

Ethics of Information & Technology

COURSE

MWF 9:05-9:55
College of Arts & Sciences
725 Comm. Ave., Room 310

INSTRUCTOR

Susan Kennedy
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OFFICE HOURS

M/W 10:00-11:00
School of Theology
745 Comm. Ave., Room 502

TOOLS & MATERIALS

Blackboard

Our class has a Blackboard site that contains the syllabus, assignments, and other course-related materials. You can log in to our Blackboard page at: <http://learn.bu.edu>

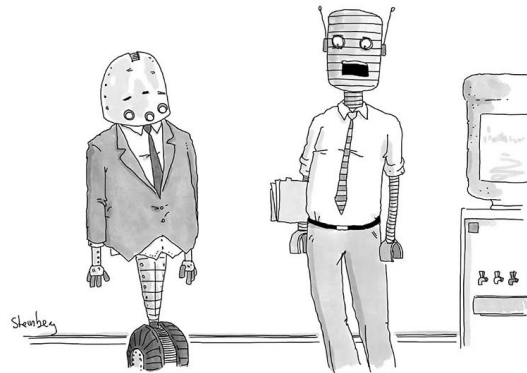
Books

Purchase or rent the following, in print or electronic edition:

- Turabian, et al. *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 2010.

Additional Readings

All other readings for this course will be provided on the Blackboard site.



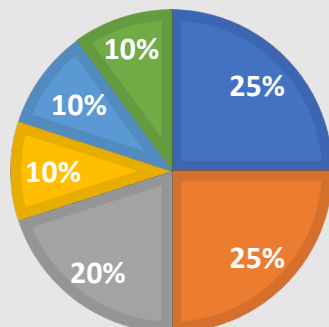
"I never would have replaced the human workforce if I had known about the dress code."

Welcome to WR 120 B4

We currently live in an era marked by technological innovation and the transmission of information. As technology becomes an inalienable part of human life, there is an increasing demand to consider the ethical implications of new technologies and their impact on how we receive and transmit various types of data: medical, genetic, financial, personal. This course will offer an opportunity to combine ethical theory and practice as we engage with important and timely questions: How do the values and norms of people change in interaction with technologies? To what extent does the individual have a right to information or to access data? When is that right mitigated by public health interests, national security interests, or privacy interests?

During this first-year Writing Seminar, you will cultivate skills and habits of mind essential to your academic success and to your future personal, professional, and civic life. You will learn methods for using sources effectively and responsibly as well as how to incorporate these into informed, well-developed pieces of writing.

GRADE SUMMARY



- Academic Essay 1: 25%
- Academic Essay 2: 25%
- Alternative Genre/ Op-Ed: 20%
- Oral Presentations: 10%
- Short Exercises: 10%
- Portfolio: 10%

Your final grade may be adjusted up or down 1/3 of a letter grade to account for participation. Each absence beyond two may lower your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.

SHORT EXERCISES

These are low-stakes assignments and activities that are designed to help you make progress on your graded, major assignments. They will not receive explicit grades, but you will receive credit for completing them on time.

METACOGNITION

You will have opportunities to reflect on your reading and writing practices. The self-assessment you write at the beginning of the semester will take stock of your writing skills and establish personal goals for the semester. You will also reflect on your experiences as you complete each major writing assignments, ultimately leading to a final reflective essay in your portfolio.

COURSE GOALS

- Read a range of genres with understanding, appreciation, and critical judgment
- Express yourself orally; converse thoughtfully about complex ideas
- Craft responsible, considered, and well-structured written arguments
- Plan, draft, and revise efficiently and effectively; help your peers do the same by responding productively to their work
- Reflect on reading, writing, and editing practices

Assignments & Activities

- Ungraded exercises and drafts (on time and complete)
- Academic essay 1 (Approx. 1,500 words)
- Academic essay 2 (Approx. 2,000 words)
- Alternative Genre/ Op-Ed (Approx. 750 words)
- Oral Presentation (5-7 minutes)
- Final Portfolio
- Participation in class activities and discussions

Policies

Format and Submission of Assignments

Assignments should be carefully proofed. Written assignments should be formatted according to APA Style. All assignments should be submitted on Blackboard.

