
Syllabus-Computers and Society: CSCI 293

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Office hours: MW 12:15 – 1:00 and by appointment

Objectives: This course explores the impact computers have had, and continue to have, on our daily lives and in our society. Among the issues we will investigate are privacy, freedom of speech, and ethical use. This course satisfies a writing requirement (W) which means you'll be writing at least 5000 words (~20 pages) of material as part of your coursework. This course also satisfies a values requirement (V). That is, you will “construct and evaluate answers to questions of moral and political concern.”

Readings:

The Computer: A Very Short Introduction	Darrel Ince	978-0199586592 Oxford Univ. Press
Networks: A Very Short Introduction	Guido Caldarelli	978-0199588077 Oxford Univ. Press
A Gift of Fire: Social, Legal and Ethical Issues for Computing Technology (4 th Edition)	Sara Baase	978-0132492676 Prentice Hall
World Wide Mind: The Coming Integration of Humanity, Machines, and the Internet	Michael Chorost	978-1439119143 Free Press

Learning Outcomes: Through successful completion of this course, you will

- 1) be able to discuss the past and present roles of the computer in society
- 2) understand and be able to apply different ethical systems to evaluate various scenarios
- 3) improve your ability to provide written and oral arguments in support of your work.

Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this class will be determined by a mixture of written work and class participation. Specifically:

Paper 1 (tentatively due Wed. Oct 8)	: 15%
Paper 2 (tentatively due Wed. November 12)	: 20%
Paper 3 (tentatively due Wed. December 10)	: 25%
Class participation/journals/quizzes	: 30%
Other writing and/or class project	: 10%

I will determine the final curve at the end of the course. However, I guarantee that if your overall average is at least 90% you will earn some flavor of “A,” at least 80% some flavor of “B,” etc. The final exam for this course is on Friday, December 19 from 8:30 – 11:30.

Class Format: Our class will be run in a seminar/discussion format. This means, of course, that your active engagement and participation is necessary for the success of the class. Besides, we all want to know what's on everyone's mind! I will post a list of reading assignments and due dates on the class Spaces site. Please have the reading completed *prior* to the day during which they will be discussed. I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes to ensure that you are doing the assigned reading.

Journals: As part of your participation grade you will keep a regular journal. The point of the journal is not to get anything "right" or "wrong," but to keep a record of your thoughts about the assignments, material and readings, and how they interrelate as the semester progresses. When there is a writing prompt for class you should craft a paragraph or so answering the prompt and bring it to class with you. In general, you should have at least two entries per week and aim for a weekly minimum of 350 words. I'll collect the journals a few times during the semester. Journals will be graded on a 12 point scale, with 0 – 3 points for each component below.

- **ANSWER/ASSIGNMENT:** Did you complete the weekly entries and answer all of the prompts?
- **EVIDENCE:** Did you support your statements with evidence from the readings, discussion, and experience? This includes citations, examples, specifics to the assignment, etc.
- **ANALYSIS:** Depends on the depth of argument/critical thinking/original ideas/logic/synthesis.
- **EXPRESSION:** This includes coherence, organization, style, and grammar.

Journal grading scale: 12 points = A, 11 points A-, 10 points B+, etc.

Class Attendance: You are expected to attend class. If you know in advance that you won't be in class or have a good reason for being absent (certifiable sickness, cancelled flight in Prague, etc.) please tell me as soon as possible so we can work out a way to make up the work you've missed as necessary. If you have more than three *unexcused* absences, you may receive a lower grade in the course. (A half letter grade for four unexcused absences, then an additional half letter grade for each additional two absences.) **No make-up quizzes without a great excuse!**

Intellectual Honesty: I encourage you to talk to other members of this class about the material we cover – explaining concepts to each other and discussing ideas is a great way to learn. However, any work you hand in must be your own. In particular, you should not copy or paraphrase the work of any other student, nor should you use another's work as a model for your own. If you have any questions as to whether something constitutes improper use, please ask! Quizzes and exams are not communal. I am required by the College to report any *suspected* instance of cheating.

Academic Accommodations: In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu, or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Privacy: Spaces contains student information that is protected by the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act. Disclosure to unauthorized parties violates federal privacy laws. Courses using Spaces will make student information visible to other students in this class. Please remember that this information is protected by these federal privacy laws and must not be shared with anyone outside the class. If you have any questions about appropriate use, please feel free to ask me.

Federal Credit Hour Statement: The student work in this course is in full compliance with the federal definition of a four credit hour course. Please see the Lafayette College Registrar's Office web site for the full policy and practice statement.

More informally: Welcome to the course! This should be an interesting semester for many reasons, and I'm looking forward to your contributions.