Week 1: Discussion

Explore a current "**code of ethics**" or "**professional conduct**" in a setting that **inspires** you. This can be a professional **association**, a corporate **acknowledgment**, or a governing **framework** (e.g., *The **Association** of **Computing Machinery's Code** of **Ethics*** found **here** - https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethicsLinks to an external site.).

As you review **consider** what **ethical** frameworks are **embedded** into this **document**. Is anything **missing**? **Why** or why **not**? In your **reply**, post a **link** to the **code** of **conduct** you reviewed.

Association for Computing Machinery

What is the ACM?

- ***Association** for **Computing Machinery***
- world's largest **educational** and scientific **society** for **computing**

History and Foundation

- founded in **1947**
- **creation** of the ACM followed soon **after** the development of **electronic computing**
- preceded by a **series** of **events** and **discussions** about **computing** among **engineers** and **mathematicians**

Organizational Structure

- **SIGs** (special interest groups) **focus** on specific **subfields** in **computing**
- **professional** and **student** chapters around the **world** provide local **activities** and **networking** opportunities

Purpose

- advance **computing** as both a **science** and a profbession
- **helps** people share **knowledge**, set professional **standards**, and recognize **excellence**
- supports **open exchange** of computing **information** and high **ethical standards**
- encourages **dialog** and **cooperation** between **industry** players

Players

- educators
- **researchers**
- students
- **enterprise professionals**

Notable Artifacts

- **digital library**
  - collection of **computing literature** and **research**
- **publications**
  - journals
  - **magazines**
  - newsletters

- **conferences**
  - gives **researchers** and **educators** a forum to **present** their **research** and **innovations**
- **career resources**
  - tools
  - **opportunities**
  - professional growth support

Member Activity

- **member**-driven and **volunteer**-led
- editorial **boards**, comities, **conferences**, journals, etc., are all **volunteer-led**

Recognition and Standards

- **promotes** high technical and professional **standards**
- **recognizes** achievement through **awards** and **honors**

ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

What is 'The Code'

- **guides** ethical **behavior** for **people** in computing
- **helps** computing **professionals** make responsible **choices**
- **focuses** on the **impact** of **computing** on **people** and **society**
- emphasizes **public good** as the **top priority**
- **encourages** professionals to **think** about both **actions** and **consequences**

Preamble

- **The Code** is a decision-making **guide** meant for all computing **professionals** that reflects the **conscience** of the **computing** profession
- **target demographics**
  - students
  - **educators**
  - developers
  - **leaders**
  - anyone whose work affects people through technology

Section 1: General Ethical Principles

- **contribute to society**
  - use skill to benefit society and human well-being
  - **consider how work affects all people**
  - give extra attention to the least privileged
  - **support environmental sustainability**
- avoid harm
  - **think about how work could injure people, property, or the environment**
  - reduce harm whenever possible
  - **report harm risk to potential affected**
  - remediate any unintentional harm incurred

- **be honest and trustworthy**
  - tell the truth about systems, risks, and capabilities
  - **do not hide mistakes or misleading information**
  - be clear about qualifications and conflicts of interest
- **be fair and prevent discrimination**
  - treat people equally and with respect
  - **avoid decisions or systems that exclude or harm groups**
  - support inclusive and accessible technology
- **respect other's work**
  - credit creators of ideas and inventions
  - **respect copyrights, patents, and licenses**
  - support sharing when it benefits society
- **respect privacy**
  - protect personal information
  - **collect only what is necessary**
  - explain clearly how data is used
  - **prevent unauthorized access**
- honor confidentiality
  - **keep trusted information private**
  - only disclose when required by law or necessary ethically

Section 2: Professional Responsibilities

- aim for high quality work
- **share honest information about progress, risks, and results**
- work within their level of skill and knowledge
- **continually improve their abilities**
- respect standards, laws, and policies

Section 3: Leadership Principles

- **set positive ethical examples**
- create environments that encourage responsible behavior
- **guide teams to follow The Code**
- consider the wider impact of technology on society

Section 4: Compliance with The Code

- all people and organizations affected by The Code are expected to
  - **uphold these principles**
  - promote ethical behavior in others
  - **treat violations seriously**
  - report violations when needed/appropriate