Late and Missed Assignments

You are allotted a time bank of two days that can be used in 24-hour units to extend the deadline of one or two of your graded assignments. This eliminates the need to request extensions and allows flexibility in managing your workflow. After you use up your time bank, graded assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade each day they are late.

Email

Email should be carefully proofed, with a subject heading, salutation (e.g., "Hi Susan"), valediction (e.g., "See you in class"), and your name. For the appropriate level of formality, use my emails to you as a guide.

RESOURCES

CAS Writing Center

The [CAS Writing Center](#) (100 Bay State Road, 3rd floor, with a satellite location at Mugar Library) offers one-on-one consultations for students to discuss their work for WR courses with well-trained writing consultants. Whether you consider yourself a strong writer or a weak one, you can benefit from meeting with a consultant.

The CAS Center for Writing is open Monday through Friday. Hours for the current semester are posted on the website below. While the center accepts walk-in visits, you are strongly encouraged to reserve an appointment in advance. Because of the high demand for consultations, students are limited to one reservation per week. Reserve an appointment via the website or by calling 617-358-1500.

Accessibility

If there are circumstances that might affect your performance in this course, speak with me so we can develop a plan to satisfy both your learning needs and the course requirements. [Disability Services](#) is the office responsible for assisting students with disabilities (physical or mental). Whether or not you have a documented disability, many support services are available at BU.

Policies, cont'd

Attendance

You may miss two classes without penalty. Save your free absences for when you need them. Each absence beyond two may lower your final grade 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., *B* becomes *B-*). Five or more absences will be grounds for an *F*. Habitual tardiness (more than three times) may also lower your grade one-third of a letter grade. If you have a special obligation that will require you to miss several classes, please talk with me at the beginning of the semester. Please note: missed conferences will be counted as absences.

Engagement

The success of this seminar depends on your participation. Come prepared to ask questions, offer ideas, and listen and respond to your fellow classmates productively and respectfully. Phones should not be used in class. Laptops may be used only for specified activities. If this policy presents problems with notetaking, let me know.

Chosen Name and Gender Pronouns

This course aims to be an inclusive learning community that supports students of all gender expressions and identities. While class rosters are provided to instructors with students' legal names, please let me know if you would like to be addressed by a different name than that listed on StudentLink. You are also invited to tell me early in the semester which set of pronouns (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/their/theirs, etc.) you feel best fits your identity.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the passing off of another's distinctive words or ideas as your own. Cases will be handled in accordance with BU's [Academic Conduct Code](#). **Penalties can range from failing an assignment to expulsion from the university.** In this class we will discuss conventions for using and citing sources. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please speak with me.

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Changes will be announced in class and will be posted online.

Module 1: COURSE FOUNDATIONS			
<p>In the first few weeks of the semester, you will learn the basic vocabulary of philosophers and start exploring key ethical issues of information. Short exercises are designed to help you practice effective reading strategies and systematic note-taking. We will focus on analyzing and understanding sources, critical evaluation, and planning and drafting papers.</p>			
Date	Class Focus	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 1			
W 9/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the course Assign Self-Assessment 		
F 9/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information – What is it? In-class writing exercise – analyzing the text 	Weigend – Introduction	Self-Assessment
Week 2			
M 9/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metadata and Surveillance Group discussion about short papers 	Schneier – Data as Surveillance	Short analysis paper
W 9/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Value of Privacy Assign Academic Paper 1 In-class Brainstorming Exercise 	Rachels – Why Privacy is Important	
F 9/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Citizenship & Bioethics In-class outline activity How to create an outline for your paper 	Evans – Power to the People Turabian pp. 63-73	
Week 3			
M 9/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Right to Know and the Right Not to Know In-class exercise – Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources 	Husted – Autonomy and a Right Not to Know Turabian pp. 89-97	Outline of Paper
W 9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic Data and Crime-solving How to write an introduction 	Williams & Wienroth – Suspects, Victims, Others Turabian pp. 119-26	
F 9/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class Peer Review 		First Draft
Week 4			
M 9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democracy, Censorship, and the Threat to Liberty and Freedom Video Clip – Hasan Minhaj 	Nunziato – Protecting Free Speech in the Internet Age	
W 9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copyright and Piracy Creative Commons – video clip 	Lessig	
F 9/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Sharing vs Data Donation In-class self-reflections on final draft 	Prainsack – Data Donation	

