

CICS 305: Social Issues in Computing – Fall 2020 Syllabus

Siobhan Meĭ (Email is the best way to reach me. Allow 24 hours for a response.)

Office Hours via Zoom: Tues, 10am-11am EST, Thursday 11:30am-12:30pm EST

Other times by advance appointment

All times listed in this syllabus are in UMass Amherst time, the Eastern Time Zone.

Course Information: Satisfies the Junior Year Writing requirement. The impact of computers on modern society. Prerequisites: Informatics or CMPSCI major; ENGLWRIT 112 or equivalent.

Detailed Course Description: This class satisfies the Junior Year Writing requirement by providing instruction in several different technical communication genres, research writing, and academic writing. Writing opportunities will take many forms, including writing for electronic environments, collaborative writing, and public writing. Through our writing, we will carefully analyze texts representing a range of disciplinary perspectives, levels of technological adoption (or adaptation), and civic engagement. Overall, this analysis will explore various impacts of computers on modern society. Students will produce approximately 20-25 pages of polished written work over the course of the semester.

Required: Regular access to the internet and to a device that facilitates reading online. Should you have connectivity or technological difficulties this semester, please be in contact with your instructor ASAP.

The Purdue *OWL* will be referenced in lieu of a handbook for this course: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Additional writing help can be found here:

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/esl/resources/>

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/>

Assignments and Grading: All major assignments and the extra credit will be submitted via Blackboard and all feedback and grades will also be communicated via Blackboard. In general, assignments will be graded in the order that they were submitted. Feedback will not be posted prior to the due date, but students may submit an assignment as early as they wish.

I want you to be successful in this course, so if you cannot access or cannot find my feedback, notify me immediately. Revisions will be a normal part of our class as you will revise your work after each peer review. Revisions will also be accepted for revised grades after my feedback has been posted for the first four unit projects. These **revisions must be submitted by the dates posted in the course calendar, and they MUST be accompanied by a list of changes to be eligible to receive credit.** This list can be in paragraph form or bulleted form, and this required list of changes may be uploaded as a separate document or attached to your existing submission on the first or last page.

Grading scale is as follows: F = <60; D- = 61-63, D = 64-66, D+ = 67-69; C- = 70-73, C = 74-76, C+ = 77-79; B- = 80-83; B = 84-86, B+ = 87-89; A- = 90-93, A = >93.49

Assignment categories and their respective weights are as follows:

- **Discussion Board**– 20%. You will post an initial response to the discussion board at the beginning of each unit, then you must post responses to two classmates' posts between Wed 11:59pm EST and Sat 11:59pm EST. For full credit for any week's discussion assignment, all three posts (initial + 2 responses) must be completed.
- **Presentations** - 10%. There will be at least two presentations this semester. Assignments for

presentations are located in the units where they are assigned. Presentations can be made using Zoom. For more details, see the presentation assignment.

- **Jobs Unit** –15%. This unit consists of a resume and a cover letter, and the job advertisement being targeted by those materials..
- **Special topics papers** – 45%. You will write four different types of writing projects this semester related to topics discussed on Blackboard. The grades for the four projects together will comprise this grade item.
- **Course Reflection** – 10%. Instead of a final exam, you will write a reflection on your learning in this class or on your journey in your major.

Asynchronous Course Setup: The weeks of the semester are divided into five (5) Units, which you will see is organized in Blackboard under the tab labeled “Writing Project Units” on the left-hand side bar of your Blackboard main page. You will see each unit divided into calendar weeks. Each week’s content will appear Monday of that week. All due dates are on the same day of the week for the following items:

Discussions:

- Initial posts will be due by 11:59pm EST Wednesdays.
- Responses to classmates’ posts will be due by 11:59pm on Saturdays.

Peer Review:

- In weeks 2,4,7,10, there will be peer review.
- Drafts for peer review should be uploaded to the designated group portal on Thursday by 11:59pm EST and reviews of your peers’ drafts should be uploaded to that portal by Saturday at 11:59pm EST.

Projects:

- All writing projects will be due on Mondays.

All due date times are 11:59pm UMass Time or EST. For success, you should plan on spending a minimum of 5-8 hours per week working on assignments and reading for our class.

All major assignments and the extra credit will be submitted via Blackboard and all feedback and grades will also be communicated via Blackboard. Please do hesitate to contact me if you are having difficulties accessing the internet or Blackboard. Similarly, contact me if difficulties navigating Blackboard or unfamiliarity is affecting your ability to access my feedback or complete and submit assignments in a timely fashion.

I want you to be successful in this course, so if you cannot access or cannot find my feedback, notify me immediately. Revisions will be accepted for revised grades for **the first four unit projects**. These revisions are optional and must be submitted by deadlines announced in the syllabus, generally one week or more following when students receive their grades and feedback. All revisions must be accompanied by a list of changes made in the revisions.

