

# Computing & Society - CS-3001

[Assignments and reading due dates might adjust during the first week of class]

Lecture and Section Recitation *In Person* is required. Attendance will be taken and is a portion of your grade.

## Instructor

Clint Zeagler

[clintzeagler@gatech.edu](mailto:clintzeagler@gatech.edu) (please copy your TA and Head TA on emails)

Office Hours - Email to confirm office hour meeting.

For class questions and concerns please ask your section TA first, then Zeagler if you need more clarification. Please always include Head TA on emails to professor.

## Learning Objectives

In this class, you will learn about:

### Ethics

What do "right" and "wrong" mean anyway? How is "ethical" different from "legal"? We'll learn about several philosophical approaches to ethics including utilitarianism, Kantianism, social contract theory, and virtue ethics. The goal is for students to be able to address ethical dilemmas with reasoned arguments, grounded in a combination of these ethical theories.

### Professional Ethics

What special responsibilities do we have as computing professionals? What do the Software Engineering Code of Ethics and ACM Code of Ethics say, and how can we use these in our daily practice?

### Computing and Society

In what ways does computer technology impact society? We'll talk about a host of issues including privacy, intellectual property, and freedom of speech.

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## Texts

### Required Texts:

- [Ethics for the Information Age](#) [Links to an external site.](#), by Michael Quinn (online edition.)
- *Visual & Statistical Thinking: Displays of Evidence for Decision Making* by [Edward R. Tufte](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [Links to an external site.](#) Graphics Press, 1997.  
Note that this little book reproduces chapter 2 of Tufte's book *Visual Explanations*. If you're a Tufte fan, you may wish to buy the full book. However, it's expensive.
- Articles on [electronic reserve](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [Links to an external site.](#)
- Articles available online.

Please make sure to read the correct (online only) edition of the Quinn book, since content in it gets quickly out of date.

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## Assignments and Grading

- Section Attendance and Participation (25%)
  - Section Expectations and Section Grading Rubric
- Lecture Attendance (10%)
- Test 1 (10%)
- Homeworks (20%)  
*Note that the term paper proposal and outline count as homework assignments.*
- Test 2 (10%)
- [Term Paper](#) (25%)

# Attendance

- **Lectures** will be in person. You may miss up to three lectures without penalty. Each additional lecture missed without documented and confirmed excuse will be deducted at an equal percentage of lectures where attendance is taken. Lectures will not be recorded
- We will take attendance via a canvas quiz that will be open 10 minutes during class. It will be a secret word I give at the beginning of class you have to pick from the multiple-choice answers. If you are not in class when the 10 min opens to take the quiz you will be counted absent.
- **Sections** will occur in-person. Attendance is required for sections and lectures at the time of class. There will be no recordings of sections. Your lowest section grade will be dropped.
- **There will be no section during the first week of class.**
- The material in this class is best understood through discussion. Therefore, sections are important. Section participation is graded. Your lowest single section grade is dropped.

Before section, you must attend the lectures for that week and do the readings. Your section leader will deduct substantially from your participation grade if you are not prepared.

If you miss section for a legitimate excused reason, you may be given a makeup assignment. The make-up assignment will typically consist of answering all the questions for discussion in writing, and one more essay that asks you to synthesize what is important. Email your TA for the make-up assignment. Make-up assignments may be handed in up to two weeks after the missed section; up to one-week later for the final section. You may not produce section makeup assignments more than once without approval from Zeagler.

- **Excused Absences** include school related events and scholastic endeavors that are known ahead of time and asked for in advance, or sickness/illness that is documented within 48 hours of an absence. Think of school like a job, you have vacation days I'm giving you (3 missed lecture days, 1 dropped section) sick days (when you are sick and cannot come to class) and work-related events (excused career events, athletic events, research events). If you had a wedding you needed to go to you would have to use a vacation day at a job. If there is an agreed upon start date and you need to take another week of time you would have to use vacation days. This is how I'm going to make decisions about what is excused and not excused (would I have to use a

vacation day, a sick day, or would this be a work event that work would pay for me to be at).

- Excused absences (in the case of planned absences such as participating in a university sponsored athletic event) need to be given with advance notice, and when sick a doctors note or other documentation needs to be given within 48 hours of absence (or at the discretion of your TA without documentation).
- On the occasion that you forget to sign in at class (make the wrong selection), you may make up your absence by writing a one page summary (or come up after class and ask to take a selfie photo of the attendance word) of the lecture and this must be turned (emailed to your TA) in within 2 weeks of the lecture. You may only take advantage of this twice, after which if you come and forget to sign in (or make the wrong selection) you will be counted absent.
- Please let your Section TA know if you are sick and cannot make it to section, the same attendance policy of excused absences apply to section.
- **Reference Format**  
Please use APA format for all references.
- **Assignments**  
Homeworks will be graded on a list of criteria (specified on the assignment) such as quality of writing, completeness, insight into technical issues, insight into social issues, etc. Please hand all assignments in on Canvas unless explicitly instructed otherwise. If English is not your first language, you may request to not be graded on your writing for a particular individual assignment, including the term paper. This means you won't be penalized for bad writing, but you also won't get credit for good writing. To take advantage of this option, you must mark "ESL" (English as a Second Language) on the first page of your assignment/paper. This option is not available for group assignments. We still of course expect you to try to write in correct English, and will do our best to offer useful feedback on your writing.
- **Late Policy**  
Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 3% (one grade step: A becomes A-) per day. Please double space your assignments. Over the course of the term, you have three "late days" where work may be late with no explanation needed. Please mark 'use my late days' on the first page of your assignment/paper if want to use your late days when you make late submissions. Use your late days wisely as different submissions have different weights. If you have used your late days on a

low-value assignment like a homework, you can't later transfer them to a different assignment.

