Basic Facts

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Sloan 311
Office Hours: by appt.

Meeting time and Place: Tu. & Th. 14:50 – 16:05 in CUE 203

Online: https://osble.eecs.wsu.edu (initially use your WSU ID as your username and password to log in; you will have to change your username and password the first time you log in). Course materials also available at: http://eecs.wsu.edu/~cs401

ISBN: 978-0-13-600848-4
(Please bring your textbook to every class.)

Required Clicker: An iClicker remote is required, and can be purchased from the Bookie along with your textbook. (You must bring your clicker to class to receive attendance, participation, and reading quiz credit. Also have an extra set of batteries handy and know how to quickly change them.)
Description

The widespread use of computing technology has changed the way we work, play, and interact with other people. These changes have given rise to a wealth of new social and legal issues that can be challenging to understand and navigate. In this course, we will use recent events in the news as a backdrop for exploring, discussing and debating issues that lie at the intersection of computing technology and society. Here are a few examples of the questions we will be exploring:

- There is a great deal of information about all of us recorded in computer databases. What rules should govern how this information is used? (We all get privacy notices in fine print from our banks, credit card companies, etc. What do they really mean?) Hacking, identify theft and credit card fraud have increased in recent years. What are responses to these types of fraud and what precautions can we take to prevent this from happening?
- New encryption methods make it possible to keep e-mail and phone conversations secret from others. How should our desire for privacy be balanced with the need of law-enforcement agencies to intercept communications of suspected criminals or terrorists?
- How serious are the problems created by Web sites that contain pornography, 'hate' material directed at various groups, bomb-making information, etc? Should there be any restrictions on material that is put on the Web?
- Computers are increasingly used to control medical devices, airplanes and other safety-critical systems. How safe are such systems? How safe is 'safe enough'? What can we do to manage the risks involved?
- It is easy to use computers to copy music, software, books, etc., in violation of copyright law. What is the extent of this problem? What can or should be done about it? What is free software? Should all software be free?

This course will emphasize critical thinking and reasoning skills grounded in ethical frameworks and principles above mere knowledge of issues and events. The goal is to provide a foundation for you to become an informed digital citizen capable of arriving at your own carefully-reasoned and well-grounded positions on the issues that affect you the most.

Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will

1. be familiar with some of the issues you may face as a member of a complex technological society.
2. understand how computing and information systems give rise to social issues and ethical dilemmas.
3. Increase your awareness of current social and legal developments related to computing technologies.
4. be able to discuss the benefits offered by computing technology in many different areas and the risks and problems associated these technologies.
5. understand some social, legal, philosophical, political, constitutional and economical issues related to computers and the historical background of these issues.
6. be able to explore the arguments on all sides of a controversial issue, and argue convincingly for the position you select.
7. be able to critique and provide constructive feedback on others’ position statements.
8. be able to work efficiently and productively as a member of a team.
Course Activities and Structure

Class meetings. The course meets twice per week for 75 minutes. Because lectures have been shown to be an ineffective learning method, lecturing will be kept at a minimum. Instead, course meetings will engage you in interactive learning activities, including large and small group discussions, cooperative groupwork, debates, mock trials, and field activities. Clickers will play a central role in engaging you more extensively in classroom activities. You must have a clicker to participate in and pass the class. Depending on its length and level of importance to the course, we will dedicate two to four class periods to each chapter. Generally, half of these class periods will explore the assigned reading material in a large classroom setting, while the other half will consist of small group activities. Attendance is required at both; clickers will be used to take attendance and gauge participation throughout each class period. If you don't have your clicker with you in class, you will not get credit for participating in class. Don't forget your clicker! Also, have an extra set of batteries handy, and know how to change them quickly if necessary.

The purpose of all class meetings is to explore the issues posed in the readings in greater depth. As such, you are expected to read the assigned material before the class meetings on which the readings will be explored. Using your clicker, you will answer reading quiz questions, which will count toward the reading quiz portion of the grade (see below). In addition, your instructor will have you click in on both attendance questions (“Are you here?”) and various opinion questions, which will be used to take the pulse of the class and to inspire discussion and critical thinking. Both of these kinds of questions will count toward the attendance/participation portion of your grade (see below).

In many of the class meetings, you will be assigned small group work in order to explore the issues and questions of the week in greater depth. This group work will consist of such activities as discussions, debates, mock trials, and field trips. In order to engage more fully in these activities, you will use your clicker to indicate your position and whether you are persuaded by other students’ arguments.

Finally, in some class meetings, your term project team may be able to work on, and receive feedback on, portions of the term project. This will provide teams with rich opportunities both to learn from other teams, and to help out other teams. It will also provide opportunities for the instructor to offer feedback, suggestions, and guidance that may be useful to the entire class.

