calendly.com/megan-winget/15min)

Introduction

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?

Course 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.
- Develop a panel presentation for a research-based conference.

Course Structure

This course meets once a week for two hours and forty-five minutes.

Our time together will be oriented around discussion. Generally, the first half of class will focus on the week’s assigned readings, while the second half of class 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.

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**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.

**Basic expectations:**

All students are expected to participate in class discussions to the best of their ability, and to attend class consistently. However, I do not take roll, and I do not have a metric for "grading" a student's participation. If it gets to the point where I notice and feel resentful that students are not participating in class discussion, or attendance becomes embarrassing, we - as a class - will have a discussion about what that means in terms of the learning environment.

There are three metrics for assessing student success in this class.

1. Mutual Aid Points
2. Group Projects
   1. Symposium Panel
   2. Two In-Class Case Studies
3. Reading Quizzes

To get a P in this course, graduate students must:

- Accrue 6 mutual aid points.
- Complete the Group Project Assignments to a minimum level of expectation (that is: students must follow the instructions, turn in all of these assignments, and include all components of the project in their deliverables).
  - The case study is an in-class activity that we will use as a framework for thinking about ethical decision making in our field. My vision is that students will have time to complete all of the work for the case study in class.
The symposium panel is a project is 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, which will be held in Manning Hall Friday April 26.

- In addition to participating in your panel discussion, students will be expected to attend two extra sessions of the Symposium for Social Good conference to be held on Friday April 26. Please expend energy to get that day off of work, or find childcare for this event.

- Readings Quizzes. Every week, we will have a brief quiz on the readings. The quiz questions are already posted on the weekly module pages, and students will have five minutes at the beginning of class to answer the question. My recommendation is to have the question in mind while you’re doing the reading, jot down your thoughts and copy and paste your answer into the quiz assignment page when it opens at 2pm on the day of class. These quiz questions do not have "correct" or "incorrect" answers, and you will be getting a "complete / incomplete" grade on them. These are NOTHING to stress about, but they do give me some insight into what students are thinking about the readings. Minimum level of expectation is that students will complete 6 of the 8 quizzes.

All grades are assessed at a "complete / incomplete" level. If you follow the directions, and turn in your assignments, you will get a P in this class.

Course Policies

Keep in Mind

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 Links to an external site.) 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 Links to an external site. 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
There are no penalties for late work. I do ask, however, that if you have to turn in your assignments more than 2-3 days late, please let me know when you think it will be in, and any plans you have for finishing it before the end of the semester.

Covid Policies

- Once we return to face-to-face instruction, it is likely that some of us may get sick, whether with COVID or with more “normal” things like colds and the flu. **If you are feeling unwell, please do not attend in-person classes.** The lectures are online, you will miss the discussion but the scribes will hopefully provide notes on interesting topics and ideas we trade in class.
- If more than 25% of class (in this class that means 5 people) is are out sick while we will have a discussion about how the class would like to handle that. We may continue meeting in person, we may decide to go online for a week or two. If more than 50% of students are sick, we will need to go remote for the following two weeks, with weekly check-ins on whether to return.
- If I get sick, or if anyone in my family is sick and I am their caregiver, I will have to switch the class to online-synchronous.

Services and 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.**

Services and 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/](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)* - I understand that some students have had negative experiences with CAPS. My recommendation is that students can use CAPS as a resource for referrals to professionals in the area who take student insurance.
• **UNC Peer2Peer**: [https://www.uncpeer2peer.com/](https://www.uncpeer2peer.com/) Links to an external site. "Peer2Peer is an organization that promotes free one-on-one peer support for UNC students. Our Peer Responders are here to listen and support individuals, especially during these uncertain times. We hope with the diverse range of experience, backgrounds, and topics of interest, our Responders are able to provide a peer perspective."

• **Heels Care Network**: [https://care.unc.edu/](https://care.unc.edu/) Links to an external site. "The Heels Care Network website is a place for all Tar Heels — undergraduate, graduate and professional students, and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff — to come together in support of each other and access the many mental health and well-being resources at Carolina."