There is one extra credit assignment available that can be used to replace a missing discussion post **ONLY**. Extra credit is not available for any other grade item in this course. Detailed instructions for the extra credit assignment are posted to Blackboard. No extensions are possible on the due date and no late extra credit assignments will be accepted.

Policies

Late work policy – *every student is permitted to submit one assignment up to seven (7) days late without penalty, except for the emerging technology and reflection assignments.* This option is only available once per student, and

you must notify me in advance if you are taking advantage of this option. Otherwise, all assignments submitted between 24 and 48 hours late will receive a full letter grade penalty. Unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor, assignments more than 48 hours late will not be accepted for credit. Since all assignments may be submitted on Blackboard, the date and time of submission is automatically logged.

Academic honesty policy - All work submitted must be your individual, unique work unless the assignment explicitly requires collaboration. You may receive writing help, but that help should not include someone else providing sentences, paragraphs, source summaries, or reading summaries written by someone else OR taken from someone else. Plagiarism is the unattributed use of others ideas or text. A works cited page alone does not satisfy the attribution expectation.

With non-peer reviewed work the rule is a bit harder to specify. You **may** discuss homework and readings with other students, in fact I encourage this as a learning experience. But again, the writing must be your work. Copying is not allowed, and collaboration so close that it **looks like** copying is not allowed. (In general, if I get two identical or very similar assignments, I will accept neither of them (i.e., both get F's) and I will report this action to the Academic Honesty Board.)

A good practice is to divide your work into a prewriting stage where you collaborate, begin formulating outlines and research plans, and a "drafting phase" where you write alone -- enter the drafting phase with notes, you may even receive advice, but not actual written suggestions or someone else's written ideas, including information found online or via external sources.

- **All sources other than your brain, even for informal assignments must be cited – this includes citing readings assigned in class.**
- You are free to discuss your responses to the readings, topic ideas for papers, and to get help with citation from anyone in class at any time. Ultimately, each student is solely responsible for the academic integrity and authenticity of the writing submitted to me for grading. This applies to collaborative projects as well.

Remember- it is a million times better to ask for help, submit a paper late, or reveal being behind than to submit something that looks like - or is in fact- plagiarism.

Incompletes policy – A student is eligible for an INC if *when they are passing the course* AND some circumstance beyond their control prevents them from finishing the course on time AND we have agreed on a plan for completion. INC grades are reserved for extreme circumstances.

Announcements – Blackboard and email will be the primary tools for conveying important class announcements. Please check for class announcements and updates through these platforms regularly.

Participation policy – Regular class participation is crucial to success in this course. Not only will it help you think through ideas and learn other perspectives, but participation in an online space creates a learning community. Supporting a safe learning community means taking care with comments made in the discussion posts, both in initial posts and in responses to peers, and in comments to peers during peer review. When asked to provide constructive feedback, do so in ways that are specific to the task at hand and focused on the work itself. Do not comment on other students' personalities, abilities, beliefs, attitudes, identities or backgrounds. This community is built on responding to others in a timely and sincere manner with an open mind, respect for your peers, and a willingness to address complex and sometimes difficult questions related to society and technology. An easy way to do so is to try to be patient, sincere, and interested in what others have to say.

Remember that even in face to face class discussions where everyone is working hard to be kind and thoughtful, misunderstandings still happen. Intent is very difficult to convey in writing online, and all of us have

to work together to make sure we take even more care in crafting our online written comments so that we are treating each other the way we want to be treated.

Disagreement, constructive criticism, and different perspectives are all healthy parts of the learning process, and they are welcome here, but be mindful of the humanity of your classmates. Not all topics are appropriate to debate in this class, and some of the topics of this course will impact different people in different ways.

Accommodation Policy – Students with a documented disability are encouraged to communicate their needs to the instructor at their earliest convenience. While documentation is required for the instructor to provide reasonable accommodations, CICS 305 instructors are happy to do so. If you aren't sure if you qualify for an accommodation, or if you have any questions about your right to accommodations, please contact the office of Disability Services: <http://www.umass.edu/disability/students>

Inclusion Policy – In this course, each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute. Please take care to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by students and staff involved in this course. We support UMass Amherst's commitment to diversity, and welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disability, sex, education, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experience, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences.

Statement on English as a Global Language - Though this course will be carried out in English, I recognize that not everyone's relationship to this language is the same. Some of you may consider English to be your mother tongue or one of your mother tongues. For others, English may be a language you learned in school or elsewhere. This course recognizes that there are many different types of English, each with their own cultural history and relationship to power. I encourage each of you to be open and inviting to how others practice English in this class, and to think of this class as an opportunity to reflect on your own language use in relation to others. As English becomes increasingly dominant as a global language it is important to recognize and consider our own individual and unique relationship to the way we speak English and, perhaps more importantly, the way English speaks us.

