CS 4873 Computers, Society, and Professionalism

Spring 2021

**Section Discussion Guide**

Week 3

Topics

* Do Artifacts Have Politics?
* Utilitarianism

I.  Questions and news items

* Everyone should bring a question, observation or relevant news item for discussion
* Go around the room with questions/observations/relevant news items
* These can be quick; we want you to be thinking about the relationship between the course and what’s going on in the world and what interests you, and to have a place to discuss it.

II. The 737 Max assignment

* Go around the group, having each student contribute something they had in their homework that they think was interesting. Examples could be
  + take a causal factor in the Therac paper, and apply to the 737 Max if relevant
  + What did Boeing employees do to help the situation?
  + What more could employees have done?
    - Discuss this in the context of real pressures on real people
* Note: not everyone has to contribute! The intent here is to share something you learned and thought would be interesting to others.
* Will you be willing to fly on a 737 MAX, now that they are modified and declared fit for service?
  + Why or why not?

III. The politics of artifacts

* Ask each student to think quietly for five minutes to pick a technological artifact that has politics
  + Discuss each one in turn
    - Are the politics/consequences intentional or unintentional?
    - What role did designers of those artifacts play in the consequences?
    - Are the consequences different if it works well versus badly? (example: face recognition)

IV. Second homework assignment (Assignment #2)

* Discuss the assignment and what is expected

V. Questions

* Any further questions about the class?

VI. Introduce the readings for next week