Academic Ethics and Integrity

CS109: Ethical Foundations of Computer Science
January 23, 2018
Welcome!

• Goals for this semester:
  • Learn to recognize ethical decisions in computer science
  • Learn to understand how those decisions affect you and others
  • Develop the ability to identify the best course of action
  • Develop the courage and stamina to be the person you want to be

• How we’re going to do it:
  • Introduce topics
  • Review case studies
  • Discuss case studies (end of class, blog posts, and beginning of next class)
Who is Sarah?

- **Education**
  - Undergrad in Russian/Media Arts and Sciences from Wellesley
  - MS and Ph.D. in CS from UT Austin
- **Teaches:** CS354, CS354r, CS349
- **Outside Dev**
  - Akula Games
  - Local and networked cooperative games
  - Empathy-building through games
- **Hobbies**
  - Brazilian jiu-jitsu
  - Art and writing
  - Playing video games!
Who is Alison?

• Education
  • Undergrad in CS from Georgia Tech
  • MS and Ph.D. in CS from UT Austin

• Teaching: CS439, CS398T, CS109

• Service
  • WiCS Faculty Advisor
  • Coding in the Classroom: Hour of Code, In-school coding programs
  • Lab director for First Bytes and Code Longhorn

• Family
  • Married
  • Three children: two boys (10 and 6) and one girl (3)
  • Two dogs
A Few Things About the Class: Logistics

• Participation matters... a lot.
  • Goal of this course is to learn to identify, understand, and reason about ethical dilemmas
  • That takes practice
  • Participation matters in class, in your groups, and in your assignments

• Assignments include weekly blog posts and presentations of case studies.
  • Any blogging platform is fine (suggestions and instructions will be included with today’s assignment)
  • About 250 words
  • Personal views okay, but should be supported with well-reasoned arguments based in fact
A Few Things About the Class: Expectations

• Behave according to the highest standards of ethical conduct
• Maintain academic integrity
  • Learn more today
  • Learn more from the syllabus
• Be polite, professional, and empathetic
  • Disagree with arguments, not people
  • Be kind
Today’s Plan

• Introduction to Academic Ethics and Integrity
• Case Study: Andrew Wakefield
• Groups!
  • Meet your group
  • Determine a group name
Academic Ethics and Integrity
How do ethics relate to academics?

• What is the purpose of academics? *Why are we here?*
  • Learning old knowledge
  • Creating new knowledge

• Why might it be important to be ethical when pursuing academics?
  • *What does that even mean?*
What is Integrity?

**Integrity:**
- firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values
  --Mirriam-Webster Dictionary
- the quality of being honest and fair
  - --Mirriam-Webster Learners Dictionary

But what do these definitions mean?
What about in the context of academia?
Ethics Unwrapped: Another Definition
Academic Integrity

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin. More specifically, you and other students are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University. This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University’s Honor Code. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

For the official policies on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty, please refer to Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

Why Is Academic Integrity So Important?
Consequences of Academic Dishonesty Can Be Severe!
Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

From deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php
What Counts?

- Copying code from your roommate
- Copying answers from a key left out by the TA
- Copying code from from an online source (such as GitHub)
- Posting code from a class publicly on the web
- Selling exams to CourseHero
- Sending someone a copy of your assignment to use as reference
- Using a copy of an old exam for the course to study that was NOT provided to you by the instructor
Questions to Consider

• Who is harmed by breaches in academic integrity?
  • The person who commits the breach
  • UTCS students
  • UTCS alumni
  • UTCS faculty
  • Future colleague
  • ...

• What are the long-term consequences of those breaches?
  • What if the person is caught?
  • What if the person is not caught?
I would never...

• How do people end up here?
  • Overconfidence Bias
  • Loss Aversion
  • “People make bad choices if they're mad or scared or stressed”
    --Bulda, the troll, in Fixer-Upper, the song by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez
    [from Frozen]

• How do you avoid making these choices?
  • Understand course policies
  • Plan you assignments and studying so that you are well-prepared
  • Consider your actions in these scenarios before you are in them
More Considerations: Creating New Knowledge

The right to search for truth implies also a duty; one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true.

---Albert Einstein

• Responsibility to do your best
• Tell the truth and the whole truth
• Think critically
• The other stuff still applies!
  • No plagiarism, no unauthorized collusion, ...
Case Study: Andrew Wakefield

• Andrew Wakefield was a doctor in Britain
• In 1998, he published a paper linking the MMR vaccine to autism
• But
  • Results could not be repeated
  • Refuted by other stories
  • Study was small (12 children)
  • Investigations found:
    • Only presented data that upheld his case
    • Data was gathered unethically
    • Wakefield was on the payroll of lawyers trying to sue vaccine manufacturers
• Paper was retracted in 2010, and Wakefield lost his license
Groups!

These were assigned in Canvas:
1. Find your people
2. Introduce yourselves
   • Name, place of origin, something you do outside of CS
3. Choose a group name
4. Discuss
   • how Wakefield may have justified his actions and
   • the repercussions of Wakefield’s actions on the medical community, the autism community, and others
Announcements

• Blog response to the Andrew Wakefield study is due before next class
  • Details linked off the schedule
• Groups that were assigned to present next week should be ready to
go at the start of class