

Social Implications of Computing: Course description and policies

CS 195, Spring 2016

Course description and policies

CS 195 is a discussion-intensive course about the social implications of computing. The purpose of this course is to help computer science students make informed and thoughtful choices about their careers, participation in society, and future development activities. Readings and lecture topics are drawn from a range of fields that together seek to describe our contemporary global society: sociology, philosophy, economics, public policy, etc.

Weekly Schedule

The week before each Monday class meeting will be used to prepare for the upcoming discussion-oriented class section.

- Small-group discussions will be held on Friday: 1pm-2pm in 531 Cory (Josh) and 2pm-3pm in 504 Cory (John)
- On Monday, class will consist of lecture and discussion on the weekly topic. All students should complete the readings and weekly survey before class.

Discussions

Each student will select *one* weekly topic that interests them the most. You are required to attend a small-group discussion section during the week before your topic is discussed in lecture.

Surveys

Lecture topics will not be determined only by the wisdom of your instructor. Instead, you will collectively choose your own adventure through the material. A brief survey about each upcoming topic will be emailed to the class each week. Before class begins, please complete the survey, in which you can vote on the issues or questions most interesting to you. The results of these surveys will guide our discussions.

Essays

In addition, you will write three short essays (500-1000 words) that contain your original thoughts about issues from the class. All students will write about the same topics, and your work will be reviewed by your peers. Essay assignments will appear in the reading list and be announced in class.

Grading

The course is graded P/NP. The reason for that policy is to ensure that you can feel free to express opinions different from those of the instructors, both in class meetings and in written work.

In order to receive a passing grade in CS 195, you must earn at least 80 points, in addition to attending one small-group discussion.

The expected way to pass the course is as follows:

- Complete at least 10 or more surveys (10 points).
- Attend 10 or more lectures.
- Submit 3 essays and receive a passing peer review (3/5) on all of them.
- Provide peer reviews for 9 essays.
- Participate in a small-group discussion section.

However, to give you a small degree of flexibility, you may design your own way to reach 80 points according to the following point values:

- Surveys, 1 point each, for a max of 10 points
- Lecture attendance, 2 points each, for a max of 20 points
- Writing essays, 10 points each, for a max of 30 points
- Peer grading, 3 points each, for a max of 29 points