• **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](https://ars.unc.edu) Links to an external site.
  - [Carolina Cupboard: Community Food Pantry (on-campus)](https://ars.unc.edu) Links to an external site.
  - [Groceries for Neighbors in Need](https://ars.unc.edu) Links to an external site.
  - SILS food pantry: The SILS break room (on the second floor) is stocked with food and hygiene supplies for all students.

**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](https://ars.unc.edu) Links to an external site. or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto: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](mailto:Adrienne.allison@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://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.

Use of Generative AI

Introduction

ChatGPT and other Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) can produce text, images, and other media. These tools can assist with brainstorming, finding information, and even reading and creating materials; however, they must be used appropriately and ethically, and you must understand their limitations. Regardless of your use of any AI tools, you are responsible for the final product of your work, both academically and in the workforce. Generative AI is extremely useful; however, it has the following limitations:

- It is unclear how AI generates its content. The internal processes used to produce a particular output within the generative AI cannot be determined.
- The output is based on existing data (often scraped from online sources) and may reflect biases that should be acknowledged; it may also be inaccurate or entirely fabricated, even if it appears reliable or factual.
- AI evokes a range of intellectual property concerns; sourcing and ownership of information is unclear, and the status of AI output raises numerous questions—e.g., is output equivalent to a published resource? What citational responsibilities are in place for various AI interactions?

The following sections provide the philosophy and specific guidelines for using these tools and features (increasingly, generative AI capabilities will be integrated with everyday applications). **Unless I provide other guidelines for an assignment or exam, you should follow these guidelines.**

Usage Philosophy:

Use of generative AI in your coursework is based on the following principles:

1. **AI should help you think. Not think for you.** Use these tools to give you ideas, perform research (in compliance with point 2 below), and analyze problems. Do not use them to do your work for you, e.g., do not enter an assignment question into ChatGPT and copy & paste the response as your answer.

2. **Engage with AI Responsibly and Ethically:** Engage with AI technologies responsibly, critically evaluating AI-generated outputs and considering potential
biases, limitations, and ethical implications in your analysis and discussions. Utilize AI technologies ethically, respecting privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property rights. Ensure that the data used for AI applications is obtained and shared responsibly and in compliance with relevant regulations.

3. **You are 100% responsible for your final product.** You are the user. If the AI makes a mistake, and you use it, it’s your mistake. If you don’t know whether a statement about *any item in the output* is true, then your responsibility is to research it. If you cannot verify it as factual, you should delete it. You hold full responsibility for AI-generated content as if you had produced the materials yourself. This means ideas must be attributed, facts are true, and sources must be verified.

4. **The use of AI must be open and documented.** The use of any AI in the creation of your work must be declared in your submission and explained. Details on how to source your AI usage are explained below.

5. **These guidelines are in effect unless I give you specific guidelines for an assignment or exam.** It is your responsibility to ensure you are following the correct guidelines.

6. **Data that are confidential or personal should not be entered into generative AI tools.** Putting confidential or personal data (e.g., your One Card details) into these tools exposes you and others to the loss of important information. Therefore, do not do so.

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**Assignments**

There are four major assessments in this class

1. Participation & Mutual Aid;
2. Symposium on Information and the Social Good, which includes a group-led workshop session with the class.
3. In-Class Case Studies
4. Weekly Reading Reviews

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**Participation & Mutual Aid**

Be excellent to each other

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:

- **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.

• **Suggest readings**: If you know of an interesting reading (or ethical standard that I’ve missed) please let me know via the “Suggested Readings Discussion Board” and I’ll look it over and may add it to the syllabus next semester!

• **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. Letters from former students are HERE.

• **Discussion group reporter**: volunteer to take notes in the breakout rooms / small-group discussions and then report back for the group when we return to the main room.

• **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.

