Questions:

1. In introducing her idea of the *New Jim Code,* Ruha Benjamin defines it in brief as technologies that perpetuate existing inequities masquerading as more objective than previous systems. A common argument for the neutrality of data is that race should be anonymized or excluded from datasets to prevent bias. How might Benjamin respond to this claim? In what ways can so-called “colorblind” approaches to data and technology reinforce racial inequalities rather than eliminate them? What alternatives might exist for designing data systems that acknowledge and address racial disparities rather than obscuring them?
2. *Data Feminism* discusses how marginalized communities have used data to challenge dominant power structures, highlighting initiatives like the Feminicide Database, the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, and Data for Black Lives. How do these initiatives reach their intended audiences and translate data activism into real change? What challenges do they face in making their work visible, accessible, and actionable? Can data-driven activism be truly effective without structural change, or does it risk reinforcing existing power dynamics?
3. Ruha Benjamin examines the practice of data sharing in the introduction. What are some ways you’re currently being surveilled? How might the sharing of this information affect other parts of your life? Is there any way for data fusion to be done in a way that mitigates the harm Bejamin describes?
4. Benjamin argues that simply fixing biased algorithms is not enough—we must rethink the entire system that produces them. What does this mean in practical terms? How can individuals or institutions challenge racism in technology beyond just improving algorithms?

Pick two from among the discussion questions:

1. In Chapter 2, communications researcher, Candice Lanius's blog post says "more data will never be enough to convince those in positions of power", so what can be done to make such people change their minds or encourage them to learn and accept research that proves things contrary to their beliefs?
2. How does racial capitalism present itself in relation to hiring algorithms? How can data scientists take action by analyzing the impacts of racist hiring practices?
3. In Chapter 2 of Data Feminism, they discuss how certain algorithms such as risk-assessment for recidivism are inherently racially biased. Consider some ways that we could create a more fair system for determining these types of important information. Is it possible to create an algorithm or automated process that is unbiased?
4. Upper-class white Americans have the ability to shield their children from technology, while lower-class people of color lack access to technology and tech literacy. How does this influence the different effect technology has on people of color and white people? If the roles were reversed (the upper class didn't have access to technology and the lower class tended to opt out), would that change this effect, and how? How and why might that situation occur?
5. Algorithms are not allowed to decide mortgage eligibility because they regularly reject qualified Black applicants. Is it necessary therefore, to have algorithms make major decisions in people's lives (criminal risk, mortgage applications, etc)?
6. Both Data Feminism and Race After Technology argue that power is embedded in data and technological systems, often reinforcing existing social hierarchies. One recent example of this is the flagged words in NSF grant applications, where certain terms related to diversity, equity, and inclusion have been scrutinized or discouraged, reflecting broader political and institutional power struggles. Discuss possible strategies for challenging these forms of power utilizing data and technology. Can you think of other spaces where language or data has been controlled in ways that reinforce dominant power structures?
7. Inspired by "The New Jim Code", what is your name – what is the origin of this name, what does it carry. And what do you expect to find online regarding your name? Do you think that your name would be received "pleasantly" or "unpleasantly" by the search engine?
8. How do you think Benjamin’s discussion of Silicon Valley culture would change in light of Facebook’s recent policy changes regarding content moderation? How does this fit into ideas about power in data and computer science?
9. Chapter 2 of Data Feminism discusses the process of auditing algorithms in research and journalism to uncover data-driven revelations in the way of systematic racism and bias. What can be done to force accountability for these systematic injustices? What justifies a “meaningful response from institutions that have vested interest in maintaining the status quo?”
10. In the beginning of The New Jim Code, Benjamin discusses how whiteness is viewed as the norm, giving a sort of racial invisibility. How might this common belief / assumption hinder attempts to pursue data justice? How does our understanding of norms potentially limit our ability to achieve justice and liberation?
11. Benjamin suggests "thin description" as a possible solution for over-surveillance. How would thin description affect the issue of risk assessment discussed in Data Feminism, seeing as risk assessment focuses on biased data from past conglomerates, rather than meaningful information about the actual subjects it analyzes? Is thick surveillance still problematic when subjects are being analyzed based on data that doesn't necessarily apply to them?
12. Benjamin introduces the concept of "imagined objectivity" in the context of data driven systems, however this concept can be applied outside of just this context, in what other places does imagined objectivity come into play and how do previous forms of this issue influence its affect on data driven systems?
13. Both the Race After Technology reading and Chapter 2 of Data Feminism touch on attempts to create “technical fixes” to racial biases that often fail. Can these algorithmic or “data-driven solutions” ever exist free of human bias? How does the prioritization of “efficiency over equity” stand in the way of addressing algorithmic discrimination?

Group 1: Nayja

Members:

Group 2: Jamie

Members:

Group 3: Grace

Members: Amuthini, Maha, Shriya, Rebecca

Group 4: Yvo

Members: Hannah, Fiona, Anna

* Q1: Anonymizing data could cover up systemic gaps in the data. If we anonymize the data, we can’t tell if we are excluding certain groups. Also, there are other indicators of race that may not be able to be removed or anonymized.
* Q2: Empowerment vs. Awareness. Interpretability to the public. How does someone access/become aware of counter data?
* Q3: Literally everything is collected and surveilled, data brokers buy and sell data, CCTV, manipulation into buying certain items, data collection is motivated by economic exploitation so data fusion will be harmful until the motivation changes
* Q4: bias starts before the algorithm with the data, awareness is necessary to address problems, having diversity in data science teams
* 2: hiring algorithms just reinforce discriminatory hiring practices that existed before, the stereotypical ideal candidate is encoded in whiteness, testing algorithms for bias before implementation

Group 5: April

Members: Tess, Morgan, Bailey, Suzanna

Q1:Equity vs equality, not considering race in social datasets hides disparities; counter data should be considered

Q2: to make real change, the data needs to be presented in a comprehensive way

* People are barred from access to data through the lack of visualizations: can people comprehend large dataset without losing the message? How can people without access to computers access data that concerns them?
* Social media graphics might be useful for the dissemination of knowledge
* Change is more likely to occur when companies and the general public are aware of an issue
* Data-driven activism seems like a dehumanizing term, as it reduces people and lived experiences to a statistic

Q3:- Knowledge of what we buy, search, how we identify politically, were we live; patterns are schedules are picked up on

* + Insurance rates go up for people who have pre-existing conditions when insurance companies buy data from smart watches
* How does it affect us? Unsure of the lasting effects, which makes the process more threatening. The collection of face data makes protesting and political activism harder to participate in
* Consent needs to not be buried; people need to be asked for consent multiple times with full awareness of what they are sharing
* Data needs to be eliminated as a sold commodity

Q4:- institutions can have their algorithms audited by outside sources (perhaps through government regulated companies)

* People need to be presented with diverse options, rather than with a default white option

Q1: - inform the general public, who can use their vote to encourage change when electing officials

* Companies should not operate with centralized power
* Restructure our process: the presence of a problem should be enough to inherently make those in positions of power care

Group 6: Jadyn

Members: