



Course Information	<p>94-841 The Ethics and Politics of Data 6 Unit Course Fall 2021 (Mini 2)</p> <p>Instructor: Nicholas Agar Office: First level Phone: TBC Email: nagar@australia.cmu.edu Classes: Remote (synchronous) Course Web Site: CMU Canvas</p>
Motivation for this course	<p>The objective of this course is to introduce students to the many ethical and political issues arising in the gathering, storage, processing, and exploitation of data. The course will instruct students on how to contribute to ethical debates about data and to help make policy about it. Students will learn how to write effective and readable opinion pieces publishable on intellectually respectable Internet news sites and offered to potential employers as demonstration of your ability to write in an informed, persuasive, and engaging way about some of the headline ethical issues of the day.</p> <p>This is an interdisciplinary course. It draws on information from many different sources, including economics, politics, ethics, philosophy, and data science. The interdisciplinary focus of the course means that we will be interested in debate and discussion between these various disciplines. Successful interdisciplinary discussion advances an informed view about the ethical implications of the digital economy in a way that minimizes specialist jargon.</p>
Learning objectives	<p>Students completing this course will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand ethical and political issues that arise in the gathering, storage, processing, and exploitation of data• identify philosophical themes that arise in contemporary debates about data• formulate contributions to these debates suitable to shape public policy about data and potentially publishable on reputable Internet news sites.
Course Materials	<p>For each lecture, the instructor will post lecture ppts. Students in course will have full access to the website of the international media organization Project Syndicate https://www.project-syndicate.org/ Project Syndicate publishes and syndicates commentary and analysis on a range of global topics. All the commentaries are available in English, but many also appear in other languages including Mandarin and Spanish. Among commentators are world leaders and Nobel laureates. The discussions are accessible but authoritative. Students should begin the course by browsing Project Syndicate locating commentaries that have relevance to the gathering, storage, processing, and exploitation of data.</p>

Evaluation Method	Students will write three 800-word opinion pieces using the commentaries on <i>Project Syndicate</i> as a model. Opinion pieces will be graded according to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding of a chosen ethical and political issue arising in the gathering, storage, processing, and exploitation of data• the presentation of a response to that chosen issue• the novelty, clarity, and accessibility of that response.																							
Grading Scale	<table><tr><td>A+</td><td>95% – 100 %</td><td>B+</td><td>80% – 84.99 %</td><td>C+</td><td>65% – 69.99 %</td></tr><tr><td>A</td><td>90% – 94.99 %</td><td>B</td><td>75% – 79.99 %</td><td>C</td><td>60% – 64.99 %</td></tr><tr><td>A–</td><td>85% – 89.99 %</td><td>B–</td><td>70% – 74.99 %</td><td>C–</td><td>55% – 54.99 %</td></tr></table> <p>Scores below 55% equate to a failing grade (R)</p>						A+	95% – 100 %	B+	80% – 84.99 %	C+	65% – 69.99 %	A	90% – 94.99 %	B	75% – 79.99 %	C	60% – 64.99 %	A–	85% – 89.99 %	B–	70% – 74.99 %	C–	55% – 54.99 %
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Course Outline / Readings	<p>Week 1: Introducing the ethical and political challenges of data</p> <p><u>Class 1: The OECD Principles on AI</u></p> <p>The course begins by offering a user-friendly approach to ethical debates about data. We won't treat ethics as an abstract academic subject with jargon known only by the fortunate few. The approach to ethics taken in this course is designed to help those who set and administer policy about data. We examine the 2019 OECD Principles on AI and explore ways in which students can make use of them or challenge some of the ethical assumptions behind the principles.</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>OECD Principles on AI https://www.oecd.org/going-digital/ai/principles/</p> <p><u>Class 2: How to write an effective and authoritative opinion piece</u></p> <p>This class introduces the accessible but authoritative opinion pieces on <i>Project Syndicate</i>. Students are encouraged to freely browse the website seeking out commentaries relevant to the gathering, storage, processing, and exploitation of data.</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Gordon Brown and Anant Agarwal, "Closing the Education Technology Gap," <i>Project Syndicate</i> https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/education-skills-gap-online-learning-by-gordon-brown-and-anant-agarwal-2019-11 Nicholas Agar, "Automating Segregation," <i>Project Syndicate</i> https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/automation-fuels-social-segregation-by-nicholas-agar-2019-10</p> <p>And two opinion pieces on <i>Project Syndicate</i> that connect in some way with either or both of the Brown and Agarwal, or Agar commentaries.</p>
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Week 2: Data and Democracy

There are widely expressed concerns about the impact of the control and use of data on democracy. In 2012 Mark Zuckerberg said “Facebook was not originally created to be a company. It was built to accomplish a social mission – to make the world more open and connected.” Have Facebook and other Social Media companies lived up to this promise?