Module 2: ACADEMIC WRITING USING MULTIPLE SOURCES

In this module, you will build on the critical evaluation skills you practiced in the first module by learning how to acknowledge and respond to objections as well as integrate multiple sources into your paper. Now that you have been familiarized with ethical issues of information, you will shift focus to developing a critical understanding of emerging technologies. Short exercises are intended to help you develop planning and drafting your writing, incorporating multiple sources whether by quoting, paraphrasing, or citing, developing a strong thesis statement, and effective strategies for revising your paper draft.

Date	Class Focus	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 5			
M 9/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is technology? Small group activity – identifying technology relations 	Rosenberger & Verbeek – A Field Guide to Postphenomenology	Final Draft and Metacognitive Reflection
W 10/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the ‘Script’ Video clip from the movie <i>Her</i> Gatebox and Digital Voice Assistants – Small group activity 	Verbeek – Obstetric Ultrasound and the technological mediation of morality	
F 10/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign Academic Paper 2 Aristotle’s <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> – Close-reading exercise 	Aristotle – Nicomachean Ethics book 8	
Week 6			
M 10/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual Friendships Create outline of reading together in-class 	Cocking & Matthews – Unreal Friends	Outline Exercise
W 10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual Friendships Review Claim and Criticism exercise 	Briggle – Real friends: how the internet can foster friendship	Claim and Criticism Exercise
F 10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual Communities Sign-up for conference times for 10/15-10/17 	Parsell – Pernicious Virtual Communities	
Week 7			
T 10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Identity Online Conferences begin 	Rodogno – Personal Identity Online	First Draft – Outline
W 10/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Identity & Immortality Black Mirror video clip 	Newton – Speak, Memory Perry – Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality	
F 10/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Cloning 	Brock & Kass	
Week 8			
M 10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class peer review 		Second Draft
W 10/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic Enhancement Revising sentences/revising your draft 	Sandel, Parens Turabian pp. 115-18	
F 10/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem of Obsolescence Reverse Outline Exercise 	Sparrow Turabian 128-38	

Module 3: GENRE AND AUDIENCE			
<p>In this module we will shift focus from evaluating technology to implementing these critiques into a value-sensitive design. After becoming familiar with stakeholder reasoning and completing a journal assignment reflecting on your technology usage and interactions, you will develop a writing topic for a public audience: The Op-Ed. At the end of the semester, you will share your ideas with the class in a simulated conference-style presentation.</p>			
Week 9			
Date	Class Focus	Readings Due	Assignments Due
M 10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Module 3 Soft Impacts of technology 	Swierstra – Identifying Soft Impacts	Final Draft and Meta-cognitive work for portfolio
W 10/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial Intelligence in Medicine Assign journal entries 	Chung & Zink – Hey, Watosn, Cabitza et. Al. – Unintended consequences..	
F 11/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technomoral scenarios Small-group activity- technomoral scenarios 	Lucivero et al. & Regalado	
Week 10			
M 11/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring Technomoral Change 	Swierstra et. al.	
W 11/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value-sensitive design Assign Op-Ed 	Friedman et al.	
F 11/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robots and Work 	Gheaus and Herzog	
Week 11			
M 11/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robots and Caregiving How to use library resources 	Sparrow and Sparrow	Journal Entries
W 11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care robots – creative small group activity Timely topics in ethics of information and technology – class brainstorming activity 	Vallor, and Van Wynsberghe	
F 11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual Reality 	Brey, and Ramirez & LaBarge	
Week 12			
M 11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review Aristotle on the modes of persuasion – writing for a public audience 	Aristotle – Rhetoric Op-ed examples	First Draft – Editorial
W 11/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral ‘nudges’ 	Sunstein and Thaler	
F 11/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nudging for Health 	Quigley	
Week 13			
M 11/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tips for effective oral communication TED talk clips 	Myisha Cherry – Anger is Not a Bad Word	
W 11/27	Thanksgiving Recess		
Week 14			
M 12/2			Oral Presentations
W 12/4			Oral Presentations
F 12/6			Oral Presentations