• **Perfect Attendance!** Remember how gratifying it was to have perfect attendance in elementary school? Here’s your chance to get that same warm fuzzy feeling again! (self-reported)

• **Sharing is Caring**: If you’re out in the world, reading stuff, looking at TikTok, reading some article somewhere and it seems relevant to this class, share it on the "Sharing is Caring" Discussion Forum! Students will get a point for sharing an article and/or commenting on a post where someone has shared an article.

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. Students must accrue 6 mutual aid points to pass the class.

(These ideas for grading mutual aid come from Dr. Max Liboiron on twitter: [https://twitter.com/MaxLiboiron](https://twitter.com/MaxLiboiron) Links to an external site.)

## Symposium for Social Good

### Overview

All students in all sections of INLS 776 will participate in the Symposium for Social Good on April 26 from 8:30 am - 5:30 pm. The symposium will consist of 45-minute panel presentations, organized in 5 research groups of 4-5 students each.

Each research group will host a symposium panel, which will:

- Describe a matter of concern: a topic area, professional dilemma, or current event.
- Outline pertinent problems or questions related to ethics and values of that dilemma/event.
- 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 26, 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 they 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:
   1. Selecting a set of appropriate readings.
   2. Leading us through your panel.
   3. 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.

**Group Formation & Topic Selection**

Students will form their own groups based on interests, prior relationships, similar professional goals...I will provide time at the beginning of class for the first few weeks for students to meet each other and explore the opportunities in group formation. Once the group forms, students will be able to discuss what their specific interests are, and come to an agreement on the general topic of their panel. An example from a previous semester: panel topic was "Toxicity in the Library" and individual presentations were things like toxic mold / toxic masculinity / toxic waste / toxic words / toxic attitudes...in the library. Assignments and due dates are in the modules section of this syllabus.

**Abstract & Content Outline**

• Each research group will provide a 300-500 word abstract for their panel to be included in symposium organizational materials (like schedules and brochures and whatnot). Abstracts include:
   o The title of your panel,
   o The names of the research group members, and
A general statement setting up the problem you'll be addressing in your 45 minute time-slot.
Examples of previous years' abstracts can be found at this link: https://info4socialgood.web.unc.edu/panel-abstracts/ Links to an external site.

The content outline is a brief outline of your panel: The panel topic, and each presentation title (and author) listed in the order that makes most sense, with a very brief description (15-25 words) of what each author will be addressing in their 5-7 minutes of presentation time.

In preparation for your panel, students will be doing significant research into their topic area. In the annotated bibliography, each research group will provide an annotated list of the materials they've found most useful. For the purpose of this exercise, I'd like 3-5 citations per student in the research group, with a total of no more than 35 citations. The bibliography can be organized by group, or by student, or by themes within the group.

Finally, research groups will have the chance to workshop their panel during class time in the final weeks of the class. Please provide a list of readings for the class (maximum of 5).

Annotated Bibliography & Selected Readings

Create an annotated bibliography, 4-6 citations per student in the research group, with a total of no more than 30 citations. The bibliography can be organized by student, or by themes within the group.

Each citation will include
- Bibliographical citation (APA format)
- The names, titles, and place of employment for each author of the work.
- What type of article is it:
  - Scholarly journal article (what journal)
  - Scholarly conference article (what conference)
  - Blog post (provide a description of the blog.)
  - Presentation (where was it presented, what date)
  - Newspaper article
  - Magazine article
- How many people have cited this resource / the nature of the resource (I want you to recognize that citing a blog post is different from citing the New York Times, which is different from citing an academic article)
- 1-3 paragraph description of the article
  - What is the author arguing for?
  - What methodology are they using?
  - What are the argument's strong points?
  - What are the argument's weak points?
  - What is interesting / valuable for you in this article?

Workshopping Your Panel
We can work on what this means as a class. My vision is that the research group will provide readings that will give the class an opportunity to understand the context of the problem. On the day of the workshop, each student/theme/sub-topic in the research group will have 5-10 minutes to present what they’re working on, what they're thinking, and how they’re approaching the problem. Students may do this live, or they may turn in a video that we can watch. Some examples of what you might include in a workshopping session:

1. **Tell the story**: Give a detailed description of the immediate dilemma / situation / conflict. Who are the key and secondary stakeholders? What is the context? What issues are at stake? Why is this important?
2. **A brief description of the relevant history** associated with the issue. What history do we need to know to understand what is happening now, why it might be happening the way it is, and why at this point in time?
3. **(From the group) An ethical/moral question**: This might be one large question or 2-3 smaller questions. These questions will frame our class discussion for that week.

I expect workshopping sessions to last between an hour and an hour and a half. Students will "Work With Me" (mutual aid point) to plan their workshopping session.

### Presenting the Panel at Symposium

We will have more information about the Symposium for Social Good as the semester continues. Students in the remote classes may present remotely or in person. In addition to presenting at the conference, all students must attend at least two hours at the symposium.

### Wrapping Up! The Final Week

We have one last class after the symposium and I’d like to use it to wrap up what we’ve learned in class. I don’t know what it looks like yet, but there’ll be nothing to turn in.

### In-Class Case Studies

#### Overview

We will have two sets of in-class case studies.

The first set will focus on cases where there is a problem in the field (this is introduced in Week 2), and the second set will focus on situations where an institution is trying to activate their collection / services / materials as some meaningful response to ethical issues.
I am using these case studies to work through the "Framework for ethical decision making" that we'll be using in this class. I hesitate to say it's a grading metric, but there will be a group presentation of your findings, so - I might as well give you credit for doing that work.

- In Week 2, students will choose the case they'd like to work on for the first case study (and I will form groups based on students' interests) - students will present their case in Week 4
- In Week 5, students will choose the case they'd like to work on for the second case study (and I will form groups based on students' interests), Students will present this case in week 8.

From the Markulla Website

*A Framework for Ethical Decision Making*

**Identify the Ethical Issues**

1. Could this decision or situation be damaging to someone or to some group, or unevenly beneficial to people? Does this decision involve a choice between a good and bad alternative, or perhaps between two “goods” or between two “bads”?
2. Is this issue about more than solely what is legal or what is most efficient? If so, how?

**Get the Facts**

3. What are the relevant facts of the case? What facts are not known? Can I learn more about the situation? Do I know enough to make a decision?
4. What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? Are the concerns of some of those individuals or groups more important? Why?
5. What are the options for acting? Have all the relevant persons and groups been consulted? Have I identified creative options?

**Evaluate Alternative Actions**

6. Evaluate the options by asking the following questions:

- Which option best respects the rights of all who have a stake? (The Rights Lens)
- Which option treats people fairly, giving them each what they are due? (The Justice Lens)
- Which option will produce the most good and do the least harm for as many stakeholders as possible? (The Utilitarian Lens)
- Which option best serves the community as a whole, not just some members? (The Common Good Lens)
Choose an Option for Action and Test It

7. After an evaluation using all of these lenses, which option best addresses the situation?
8. If I told someone I respect (or a public audience) which option I have chosen, what would they say?
9. How can my decision be implemented with the greatest care and attention to the concerns of all stakeholders?

Implement Your Decision and Reflect on the Outcome

10. How did my decision turn out, and what have I learned from this specific situation? What (if any) follow-up actions should I take?

In-Class Case Studies

Overview

Weeks 2 - 10 we will have a brief quiz on the readings at the beginning of class. These are timed quizzes (5 minutes) and the questions are available at the beginning of the semester on the Weekly module page. There are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers. My recommendation is to have the question in mind as you’re doing your readings, jot down your thoughts, and then copy and paste your thoughts into the quiz assessment at the beginning of class.

I use these quizzes to get an insight into what students are thinking as they do the reading. Again, there is no "incorrect" answer, and these are graded as "complete" or "incomplete."

Please complete a minimum of 6 of the 8 quizzes.