Class 1: The challenge to democracy from social media

We look at the arguments of the legal scholar Cass Sunstein that, Zuckerberg’s proclamation notwithstanding, Social Media companies like Facebook pose an unprecedented threat to democracy.

Required reading and listening:

Kelly Born, “Six Features of the Disinformation Age,” *Project Syndicate*

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/fake-news-government-inadequate-responses-by-kelly-born-2017-10>

Peter Singer, “Free Speech and Fake News,” *Project Syndicate*

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/fake-news-criminal-libel-by-peter-singer-2017-01>

HLS Library Book Talk: Cass Sunstein’s “#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media” Harvard Law School available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI31M3tC1y8>

Class 2: Fixing democracy in the age of social media

We will examine Sunstein’s suggestions about how democracies can respond to the challenge and an argument that he misdiagnoses the problem facing democracy.

Required reading:

David Weinberger, “Pointing at the Wrong Villain: Cass Sunstein and Echo Chambers”, *Los Angeles Review of Books*

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/pointing-at-the-wrong-villain-cass-sunstein-and-echo-chambers/>

Week 2 in greater depth

Cass Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*, (Princeton, 2017)

Tom Cristiano, Entry on Democracy, *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/democracy/>

Week 3: Surveillance Capitalism

There are many fears about the intrusiveness of some digital technologies. We look at the work of the social psychologist and philosopher Shoshana Zuboff on a novel form of capitalism – surveillance capitalism – that prioritizes behavioral manipulation and exploitation.

Class 1: Introducing Surveillance Capitalism

This class introduces Zuboff’s view.

Shoshana Zuboff, “Surveillance Capitalism,” *Project Syndicate*

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/onpoint/surveillance-capitalism-exploiting-behavioral-data-by-shoshana-zuboff-2020-01>

Class 2: Surveillance Capitalism during a pandemic

We look at a criticism of Zuboff. We go on to consider how surveillance capitalists have fared during the pandemic.

William Janeway, "Big Tech is Watching – and Being Watched," *Project Syndicate*
<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/onpoint/big-tech-is-watching-and-being-watched-by-william-janeway-2019-03>

Video of discussion between J. Bradford DeLong and Scott Galloway "COVID-19, Technology, and Surveillance Capitalism," *Project Syndicate*
<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/videos/covid-19-technology-and-surveillance-capitalism?barrier=accesspayupgrade>

Week 3 in greater depth

Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, (Public Affairs, 2019)

Week 4: Cyber Security

The focus of this week is on the many challenges to cyber security. We begin with a description of these challenges suitable for an ethical or policy evaluation. How does cyberwar change the way states relate to each other? We go on to consider the various resources available to states who need to secure their digital networks.

Class 1: Introducing Cyber Security

This class describes some of the challenges to the security of a digitally connected world. Our focus on ethics and politics means that we seek descriptions of the relevant technologies that tell us what we need to understand about the threats to cyber security but no more.

Required reading:

Michael Chertoff, Latha Reddy, Alexander Klimburg, "Facing the Cyber Pandemic", *Project Syndicate*

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/pandemic-cybercrime-demands-new-public-core-norm-by-michael-chertoff-et-al-2020-06>

Richard Haas, "Taming the New Wild West", *Project Syndicate*

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/biden-putin-meeting-cyber-security-will-depend-on-deterrence-by-richard-haas-2021-06>

Class 2: Contemporary threats and available resources

This class focuses on the latest challenges cyber security and the resources available to liberal democracies.