Grading

Your grade for the course will be based on the following items (weights are in parentheses):

- **Reading quizzes (10%).** Sprinkled into both the Tuesday and Thursday lectures will be reading quiz questions, which you will answer with your clicker. The quiz questions will be written such that anyone who has made an honest attempt to do the assigned reading will have no problem determining the correct answers. Each week, the Tuesday and Thursday quiz questions will be combined to form one quiz for grading purposes. Each week’s reading quiz will be equally weighted. No quiz make-ups will be given under any circumstances. However, your two lowest quiz scores will be discarded.

- **Class attendance and participation (10%).** You are expected to attend class meetings and to participate actively in the class discussions and activities that take place. Your attendance
and participation will be monitored through your use of your clicker. In order to receive credit for a given class meeting, you will need to be present and to respond to all but one participation questions (i.e., non-quiz questions) on that day. In other words, your attendance and participation credit for a given class meeting is all or nothing: If you respond to all participation questions, or all but one of them, you will receive credit. If you miss more than one participation question, you won’t receive any credit for the day. We have instituted this policy in order to encourage students from arriving late or departing early. We also understand that you may need to miss class occasionally for valid reasons. For this reason, your three lowest class participation scores will be discarded.

- **Exams (30%).** A written midterm exam, worth 12% of your overall grade, will be given on Thursday, March 10 in class. The midterm will cover Chapters 1-4. A final exam, worth 18% of your overall grade, will be given during the course's scheduled final exam period: Tuesday, May 3 from 10:10 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. The final exam will be comprehensive, with an emphasis on chapters 5, 7, and 8. Both exams will consist of a mix of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short essay questions.

- **Term Project (50%).** A capstone term project, which you will complete in self-selected teams of four to five, invites you to explore a problem brought about by the emergence of technology in society in greater depth, and to explore alternative solutions. Through a series of project milestones, your project team will gradually develop a short documentary-style video (5 to 8 minutes) that presents the problem, explores alternative solutions, and ultimately endorses one of the solutions. For each deliverable, you will evaluate the contribution of your team members. Based on these evaluations, each team member will receive a multiplier for each deliverable that will be used to weight his or her grade.
Grading Scale
The following scale will be used to convert your course percentage into a grade. While it is unlikely that we will establish a curve, we may opt to use one for one or both of the exams if the results indicate that the exam may not have been fair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-90</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-89.99</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-87.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84.99</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-80.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>75-77.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64.99</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Suggestions for Getting the Most out of This Course

- **Attend class.** You can only benefit from this course if you show up! This is especially true of the group activities held on Thursdays. Therefore, you are expected to attend every class session and to participate actively. Remember, course attendance and participation are worth 10 percent of your overall grade (see above).

- **Put in enough time.** How much time are you expected to put into this course? Our rule of thumb is that students need to put in 3 hours of work outside of class for every hour they spend in class. This translates to roughly **6 hours per week.** You may need to put in only a fraction of 6 hours during some weeks, while you will find yourself putting in more than 6 hours during other weeks—especially during weeks in which pieces of your term project are due.

- **Provide ample feedback on the course.** In order to keep the class "on course," we rely extensively on your timely feedback. If you have any comments on the course (e.g., "I need more time to finish the assignment due next Tuesday"), or if you have any suggestions on how to improve the course, please let your course instructor know by e-mail, or attend office hours. You may also share your comments and feedback anonymously through periodic evaluation surveys administered online and via clickers.

- **Take initiative to get help.** You are strongly urged to "get by with a little help from your friends," as the familiar song goes. You can do this in two ways. First, we recommend that you form study
groups that meet regularly to study and discuss the material. These groups can be the same ones to which you are assigned for the group activities, or they can be self-selected groups. Second, it is up to you to take the initiative to contact the instructor or other students if you begin to struggle. The more you fall behind, the harder it will be to catch up. Therefore, it behooves you to seek help as soon as you notice that you're struggling.

- **Have reasonable expectations.** Through teaching many college courses, we have learned that our students often bring unrealistic expectations to a college course. Learning does not come "for free"; it is not simply a matter of "being taught." We'd instead like you to take the position that your destiny in the course is totally up to you. If you take an active role in your own learning, you will excel in this course, and have fun doing so. If, in contrast, you treat this course in the same way you treat television or video games—as an information "delivery" system—you are guaranteed not to get much out of the course, and your grade will suffer.

**Policies**

Please familiarize yourself with the following course policies. By following them, you will get the most out of this course, and you will not encounter any unwelcome surprises down the road.

- **Do not ask the instructor questions before class.** Please do not ask the instructor questions before class! I need this valuable time to set up my computers for class; I am unable to give you the attention you deserve. If you have specific questions about the class, feel free to approach me after class; however, never ask about your specific grade after class (see next point).

