CSSci

Essay on Algorithms and Social Inequality

Individual Assignment SSH

Students are asked to explore an issue of their choosing in which algorithmic decision-making has substantial impact on social inequality. You will assess your topic using one of the two traditional political science theories, Realism or Liberalism (Part A), and then critique that assessment from a critical theory perspective (Part B). The critique should look at how algorithmic decision-making reproduces ideational and material structures and how stakeholders may confront this. Students may draw on concepts from lectures and workshops but are expected to do substantial literature reviews independently.

Students may choose to focus on any topic that is of significant societal concern. Students are encouraged to choose the same topic for the RE Qualitative Prediction Framework and the SSH Essay on Social Inequality assignments. However, they are **not** required to choose a topic that is closely related to their group project. Every student must choose a distinct societal issue as the topic for their essay.

Deadlines

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 (5 p.m.)	**Progress check 1** *Feedback in Check-In Tuesday, April 02*
Wednesday, April 24, 2024 (5 p.m.)	**Progress check 2** *Feedback in Check-In Tuesday, May 07*
Wednesday, May 15, 2024 (5 p.m.)	**Final submission** Final submission of PDF file via Canvas

Assessment Criteria

1. Clearly stated and appropriately scoped thesis statement.
2. Presents non-trivial arguments to support the thesis statement.
    a. Selection and utilization of appropriate academic texts.
    b. Provides theoretical and empirical evidence for arguments.
3. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and theories from one of the "traditional" theories: realism or liberalism.
4. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and theories from one of the "critical" theories: feminist theory, critical economics, or post-colonialism.
5. Meets basic academic requirements, including:
    a. Well-written and edited, with a logical structure.
    b. Relevant academic sources are adequately utilised and correctly referenced.
    c. Word count: 1600 maximum (strict word maximum), excluding references.

Learning Objectives

- Use relevant theories to recognize and explain structural inequality, bias and stratification.
- Use relevant theories to identify potential sources of bias and power relations and values to contribute to the development of socially responsible AI solutions.
- Discuss how design choices in AI reproduce ideational and material structures and how stakeholders may confront this.
- Analyse the ethical, legal and societal impact of AI/algorithms.

Version History:
Jul. 24, 2023: V1.0