The Code in 2026

- updated in 2018 to address modern issues and technological developments
- **updated domains**
  - artificial intelligence
  - **data privacy**

- global impact of technology
- **socially integrated systems**

The EU Artificial Intelligence Act

The EU AI Act was passed in **2025** and uses a **risk-based** approach to ban **unacceptable AI**, protect public **safety** and **rights**, and encourage **responsible innovation** and **applies globally** if AI **impacts** the **EU** market-space

https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/

High-Level Summary

AI Classification Risk Categories

- **unacceptable risk**
  - banned
- **high risk**
  - must follow strict rules before being distributed
- **limited risk**
  - lighter restrictions
  - **must be transparent with users about interactions with AI**
- minimal risk
  - **unregulated**

Affected Entities

- developers
  - **creators of AI systems**
  - highly affected
- **providers**
  - companies facilitating AI development
  - **most affected**
- enterprise deployers
  - **providers of AI-related products**
- enterprise users
  - **use AI in a professional context**
- third-country providers
  - **outside of the EU**

General Purpose AI (GPAI) Restrictions

- high-parameter models (LLMs and siblings)
  - **provide technical documentation**
  - clear instructions for use
  - **adhere to EU copyright laws**
  - publish a training data summary
- **open-source models**
  - only need copyright and data-summary

- **high-risk models**
  - comprehensive testing
  - **life-cycle risk-management**
  - quality data practices
  - **accurate and complete training data**
  - track and report serious issues
  - **protect against cyber-threats**
  - provide technical documentation for authoritative review
  - **provide user instructions**

Prohibited AI Practices

- manipulation of user decisions
- **exploitation of vulnerable groups**
- infer sensitive biometric data without legal grounds (sex, race, religion, etc.)
- **publicly use real-time biometric data unless**
  - searching for missing or criminally victimized
  - **preventing substantial and imminent threat**
  - foreseeable terrorist attack
  - **investigating suspects in serious criminal investigations**
  - when not using it will result in considerable harm
- **before deploying system exempt from biometric data public-use restrictions**
  - complete fundamental rights impact statement
  - **register with the EU database**
  - obtain authorization from judiciary or designated independent authority

Implementation Governance

- AI Office established to monitor GPAI models
  - **assess compliance if information gathered under mandate is insufficient**
  - accept qualified reports from scientific panels of independent experts
  - **investigate system risks**
- downstream providers can lodge a complaint regarding upstream provider infringement

Implementation Timeline (after entry into force)

- prohibited AI systems: 6 months
- **GPAI: 12 months**
- Annex III high-risk: 24 months
- **Annex I high-risk: 36 months**

Discussion Post

An American Entrepreneur on The EU AI Act

The introduction of disruptive technologies into society is not a new venture for humankind. The steadily increasing frequency of 'revolutions', suggest that we are addicted to it. Anybody with a pulse is aware that we find ourselves in an interesting pivot in human history, where the bulk of human effort has united in pursuit of an emerging and highly disruptive technology. Previous revolutions, from the wheel to the microchip, have had a profound effect on how the average human lives, but never has the ability to utilize and contribute been so immediately accessible to so many people. All advancement comes with risk, though with previous innovations, the rollout allowed time for social structures to adjust and for governments to erect the scaffolding needed for responsible public ingest. The closest analog to our current situation is the dot-com boom which was a shadow of the current AI surge, and which we famously fumbled.

There are some legislative and organizational efforts to define a code of conduct for relevant entities in the AI development pipeline. Here in the United States, our legislators are conspicuously reluctant to act. I, for one, am not going to let any entity define my moral framework – certainly not Congress – and I think it is past time for technological innovators to define the moral path forward that our government refuses to address.

Luckily, we have some inspiring examples that define ethical AI development such as the International Finance Corporation and the Association for Computing Machinery, but it is the EU that is blazing the trail. The European Artificial Intelligence Act (EU AI) was passed in 2025. Anyone developing the next revolutionary machine learning application in their garage should take notice and adjust their models accordingly. No matter the country of origin, if anyone in the EU uses or can be affected by your products, this law applies to you.

EU AI does not affect the choices of average citizens making videos of Barack Obama breakdancing or (mis)using ChatGPT as super-Google. The law does affect how AI products reach the public space. Many of the regulations defined in the Act apply to how agents interact with users, though most restrictions apply farther up in the supply chain. The groups affected most are the 'providers', those who facilitate the development of AI applications.

If I could sum in a few words the regulatory posture of EU AI for the garage-tinkerers to keep in mind, it would be provenance and risk assessment. Robust audibility and auditability will be crucial when moving forward as we slug through debugging systems that we barely understand, and having a solid understanding of your risk profile will help you determine what laws apply to you, and which do not. The Act defines four 'Risk Categories' that determine the level of regulation that applies to a machine learning enabled product. The highest classification, "unacceptable risk" results in a total ban, followed by decreasing strictness in rules as you descend through high and limited risk tiers to the 'minimal risk' classification which is unregulated.

As we navigate the frontier ahead, ethics in development and implementation practices will steer the industry, and ultimately, the affect it will have on society. Although there are some attempts by non-authoritative bodies to help define a novel ethical framework, the U.S. government and the oligarchal industry leaders that truly define policy, are shying from enacting regulation. Please, and this applies to all business practices, do not wait on legislators to define your moral framework.

Citations

Association for Computing Machinery Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Enforcement Policy/Procedure. (n.d.). **https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics/enforcement-procedures**

Developing Artificial intelligence Sustainably: Toward a practical code of conduct for disruptive technologies. (n.d.). IFC. **https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2020/emcompass-note-80-tocc**

High-level summary of the AI Act | EU Artificial Intelligence Act. (n.d.). **https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/high-level-summary/**

Klarin, A., Abadi, H. A., & Sharmelly, R. (2024). Professionalism in artificial intelligence: The link between technology and ethics. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, *41*(4), 557–580. **https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.2994**

Reading for Class Discussion

Buddhist Ethics

In the recorded lecture **Prof. Tripodi** covered some non-western **ethical frameworks**. **Below** is more **information** on the **four discussed**. Choose one and **read** the accompanying **PDF**. Then **do** a bit more **research** on this **framework**. Can you find an **example** of this in an **applied setting** (**corporate** or **government**)?

Background

- the Buddha was born in the 6th century BCE as Siddhartha Gotama in North India
- **he rejected some aspects of Indian culture and religion**
  - caste rigidity
  - **animal sacrifice**
  - uncritical political authority
- **primarily concerned with easing human suffering**
- experimentation with meditation
- **attained enlightenment at the age of 35**
- taught for 45 years

Buddhist Literature

- **Buddhist ethics is drawn from the Pali Canon**
  - Vinaya Pitaka – monastic discipline
  - **Sutta Pitaka – core teaching**
  - Abhidhamma Pitaka – systematic philosophy

Buddhist Ethics

- **not a single formal theory**
- Buddhist philosophy is
  - **a way of life**
  - a practical path
  - **a personal moral discipline**
  - a social ethic
- **core tenets**
  - rational reflection
  - **moral conduct**
  - meditation
  - **character development**
- meditation is particularly stressed
  - **strengthens awareness**
  - elevated awareness supports moral behavior

The Four Noble Truths

- **life involves suffering (dukkha)**
- suffering arises from craving and ignorance
- **suffering can cease (nibbana)**
- there is a path to end suffering

Three Interconnected Doctrines

- **impermanence**
- suffering
- **ego-lessness (no sustained 'self')**

The Noble Eightfold Path

- the path to liberation has eight components grouped into three areas
  - **ethical conduct (Sila)**
    - right speech
    - **right action**
    - right livelihood
  - **mental discipline (samadhi)**
    - right effort
    - **right mindfulness**
    - right concentration
  - **wisdom (panna)**
    - right understanding
    - **right intention**

Threefold Moral Training System

- virtue
- **meditation**
- insight

Moral Philosophy of Kamma (Moral Action)

- **moral value depends primarily on intention**
- actions occur through
  - **thought**
  - speech
  - **bodily action**
- actions are evaluated by
  - **their mental roots**
  - their effects on others
  - **their long-term consequences**

