

Ethics, Data & Technology

PHI 3681

Instructor Info —



Shadi Heidarifar



W 3:30 - 6:30 PM & by appt.



FLO 303



Sheidarifar@ufl.edu

Course Info —



MTWRF



2 - 3:15 PM



FLI 109



Course Description

In this course, the importance of the ethical dimensions of data science and big data technologies is explored. The course begins with some concrete problems in everyday life as unintended consequences of AI. The course then pairs ethical discussions with more in-depth concerns in emerging technologies, such as the attention economy, privacy, and consent. The course ends with interdisciplinary discussions on a variety of concepts and problems in the contemporary literature of the field, such as algorithmic fairness, data inequality, and biases.

Course Requirement

1. Participation – 150 points:

- Attendance
 - Showing up on time having read the material each day.
- Discussion Board Post
 - Submitting a discussion board post for every reading before the class by 12 pm reflecting a serious effort on engaging with the material. Every day, the class starts with the questions or points that students raised in their discussion board posts. For days that there is no new reading and so, there is no discussion board post, the class starts with a discussion on how what has been said during the lecture so far is connected to the discussion board posts on the topic.
- Questions for Discussion during Lectures
 - Every day during the lecture, there are questions for discussion that are designed for students to critically share their views on the topic.

Participation Grade

A	Student is present in the class on time, submits discussion board posts, actively listens to class discussions, and participates in class whose contributions are consistently of high quality.
B	Student is present in the class on time, submits discussion board posts, actively listens to class discussions, and often participates in class whose contributions are sometimes of high quality.
C	Student is present in the class on time, submits discussion board posts, and actively listens to class discussions but is mostly silent.
D	Student is disrespectful or disruptive of the class, the discussion, other students, the instructor, or in their discussion board posts.
E	Student fails to submit discussion board posts and participate in the class discussion in any substantial way.

2. In-class presentation – 150 points:

- Starting from week 2, students in pairs of groups that are randomly assigned, present each week's course materials on Thursdays.
- The presentation must include:
 - An overview of that week's materials as well as a discussion of a case/an example that is related to that week's theme.
 - A facilitation of designed discussion questions and answers with the contribution of other non-presenting students in responding to the provided questions.



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Presentation Grade

Grade Delivery

A	Holding eye contact and speaking with inflection to capture the audience's attention.
B	Displaying minimal eye contact with the audience and speaking with little inflection.
C	Holding no eye contact with the audience and speaking in a monotone.
D	Being disrespectful or disruptive of the presentation, other students, or the instructor.
E	Failing to present.

Presentation Grade

Grade Content

A	Demonstrating a high level of knowledge by explaining the materials and answering all class questions with further elaboration.
B	Having a partial grasp of the materials and attempting to answer class questions with the use of examples and cases.
C	Struggling to make coherent sense of the materials and failing to answer class questions.
D	Being disrespectful or disruptive of the presentation, other students, or the instructor.
E	Failing to present.

Presentation Grade

Grade Organization

A	Presenting information in a logical sequence and limiting the length of the presentation within the assigned time.
B	Presenting information in a logical sequence and failing to limit the length of the presentation within the assigned time.
C	Presenting information in a semilogical sequence and failing to limit the length of the presentation within the assigned time.
D	Being disrespectful or disruptive of the presentation, other students, or the instructor.
E	Failing to present.

3. Self-Evaluation – 50 points:

- Halfway through the semester, at the end of week 3, students write a one-paragraph self-evaluation of their participation and what they learned in the course so far.



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- Students are expected to reflect on their strengths and contributions to the class, their areas for growth, materials that they deeply engaged with so far, and their plans for improving how they participate in the course for the rest of the semester.

- The file must be submitted on Canvas by 11:59 pm on Friday, Jun 2.

4. ChatGPT Assignment – 50 points:

- At the end of week 5, students write a short solution, counterargument, or counterexample to overcome one of the ten scenarios in the paper “What if the Devil is my Guardian Angel: ChatGPT as a Case Study of Using Chatbots in Education” – Tlili et al.
- It is highly recommended that students read the entire paper first and then, choose a scenario to respond.
- The file must be submitted on Canvas by 11:59 pm on Friday, Jun 16.

5. Case studies – 600 points:

- Starting from week 2, students in pairs of groups that are randomly assigned, discuss case studies concerning emerging technologies in class. On a case study day, every other Friday, each group meets in class to discuss the case study questions. After the initial discussion, by Friday midnight, students compose their own individual responses based on their group discussion and submit them in a single file on Canvas.
 - Case study 1 – by 11:59 pm on Friday, May 26 – 200 points
 - Case study 2 – by 11:59 pm on Friday, Jun 9 – 200 points
 - Case study 3 – by 11:59 pm on Friday, Jun 23 – 200 points

Case Study Grade

Grade	Criteria
A	The response clearly reflects course materials. The argumentative line of the response is fully intact in the sense that there are no logical or mechanical flaws to make the structure or the content of the response difficult to follow.
B	The response clearly reflects course materials. The argumentative line of the response is partially intact and there are gaps in the logical and mechanical flows of either the structure or the content of the response.
C	The response minimally engages with course materials. The argumentative line of the response is partially intact and there are gaps in the logical and mechanical flows of both the structure and the content of the response.
D	Student is disrespectful or disruptive of the class, other students, the instructor, the group discussion, or in their individual responses.
E	Student fails to submit individual responses on Canvas by the deadline.

6. The sum of all the points for each assignment is then a percentage, and the course grade is based on the standard scale:

Grading

Letter	Percentage	Point	Letter	Percentage	Point
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A	100-93	4.00	C	75.5-71.5	2.00
A-	92-89.5	3.67	C-	71.55-68.5	1.67
B+	89.5-85.5	3.33	D+	68.5-65.5	1.33
B	85.5-81.4	3.00	D	65.5-61.5	1.00
B-	81.5-78.5	2.67	D-	61.5-59.5	0.67
C+	78.5-75.5	2.33	E	59-0	0.00

Course Material

All materials are available on Canvas.

Attendance

- Attendance is mandatory.
 - Much of what students learn in this class turns on their participation in discussions.
- Attendance is not figured into the grade as a separate factor.
 - Absences can bring penalties by bringing down students' participation grades.
- Except for presentation days, students are permitted three "free" unexcused absences without any penalty.
 - For each unexcused absence beyond the third, students will lose 10% of their participation grade (e.g., with the fifth unexcused absence, a 100% will become a 90%).
 - Students' free absences are there to cover for them on occasions when they have important reasons for not being in class that they do not wish to or are unable to document.
- If students are absent for a documented, excused reason, they will not lose any points and the absence will not exhaust one of their free absences.
- Excused absences are typically limited to the following cases:

Grading

Cause	Documentation
Mental/physical health	Note from a medical professional or from the Dean of Students within one week of absence, including the date(s) students are unable to attend class. No private medical information should be included in this.
Personal(e.g., death in family)	Note from the office of the Dean of Students
UF activities	Notes must come from the activity supervisor, such as a coach, prior to the day of absence. Regular absences will lead to make-up assignments.



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Religious

None required. Please talk to the instructor at the beginning of the semester about this.

All other absences are typically unexcused, including some very good reasons to miss a class, like career or family events. The instructor supports students' interest in these things and understands why they might prioritize them over class, but that does not make them excused absences. If students think they have an exceptional case, contact the instructor.

The Use of Technology

The use of laptops, tablets, watches, and cell phones is prohibited in this class. Turn off your phone as soon as you enter the classroom. First-time violations will receive a verbal warning. Subsequent violations will yield a substantial loss of participation points. See more on why at <https://s-heidarifar.hopp.to/washingtonpost> and <https://s-heidarifar.hopp.to/higher-education>.

In the case that students really do need to use an electronic device for looking at course materials or taking notes, talk to the instructor in advance.