- **Honor Code**

This class abides by the [Georgia Tech Honor Code](#)Links to an external site.. All assigned work is expected to be individual, except where explicitly written otherwise. You are encouraged to discuss the assignments with your classmates; however, what you hand in should be your own work. Please be careful not to copy sentences from readings/references into your assignments verbatim. Sometimes this happens accidentally. For example, a student may copy and paste a sentence into their file of notes, and then later refer to their notes and forget that the sentence is not their own. If you copy anything into notes, make sure to write where you got it from. Other times, students who are struggling with English as a second language may copy sentences because they are struggling with the language. Do not do this. Remember that we have a lenient policy on grading for ESL students. If copied sentences are detected and the copying appears incidental, the assignment will be penalized for 5 to 10 points per sentence. If the copying is more extensive, the student will be referred to the Office of Student Integrity.

- **AI Generative Use** – It is understandable that the generative AI is going to be part of our writing process. Please know that if you just ask AI to write your papers or homework for you, you will probably receive a low grade. If AI lies, or makes up facts or references, or is wrong and you have not checked what you have turned in for accuracy you will receive a failing grade for fake information or references. If you are using AI to rephrase or to help with grammar especially if you speak English as a second language this is a wonderful use of AI.

- **Statement of Intent for Inclusivity**

As a member of the Georgia Tech community, I am committed to creating a learning environment in which all of my students feel safe and included. Because we are individuals with varying needs, I am reliant on your feedback to achieve this goal. To that end, I invite you to enter into dialogue with me about the things I can stop, start, and continue doing to make my classroom an environment in which every student feels valued and can engage actively in our learning community.

## Section Expectations

Ethics are best learned through discussion, and discussion sections are a critical part of this class. Coming to section in person and on time and prepared is 25% of your course grade.

Before each section, you will:

- Read the section guide for the week before your section.
  - Some section guides have things you need to do before section, so read it in advance.
- Attend the lectures for that week.
  - Lecture attendance is required in-person. (I will ask the class questions during lecture.)
  - If you have an excused absence, you may watch live or watch the lecture recording.
  - But you must watch before your section meeting.
  - Do the reading before each lecture.
- Bring a question about this week's content, or a news article relevant to the course content. These will be discussed at the start of each section.
- Complete any pre-section assignments.
  - Some sections will ask you to select a quote from the reading and post it on the Canvas for your section. Early on, we will ask you to call an older family member or friend and ask about how technology has changed in their lifetime. Check the section guide to see if there is something you need to do.
- Be on time. Sections will start promptly at the start time (not five minutes after.)
- (In the event of an online section) Your video must be **on**. If you are having bandwidth problems and need to turn your video off, notify your TA in advance.

Students of all political persuasions should feel equally comfortable in this class. It is fine to disagree with someone or ask why they believe as they do, but please do so in a friendly and respectful manner.

The TAs will use the section grading rubric. Your lowest section grade will be dropped.

If you miss section for a valid reason, you will be given an opportunity to do a make-up assignment. It will typically consist of answering all the questions of the section discussion in writing, with an additional essay asking you to reflect on the content. The make-up assignment is due two weeks after the section date and time, but extensions will be given for extenuating circumstances like prolonged illness. Contact your TA to request your make-up assignment.

## Section Grading Rubric

### General grading categories:

Section grades are on a continuous scale from 0-100. Generally speaking, these ranges are what to expect:

- **100:** Exceptional. Student is fully prepared and on time, and expresses insights that go beyond what is in the reading to synthesize concepts and connect to other course content or current events.
- **90:** Good. Student is prepared and on time, and participates as expected. Most students should get a 90 most of the time.
- **80:** Fair. Student is somewhat underprepared or does not participate adequately.
- **70:** Poor. Student is underprepared and does not participate adequately.
- **60 or lower:** Student is totally underprepared and does not participate.

### Deductions will be taken for:

- Being slightly late (10 minutes or less): 2 to 5 points
- Being very late (10 minutes or more): 10 to 100 points
- Being under-prepared
- Not actively participating in conversation
- Being rude/disrespectful of others
- Derailing the conversation by trying to participate when under-prepared

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## Acknowledgments

Assignments and ideas on this syllabus build on those from everyone who has taught it before, especially Amy Bruckman, Colin Potts, Mary Jean Harrold, Bill Ribarsky, and Spencer Rugaber.