Computers and Society

CPSC 430

Lecture 1 – Introduction

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http://cs.ubc.ca/~kevinlb/teaching/cs430

Course Description

- We'll explore the interplay between **information technology and society**, emphasizing ethical issues.
- You'll come away with an increased:
  - understanding of the **social and ethical implications** of computer use and abuse;
  - ability to **think critically and defend decisions** logically;
  - appreciation for **alternate points of view**.
- Our focus will be on **reading, writing and discussion**.
  - Each week students will complete an **assigned reading**, write a **mini-essay** in response, and **evaluate the work of others**.
  - Classes will emphasize discussion and debate.
  - The ability to speak, read and write fluently in English is **essential for success** in the class.

Grading Scheme

In-Class Participation	20 %
Weekly Essay Questions	25 %
Weekly Peer Review	10 %
Midterm Exam	15 %
Final Exam	30 %

Caveats:

- To pass the course, you must pass the final exam.
- I may change the exact percentage breakdowns shown here.
- This is **not an easy course—something to hand in *every* class**
  - On the other hand, you'll learn a lot, and students who work hard throughout the term can expect to do well.

Course Website: http://cs.ubc.ca/~kevinlb/teaching/cs430

Participation

- **Clicker use**: 10%
  - depends on activity, not on answers
  - starts **Tuesday**
  - if you don't register in **Connect**, you'll start missing marks
  - posted weekly

- **Other class participation**: 10%
  - structured activities (debates, presentations)
  - participation in class discussions
  - course blog (Google+) discussion and contribution
  - making good use of time in class (no Facebook, games, …)
  - tracked by TAs, finalized only at end of class

Weekly Essays

- **Between Thursday, 3:30 PM and Tuesday, 1:30 PM (sharp!)**
  - Do **assigned readings** of up to one chapter from the textbook. Readings posted at http://cs.ubc.ca/~kevinlb/teaching/cs430.
  - Take a **multiple-choice quiz** online to test your comprehension.
  - Answer one **essay question** (your choice from a list of choices) and enter your answers online. You'll be allowed up to 300 words; that's less than one single-spaced page.
  - At first: do some **calibrated peer review**
    - This is practice for the following; details in a minute
- **Between Tuesday, 3:30 PM and Thursday, 1:30 PM (sharp!)**
  - Perform your own **peer review** of four randomly assigned students' written questions.
    - We'll accumulate an (anonymous) "hall of fame" of excellent essays and peer reviews that you can use as further examples.

Peer Review

1. **Calibrated peer review**

   Grading essays from previous years that we've graded already

   – Confirms that we all **understand the grading scheme** in the same way, and shows you examples of weak and strong essays

2. **Supervised peer review**

   Grading essays from this year when you haven't yet demonstrated proficiency at peer review

   – A **TA will grade the same essays**, and only the TA grade will count

   – The **TA will also grade your peer review** (recall: 10% of final grade)

3. **Unsupervised peer review**

   Grading essays from this year once you've demonstrated proficiency

   – By default, **you get a perfect grade** for every submitted review

   – Your review may be **spot checked or appealed**: checked by TA

     • Spot checks: very positive ratings; severe disagreements; random

   – This can put you back into the supervised pool

Peer Review: Reviewer Perspective

- Do **at least 3 calibrated reviews** (and as many as you want) before 1:30 every Tuesday that you're in the supervised pool
  - Week 1: this means everyone!
  - Week 2: only if you're still in the unsupervised pool
  - Getting into the **unsupervised pool** (you can do this in week 1!):
    - Over your past five graded reviews (whether calibration or graded by a TA), get a cumulative score of at least 35/50
    - Calibration scores are computed as max(10 - sum of squared errors across rubric items, 0)
- Do **4 reviews of others' essays** before 1:30 PM Thursday
- How we'll calculate **your peer review grade** (10% of the course):
  - graded reviews: you get **what the TA gives you**
  - ungraded reviews: you get a **perfect grade**
  - reviews worth increasing amounts: scaled to 0.6, 1, 1.4 points (%) per week
  - calibrated reviews, when supervised: **lose 50% of the week's grade** if you don't do ≥3

Review of your Essays

- You'll **receive 3 or 4 peer reviews** of your work, each week
  - These reviews will be **double-blind** (you won't know who reviewed you)
  - You'll be graded on a five-point scale on four dimensions:
    - Was the essay **well structured**, stating a thesis, supporting it with argument(s) that are clearly related to this point and (if relevant) distinct from one another, and linking these arguments in a logical way?
    - Did the essay **do a good job of making its case**, choosing relevant arguments, backing them up with evidence and examples at an appropriate level of detail, and responding to contrary views as appropriate?
    - Did the essay demonstrate a **good understanding of the course's subject matter**, including both the topic and the wider context?
    - Was the essay presented **clearly and in correct English**?
  - You'll also get comments on each item, and an outline of your essay
- When you also **receive a review by a TA**:
  - only the TA evaluation matters for your grade
- When you are evaluated **only by peers**:
  - your grade is the **median** of your peer grades
    - in the case of 4 grades, we average the middle two
  - If you disagree **you can appeal**, and a TA will re-grade your essay
- Essays are worth **increasing amounts** as the term goes on
  - 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 points (% of final grade) each week

This all starts right away!

- For **next class** (Tuesday, September 11, **1:30 PM**) :
  - ☑ **read all of Chapter 1** of the textbook
  - ☑ **log in** to "Mechanical TA" and:
    - ☑ complete a **quiz** (or you can't do the essay)
    - ☑ perform at least 3 **calibrated peer reviews**, preferably more
    - ☑ write a **short essay** on your assigned topic
  - ☑ **register your clicker** in Connect, or you'll miss out on grades
  - ☑ **bring a laptop** if you have one

- Don't leave this to the last minute!
  - It might take you a bit of time to get your accounts set up, etc.

"What if something goes wrong, and I can't submit an essay/review?"

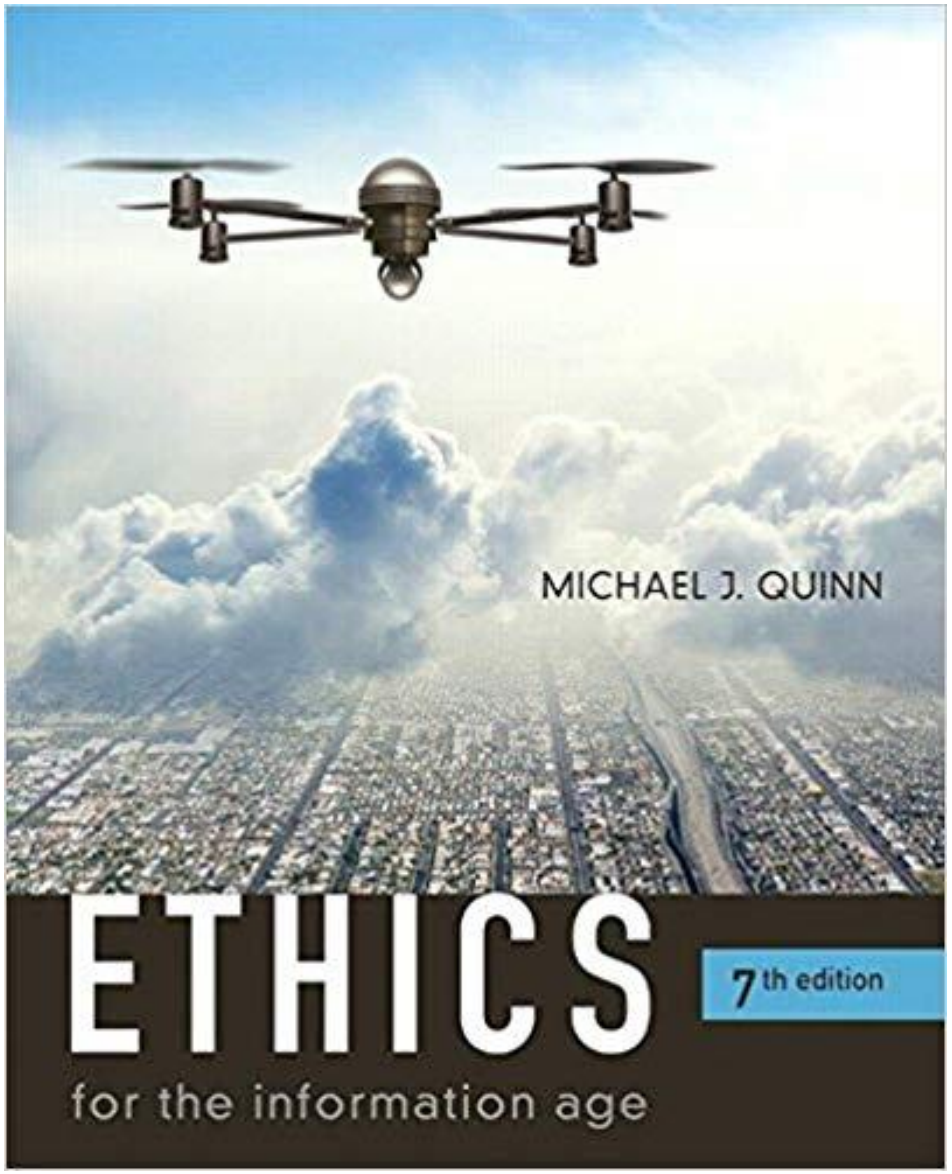
- We'll **drop your worst essay and peer review grades**, allowing for a situation in which:
  - you miss the (firm) deadline
  - you're sick, out of town, have a conflict with another course, …
  - you register for the course late
  - you get a poor grade on one essay