Learning Objectives

- To become familiar with philosophical questions, texts, and methods regarding the ethical dimension of AI, data, and technology.
- To identify the ethical dimensions of concepts in emerging big data technologies including bias, fairness, privacy, and consent.
- To develop critical thinking ability and analyze issues regarding the ethical application of AI, data, and technology.
- To make progress in writing and oral skills regarding complex ethical questions on AI, data, and technology.
- to build teamwork skills regarding the ethical dimension of AI, data, and technology.
- To learn different ways of interpreting texts, both historical and contemporary materials in emerging big data technologies.
- To practice questioning everyday life's events regarding the ethical dimension of AI, data, and technology.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with learning needs that require special accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Read the Conduct Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.



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A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Mental Health

Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, or problems with eating or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be related to your coursework; if so, feel free to contact the instructor. However, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis can also contribute to decreased academic performance. In that case, contact:

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit <https://umatter.ufl.edu/> to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>.
- University Police Department: Visit <https://police.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit <https://ufhealth.org/>.
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/> or call 352-273-4450.

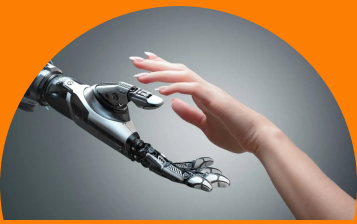
In the event the instructor suspects students need additional support, expect that the instructor expresses their concerns and the reasons. It is not the instructor's intention to know the details of what might be troubling students, but simply to let them know if needed, mental health resources are available.

Remember, getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself and for your loved ones.

Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>.

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.



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Diversity & Inclusivity

The instructor considers the classroom to be a place where students will be treated with respect and welcomes individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, abilities - and other visible and non-visible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

Land Acknowledgment

The instructor acknowledges that for thousands of years the area now comprising the state of Florida has been and continues to be home to many Native Nations. The instructor further recognizes that the main campus of the University of Florida is located on the ancestral territory of the Potano and the Seminole peoples. The Potano, of Timucua affiliation, lived here in the Alachua region from before European arrival until the destruction of their towns in the early 1700s. The Seminole, also known as the Alachua Seminole, established towns here shortly after but were forced from the land as a result of a series of wars with the United States known as the Seminole Wars. The instructor acknowledges the obligation to honor the ancestral, present, and future Native residents of Florida.



Class Schedule

Week 1: Technology & Society

Day 1	Introduction	
Day 2	Politics of Technology	Do Artifacts Have Politics? – Winner
Day 3-5	Attention Economy	Is the Attention Economy Noxious? – Castro and Pham

Week 2: Surveillance and Privacy

Day 1-2	What is Privacy?	The Right to Privacy – Thomson
Day 3	Why should We Care about Surveillance?	Why 'I Have Nothing to Hide' is the Wrong Way to Think About Surveillance – Marlinspike
Day 4	May 25	Group Presentation 1
Day 5	Midnight – May 26	Case Study 1

Week 3: AI & Love

Day 1	Holiday	
Day 2	The Ethics of Care	Robots and Human Dignity: A Consideration of the Effects of Robot Care on the Dignity of Older People – Sharkey
Day 3	The Ethics of Companionship	The March of the Robot Dogs – Sparrow
Day 4	Jun 1	Group Presentation 2
Day 5	Midnight - Jun 2	Self-Evaluation Guest Lecturer - Sturm

Week 4: Data Feminism

Day 1-3	Feminist Approach to Data Equality	Data Feminism (Selected) – D'Ignazio & Klein
Day 4	Jun 8	Group Presentation 3
Day 5	Midnight – Jun 9	Case Study 2

Week 5: Data & Inequality

Day 1-3	Racial Data Inequality	Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code (Selected) – Benjamin
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Day 4	Jun 15	Group Presentation 4
Day 5	Midnight - Jun 16	ChatGPT Assignment
		Guest Lecturer - Suleymani

Week 6: Algorithmic Bias

Day 1-2	Algorithmic Fairness	The Ethical Algorithm: The Science of Socially Aware Algorithm Design (Selected) – Kearns & Roth
Day 3	Algorithmic Islamophobia	Is GPT-3 Islamophobic? – Francesca
Day 4	Jun 22	Group Presentation 5
Day 5	Midnight – Jun 23	Case Study 3
		Pizza Day & Wrap up