Two Models of Moral Consequence

- character-building model
  - **actions shape habits and personality**
- judicial model
  - **actions bring rewards or suffering across lives**

liberation-oriented actions reduce attachment and shorten suffering

Buddhism as a Consequentialist Ethics

- **Buddhist ethics are consequentialist but not hedonistic**
  - the goal is freedom form suffering, not pleasure
  - **deep meditation produces joy that differs from sensory pleasure**
  - ethics emphasizes welfare of all beings
- **strong altruism is expressed through**
  - loving-kindness
  - **compassion**
  - sympathetic joy
  - **equanimity**

Duties, Rights, and Guilt

- Buddhism recognizes duties and reciprocal obligations
- **focus is humanistic, not legalistic**
- no central concept of sin or guilt
- **moral failure is seen as**
  - unskillful action
  - **mental defilement**
  - an obstacle to growth

excessive guilt is considered harmful to moral progress

Knowledge, Truth, and Ethics

Buddhism rejects separation between facts and values

- **moral claims are grounded in**

- psychological facts
- **social consequences**
- spiritual insight

- **Dukkha functions as both**
  - a factual description
  - **a moral call to transformation**
- knowledge may arise from
  - **ordinary perception**
  - meditative insight
  - **advanced spiritual awareness**

Virtues and Vices

- greed
- **hatred**
- delusion
- **envy**
- pride
- **deceit**
- anger

Three Groups of Virtues

- **conscientiousness**
  - truthfulness
  - **righteousness**
- benevolence
  - **compassion**
  - loving-kindness
  - **sympathetic joy**
  - equanimity
- **self-restraint**
  - patience
  - **contentment**
  - purity
  - **self-control**

Buddhist ethics closely links emotions, psychology, and morality

Social and Political Ethics

- **key principles**
  - rejection of caste and birth-based hierarchy
  - **moral worth is based on character**
  - ethical concern extends to animals and all life
- **governance**
  - rulers must act with
    - **impartiality**
    - justice
    - **truthfulness**

- compassion

social ethics emphasize responsibility and care, not abstract rights

The Five Precepts

- core moral commitments
  - **do not kill or harm living things**
  - do not steal
  - **avoid harmful sensual contact**
  - do not lie
  - **avoid intoxicants**
- these promote
  - **social harmony**
  - personal discipline
  - **respect for life**

Wealth and Livelihood

- wealth may be earned ethically
- **greed and exploitation are condemned**
- generosity is encouraged

Later Buddhist Traditions

- **mahayana**
  - introduces the Bodhisattva ideal
  - **emphasize compassion and saving others**
- tantrayana
  - **adds ritual and symbolism**
  - ethical outlook aligns with mahayana
- **zen**
  - critiques rigid moral formalism
  - **stresses inner transformations**
  - emphasizes lived wisdom over rules

Conclusion

- **Buddhist ethics is**
  - practical
  - **psychological**
  - consequentialist
  - **compassion-centered**
  - liberation-oriented
- **it integrates**
  - moral action
  - **mental discipline**
  - wisdom
  - **social responsibility**

ethics is inseparable from inner transformation

Key Buddhist Terms

- **Abhidhamma**
- Arahant
- **Bodhisattva**
- Jhana
- **Kamma**
- Kusala / Akasaka
- **Mahayana**
- Bhavana
- **Nibbana** (**Nirvana**)
- Pali Canon (Tipitaka)
- **Samsara**
- Samadhi
- **Sia**
- Sutta Pitaka
- **Tantrayana**
- Theravada

Manifestations of Buddhism in Corporate Management

- **Google – "Search inside yourself"**
- Buddhist principles applied
  - **mindfulness**
  - right effort
  - **right awareness**
  - non-reactivity
- **how this is applied**
  - employees are trained to
    - **observe thoughts without immediate reaction**
    - pause before decision-making
    - **reduce ego-driven conflict**
  - emotional regulation is treated as a trainable skill, not a personality trait
- **what defines this as 'Buddhist'**
  - mindfulness originates in Buddhist meditation
  - **the focus is on**
    - awareness of mental states
    - **reduction of craving, aversion, and ego**
  - the goal is clear perception, not relaxation alone

Citations

de Silva, P. (1993). Buddhist ethics. In P. Singer (Ed.), A companion to ethics (pp. 48–53). Blackwell.

Our story: The Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute | About. (n.d.). https://siyli.org/about?utm_source=chatgpt.com