Gavin Patterson, "Fighting Cybercrime with Neuro-Diversity", *Project Syndicate*,
<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/neuro-diversity-cybersecurity-autism-asperger-by-gavin-patterson-2018-01>

Anne-Marie Slaughter and Simm Sacks, "Changing the Face of Sino-American Relations", *Project Syndicate*

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/us-china-alaska-summit-diplomacy-women-by-anne-marie-slaughter-and-samm-sacks-2021-04>

Joseph Nye Jr., "What Did Biden Achieve in Geneva?", *Project Syndicate*

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/did-biden-putin-geneva-meeting-advance-cybersecurity-by-joseph-s-nye-2021-07>

Week 4 in greater depth

Ben Buchanan, *The Hacker and the State: Cyber Attacks and the New Normal of Geopolitics*, (Harvard University Press, 2020).

Week 5: The Future of Work

We peer into the not-too distant future to wonder about the place for human workers in a world of increasingly powerful digital technologies. Human workers are already being displaced from the economy. Where might we find a refuge for human workers in a future of increasingly efficient machine learners and artificial intelligences?

Class 1: Two perspectives on the challenge to work from the digital revolution

This class introduces two clashing perspectives on the future of work. According to one perspective, the digital revolution will eliminate almost all work done by humans. According to another, current job losses are a blip that will soon pass as the economy creates more and better jobs. We look at how to respond to this disagreement among experts.

Required reading:

John Maynard Keynes, "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren" in John Maynard Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion*, (W.W. Norton & Co., 1963): 358-373.

Available at <http://www.econ.yale.edu/smith/econ116a/keynes1.pdf>

David Autor, "Will Automation take away All our Jobs?" *TED* Talk available at

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_autor_will_automation_take_away_all_our_jobs/reading-list?language=ta

Class 2: A social solution to automation?

This class examines a response to the threat from automation that focuses on our social natures.

Required reading:

Nicholas Agar, "The Social Solution to Automation", *Project Syndicate*,

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/social-economy-to-overcome-automation-and-loneliness-by-nicholas-agar-2019-03>

Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo, "The Revolution Need Not Be Automated", *Project Syndicate*,

<https://www-project-syndicate-org.cmu.idm.oclc.org/commentary/ai-automation-labor-productivity-by-daron-acemoglu-and-pascual-restrepo-2019-03>

Week 5 in greater depth

Martin Ford, *Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future* (Basic Books, 2015)

Robert Gordon, *The Rise and Fall of American Growth: The U.S. Standard of Living Since the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016)

David Autor, "Why Are There Still So Many Jobs? The History and Future of Workplace Automation" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 29 (3) 2015: 3-30

Nicholas Agar, *How to be Human in the Digital Economy* (MIT Press, 2019)

	<p>Week 6: Mystery Topic</p> <p>The final week will examine an issue in data ethics that Professor Agar and the class will choose together. During Week 3 students will browse <i>Project Syndicate</i>, seeking out a topic on the ethics or politics of data that has yet to be covered. They will email Professor Agar with their recommendations before the end of Week students will use the two weeks leading us to the final class to conduct their own research on case studies and ethical ideas relevant to the topic.</p>
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<p>Course Policies & Expectations</p>	<p><u>Lectures:</u></p> <p>Class participation is essential to the success of this course. Students will not be familiar with any of the concepts. The best way to grasp them in to discuss and debate. We will be doing this in the context of discussion of specific digital technologies and their capabilities.</p> <p>This is post-graduate education so it should not be necessary to set rules regarding arriving on time, using mobile phones and other distractions. We are in this together so the expectation is that each student will behave in a way that adds to the achievements of the group as a whole.</p> <p>Each class will be recorded and made available to students. No student may make their own recording of any classroom activity without the express written consent of the instructor. If a student believes that he/she has a special requirement, they should speak with me directly.</p>
<p>Academic Honesty and Integrity</p>	<p>All CMU students are expected to follow the ethical guidelines and adhere to the policies as defined in your Program's <u>Student Handbook</u> or in any other source describing such policies as they apply to students at Carnegie Mellon University. These policies and guidelines are available on the CMU web site.</p> <p>Individual assignments must reflect individual effort. Sharing your assignments with any other student in any form (whether it is a paper document, an electronic document such like a MS Word document, or a document in any other format) is not permitted and will be considered cheating. Any "discussion" between students that results in a similar submission is also not allowed.</p> <p>Any violations of academic integrity in this class will have the following consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) at the minimum, no credit for assignment in question <u>and</u> lowering final grade by one letter (e.g., from B to C); (b) in more serious offences, failing the class; (c) cases will be reported to the Dean's office

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