- **Do not ask grading questions before or after class.** I am not comfortable with fielding questions about your specific grades either before or after class. Please do not ask them! In most cases, I won't be able to answer them, because I am not the one who records the grades. Instead, e-mail your TA or instructor (see next point), make an appointment with your instructor (via e-mail) to discuss the situation, or attend a TA or instructor office hour (see above for our office hours).

- **Corresponding with the instructor via e-mail.** Please put "CptS 401" as the first words of the subject line of all course-related e-mails addressed to your instructor. This will ensure that your mail does not get lost in my in boxes, and that I will respond as quickly as possible. In general, you can expect an e-mail response from me quickly, and certainly within 24 hours of sending it.

- **Accessing course materials.** [OSBLE](http://eecs.wsu.edu/~cs401/) is the online presence for this course. Log in regularly (every other day at least) to view course announcements, access course materials, submit written assignments (as .pdf files), perform peer reviews, view and discuss your peer reviews, and view and discuss your grades. Keep in mind that OSBLE is a research prototype and may have bugs; please report all bugs online at [https://sourceforge.net/apps/trac/osble/newticket](https://sourceforge.net/apps/trac/osble/newticket). This link is also available from the Help button in the upper-right hand corner of the OSBLE screen. All course materials are available off of the course home page as well: [http://eecs.wsu.edu/~cs401/](http://eecs.wsu.edu/~cs401/).

- **Checking your grades.** Your TA will update your grades on a weekly basis, including your current overall percentage and letter grade. To view your current grades in OSBLE, log on to OSBLE and click on the [View Grades] link at the top of the course home page. We will do our best to record your grades accurately. Please check your grades regularly to ensure that your grades have been entered
properly, and please let your TA (not your instructor) know as soon as possible if you detect an error.

- **Challenging a grade.** If you believe that your instructor or TA has made a mistake in grading an assignment, you have *one week* (from the time your grade is first posted to the gradebook) to discuss the matter. Such discussions should take place either through e-mail for quiz/participation issues, or online in OSBLE for assignment issues—never in class (see point above)! To discuss an issue through OSBLE, use the “Post a comment” link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen when you view your grade. Please discuss grading issues as soon as possible. Students have often attempted to bargain for points well after their grades have been posted—often near the end of the semester when they have realized that they needed more points to obtain a certain grade. Please do not attempt to do this!

- **Exam.** Please show up to the scheduled exams with your WSU student I.D., which you will need to be admitted into the exam room. For each exam, you will be allowed one side of a full 8-1/2” by 11” sheet of paper as a "cheat sheet." In general, I will not allow you to make up the exam unless you (a) have a legitimate excuse (e.g., medical or family emergency) and (b) make other arrangements with us at least one week in advance of the exam. If a genuine emergency comes up and you cannot give me due notice of your need to make up an exam, I will accept make-up requests after the fact, provided that (a) they are in writing, with supporting, signed documents (e.g., a doctor’s note), and (b) they are submitted to us no later than 24 hours after the starting time of the exam you missed. I will review each case on an individual basis, and we will let you know if your request is granted no later than 24 hours after it is submitted.

- **Late policy for assignments.** Team term project deliverables are due by the established due dates and times (see OSBLE and individual assignment descriptions for exact due dates and times). With the exception of the final video, your team may hand in an assignment **up to 12 hours late** at a penalty of 10%. As an example, if a deliverable is due on Thursday at 11:59 pm., you could hand it in on Friday by 11:59 a.m. at 10 percent penalty, In cases of illness and extenuating personal circumstances, you may request in writing (e-mail is fine) that an exception be granted to this policy, but your request must be issued in a timely manner—preferably in advance of the due date—and there is no guarantee that it will be granted. Note: In order to participate in peer reviews, you MUST hand in an assignment. Hence, even if it is more than 12 hours late, do submit some sort of assignment if you want to get credit for doing peer reviews.

- **Academic dishonesty: Cickers.** Twenty percent of your course grade is based upon your use of clickers in class. Because it is possible to use another student’s clicker in class, there are many opportunities to cheat with a friend. To discourage this practice, we will periodically spot-check attendance by verbal roll-call and we will have undercover agents occasionally attend lectures. We will deal harshly with students whom we catch using each other’s clickers. **Any student caught using another student’s clicker in class will receive an automatic "F" in the class.** Likewise, any student who knowingly allows another student to use his or her clicker in class will receive an automatic "F" for the class.

- **Academic dishonesty: Plagiarism.** The work your project team hands in must be solely your own or that of your project team. All outside sources must be properly cited (see [these rules for plagiarism](#)). Plagiarism rules will be strictly enforced, and violations will be treated harshly according to the following schedule:
o first violation—A "0" on the assignment and verbal reprimand

o second violation—a grade of "F" for the course

• Students with Disabilities. We are committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC) during the first two weeks of every semester to seek information or to qualify for accommodations. All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Admin Annex Bldg, Rooms 205). Call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability counselor.