Learning in the Context of COVID-19—Because we are living through a pandemic there are surely going to be circumstances (foreseen and unforeseen) that may complicate your workflow and learning processes. Communication is critical here: please keep your instructor updated should challenges arise related to caretaking obligations or illness. Your health and well-being is always the priority.

Recording/distribution Policy – Distribution or copying of course materials (in any media/medium) without written consent of the instructor is prohibited. This policy also applies to completed student projects and discussion posts.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as needed to incorporate current events and to better support positive student learning outcomes.

Bold items are due on the day listed. All lessons and instructions in the weekly folders are also assigned reading for the beginning of each week. This calendar contains extra readings, videos, and graded assignments in addition to those published lessons within Blackboard.

	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
Jobs Unit				

Week 1	<p>Day 1 introduction/welcome discussion post</p> <p>Read “How to get a Job at Google” (file on Blackboard)</p> <p>Read “How to Decode Job Ads” (file on Blackboard)</p> <p>Read the lesson for building effective resumes and cover letters (file on Blackboard)</p>	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.	Elevator Pitch due by 11:59pm on Friday to the designated Discussion Board in the week 1 folder	Your response to two of your peers’ initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.
Week 2	<p>Attend/or watch recorded version of job search and cover letter/resume workshop hosted by Brian Krusell, Director of CICS Careers. Held 10-11am EST (Zoom link provided via email and on Blackboard).</p> <p>Read 2 LinkedIn activity readings in the Readings folder on Blackboard.</p>	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.	Drafts uploaded for peer review to the groups space on Blackboard	<p>Your response to two of your peers’ initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.</p> <p>Peer reviews of your groupmates’ drafts due to the group’s space on Blackboard.</p>
Unit 2 - Access and Accessibility				
Week 3	<p>Jobs Unit Due by 11:59pm</p> <p>Read: Dark Patterns pdf on Blackboard + http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/ethics-digital-design https://www.propublica.org/article/discrimination-by-design http://www.washington.edu/doi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Designing-Software-Accessible-Individuals-Disabilities.pdf https://www.statnews.com/2020/06/09/systemic-racism-black-health-disparities/</p>	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.		Your response to two of your peers’ initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.
	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
Week 4	<p>Continue drafting Unit 2 assignment</p> <p>Read: https://theintercept.com/2019/12/20/mit-ethical-ai-artificial-intelligence/</p>	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.	Drafts uploaded for peer review to the groups space on Blackboard	<p>Your response to two of your peers’ initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.</p> <p>Peer reviews of your groupmates’ drafts due to the group’s space on Blackboard.</p>

Unit 3 - Examining Representations

Week 5	Unit 2 due by 11:59pm Introduction to Unit 3: Examining Representations	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.		Your response to two of your peers' initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.
Week 6	Revisions to Job Unit due by 11:59pm Consider the role of cyberpunk in shaping and/or challenging representations of computing	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.		Your response to two of your peers' initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.
Week 7	Read: https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reckoning-with-our-mistakes/	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.	Drafts uploaded for peer review to the groups space on Blackboard	Your response to two of your peers' initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm. Peer reviews of your groupmates' drafts due to the group's space on Blackboard.

Unit 4 - Current Events

Week 8	Introduction to Unit 4: Current Events Revision to Unit 2 due by 11:59pm Unit 3 due by 11:59pm Complete Library / Research Assignments.	Topic idea due by 9:00pm. Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.		Your response to two of your peers' initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.
	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
Week 9	Read the two articles: "A.I. security cameras are the latest high-tech attempt to combat mass shooters" (Blackboard). "Aggression Detectors: The Unproven, Invasive Surveillance Technology"	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.		Your response to two of your peers' initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.

	Schools Are Using to Monitor Students” (Blackboard) Use the Synthesis matrix tool from Lesson 2.2 in your work on your sources. Continue working on your Current Events unit papers.			
Week 10	Complete assignments about selecting sources and integrating them effectively.	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.	Drafts uploaded for peer review to the groups space on Blackboard	Your response to two of your peers’ initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm. Peer reviews of your groupmates’ drafts due to the group’s space on Blackboard.
Unit 5 - Emerging Technology				
Week 11	Introduction to Unit 5: Emerging Technology Revision to Unit 3 due by 11:59pm Unit 4 due by 11:59pm	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.		Your response to two of your peers’ initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.
Week 12	Complete assignment about choice of audience and summary of your argument.	Initial Discussion post is due on Wednesday by 11:59pm.		Your response to two of your peers’ initial discussion posts is due by Saturday at 11:59pm.
	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
Week 13	Complete Emerging Technology Presentation.	Emerging Technology Presentation due on Wednesday by 11:59pm Extra Credit Discussion due by 11:59pm		Your response to two of your peers’ presentations due by Sat at 11:59pm Extra credit response posts are due by Saturday at 11:59pm. Unit 5 due Monday Nov 23

Final s Week			Final Reflection Due: Dec 3 by 11:59pm	
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