

**Summary:** You will write an analysis of the social, legal, and/or ethical implications of some computing technology.

**Audience:** The audience for your work should be your peers. That is, your reader is someone who has been exposed to the theories, ideas, and issues we have discussed in class and who has a similar level of technical understanding. While you may assume a level of awareness, you must still strive to connect any such prior knowledge to your analysis.

**Topic:** You may choose which computing-related technology to analyze. The technology should be relatively recent and may have subtle or not-so-subtle implications. While the technology should have a relatively broad or important impact, your social analysis is more important than the technical consequence. Many textbooks focus on technology and society (some are on reserve in the library for this course), but you often need not look farther than your daily newspaper—especially the technology and/or politics sections—for examples.

Again, a central factor in your topic should be computing, not general science and technology. The focus of your paper should not be an explication of the technology. Rather, you should say only enough about it to clarify what the relevant social and ethical issues will be. Feel free to inquire if you are having difficulty identifying a topic or are unsure about whether your topic is appropriate.

Your topic should be something beyond the topics we have discussed and read about directly in class. If it is related, your approach must be clearly novel.

**Analysis:** Social and/or ethical impacts should form the core of your paper and drive your writing from start to finish. Be clear about the stakeholders and possible impacts of the computing technology. Examine potential policies and the relevant duties, rights, and/or consequences of each. It may be necessary to do this only for a single action/rule/policy related to your computing topic, or it may be necessary to discuss several such options.

**Argument:** In all cases, you must give reasoned support for your analysis. Because the three elements of argument are thesis, evidence, and reason, you should have a clear thesis supported by evidence and reasoning that ties the evidence and your thesis together. **Opinions are insufficient.** Your thesis should be neither factual nor obvious.

**References:** You must cite at least one reference for the computing topic. This may be a newspaper article, promotional material for the technology, or any other standard primary or secondary source. Furthermore, you should strive to support your claims with evidence by citing external references. Your sources should be either primary or secondary; **Wikipedia is an unacceptable reference.** Thus, you should plan to have at least 3-4 references, or more if appropriate. You must consistently use a recognized citation style of your choice, such as MLA or APA.

**Length:** Your essay must be at least 900 words and **no more** than 1100 words. To help give you a sense of length, this is roughly 4 pages when formatted single-sided, double-spaced, no more than 12 point font and 1" margins. This excludes references or any other headers/footers.

**Milestones:** There will be several milestones (preliminary writing tasks) before the final paper submission. These tasks should be typed and are due at the beginning of class on the specified date.

**Topic Selection** (*Wed. April 6*) Write two or three sentences identifying your technical topic and giving a brief sketch of its social implications. You need do no analysis, just offer a convincing statement about impact. If your topic needs any additional focusing or suggestions, I will notify you by Friday April 8.

**Sentence Outline** (*Wed. April 20*) Write an outline of your paper that shows the logical organization and flow of your argument. Each outline entry (heading, sub-heading, etc.) **must** be a complete sentence. These sentences may or may not end up in your paper, but each must be a completely formulated statement. Furthermore, no division (or sub-division) may consist of only one part. That is, an “A” must have a “B” and a “1” must have an accompanying “2.”

In addition to helping you construct the arc of your logic and easily identify your supporting reasoning and/or evidence, this format will help you bring clarity to your paragraph sequence and internal cohesion. Once you have organized the paper, you should find the task of writing and developing paragraphs much easier.

**Draft and Revision Plan** (*Wed. April 27*) Good writing results from revisions. Toward this end, you must submit:

**A “Smooth” Draft** That is, something that is not fresh from your fingers (e.g., rough), but has been smoothed out some. Please provide one unmarked copy.

**A Copy of an External Review** Someone other than you must read and provide comments and feedback on your paper. Your external review may be done by a peer critic or someone from the Writing Lab. The course page provides a template for a peer reviewer to use. Please provide a marked copy of your draft along with the additional comments.

**A Brief Revision Plan** Give a short (i.e., one paragraph) summary of the changes you plan to make generated by the review. Note that revising might mean adding, removing, or completely reorganizing multiple paragraphs. It is not simply correcting grammar.

**Final Paper** (*Wed. May 4*) Your final draft, including all the aspects described on page one, is due in week 13.

**Grading:** Your essay grade will be based on all of the substantive requirements described on the first page, in addition to the usual basics of good writing: argument, paragraph unity and cohesion, grammar, and style. I expect you to devote care and attention to all tasks for this assignment. Because I believe as much in the process as the product, you must submit all milestones to receive a grade for the paper.