  (We'll renormalize your grades accordingly)

- Other extensions or waivers will be granted only in **truly exceptional circumstances**.
  - Unless you have an exceptional excuse, you'll simply get a grade of zero.
  - Registering in the course late isn't an exceptional excuse.
    - If you're on the waitlist, start actively participating now!

Textbook

- We will be using the textbook ***Ethics for the Information Age, 7th Ed***, by Michael J. Quinn.
- It's important that you have a copy, because we'll be reading the whole thing—starting this week!
- **Copies on reserve** in the CS reading room
  - Some are older editions



Topics (pretty cool stuff, actually ☺)

- History of computing, storage, networking (next 3 classes)
- Ethics & Argumentation (5 classes)
- Social issues (1 week each):
  - Networked communications
  - Intellectual Property
  - Information Privacy
  - Privacy and the Government
  - Computer & Network Security
  - Computer Reliability
  - Professional Ethics
  - Work & Wealth
- Rest of today:
  - break into 16 groups (count off from 1 – 16)
  - get assigned a statement and a position for or against
  - develop arguments for your assigned position
  - present your list to the class; we'll discuss briefly
  - everyone votes on the issue (you vote freely)
  - we'll revisit these questions throughout the course. You'll get to see if your opinions change.

Networked Communications

"Any social network above a certain size should be required to verify the identities of its members."

Intellectual Property

"The government should aggressively prosecute intellectual property infringement, particularly including peer-to-peer file sharing."

Information Privacy

"It should be illegal for shopping malls to install cameras for tracking customer behavior."

Privacy and the Government

"It should be illegal to sell a mobile phone that cannot be decrypted by the police

if so ordered by a court."

Computer and Network Security

"Canadians should be able to

vote online in federal, provincial and municipal elections."

Computer Reliability

"Self-driving cars should be allowed to operate on public roads once they have been shown to be at least slightly safer than the average human driver."

Professional Ethics

"It is unethical for computer scientists to aid in the development of autonomous weapon systems."

Work and Wealth

“The government should attempt to slow or stop the spread of automation technologies that are likely to eliminate large numbers of jobs.”