

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER  
DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE  
COSC 3315-060 Social and Professional Issues in Computing  
Spring 2022

**Instructor Information:**

J. Howard Baker MAcc (USC), Ph.D. Information Systems (U.T. Arlington)  
Senior Lecturer, Computer Science  
Computer Science Office: Suite COB 315.06

**Office Hours:**

On-campus by appointment only on Monday or Wednesday. Contact me via email to set a date and time.

**Communication:**

Please use Canvas email.

**Class Instruction:**

COSC 3315 is an online asynchronous course using the Canvas LMS. All lectures, discussions, instruction, and testing are online. All class lectures are recorded. Quizzes are asynchronous, with no requirement for students to log in on a specific day or time during the week. Exams will have a specific window of time to complete.

**Text:**

*The Future of Feeling: Building Empathy in a Tech-Obsessed World*, by Kaitlin Ugolik Phillips,  
Publisher: Little A (February 1, 2020), ISBN-13: 9781542041843 (hardcover), ISBN-10: 1542041848  
(hardcover), ISBN-13: 9781542041850 (paperback), ISBN-10: 1542041856 (paperback), Kindle eBook edition  
(with text-to-speech enabled) is also available on Amazon (free if you have Kindle Unlimited). We will begin using  
this book on March 28.

**Course Description:**

Introduction to the social and professional issues that arise in the context of computing.

**Mission Statement:** The mission of this course is to address many of the myriad social and ethical concerns which arise from the use of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain technology, 5G, robotics, digital weapons, and facial recognition. We will also examine various views of a "profession" and "professional conduct" in computer science and information systems. Finally, we will explore issues in "empathic technology."

**Technology Ethics:**

This course introduces key ideas and terms in moral theory and professionalism to explore technology ethics. The course emphasizes that computing is not a purely technical discipline but also has moral and social implications that affect everyday life. Lectures will cover several ethical frameworks such as the *ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct* and examine compliance challenges a computer professional might encounter.

**Prerequisite:**

COSC 1337 or COSC 1437 – Object-Oriented Paradigm. The student is expected to have taken a foundational course in college-level composition and have a working knowledge of Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

**A Statement on Course Etiquette:**

When sending an email, your comments should always be **professional**, and you should always be **courteous**. Any personal issues or general comments about the class should be emailed privately using Canvas email.

## Late Assignments:

All assignments must be completed by the last regular day of class in the semester. No late work will be accepted without a valid excuse. The professor reserves the right to determine if a reason is valid. Typically, valid excuses will involve an official university function, sickness, a documented family emergency, a documented religious observance, or a funeral. If possible, email the professor **ahead of time** if you will be late. I will work with you to handle special needs or circumstances. Always feel free to contact me if you have a particular need.

## Grading:

All questions regarding grades must be settled by the last regular day of class in the semester. Plagiarism and copying other students' work, intentionally or unintentionally, can result in a failing grade.

**All semester grades are final. Do not beg for more points or extra credit. There is no extra credit. Feel free to ask me for help if you struggle with fulfilling an assignment.**

**If your final grade is within .5% of the next letter grade, I will increase the semester percent grade by .5% to raise the final letter grade if you have completed all assignments! (Example: 89.5% will become 90%.)**

## Grades will be determined as follows:

Lecture Quizzes – may use PPT files and notes while taking a quiz (10 @ 20 pts each)	200
Exam # 1 Covering Lectures 1-5	200
Exam # 2 Covering Lectures 1-10	300
Textbook Quizzes (4 @ 50 pts each)	200
Final Exam Covering the textbook and related subject matter (Discussion exam)	100

Semester Percent	Grade
90-100	A
80-89.99	B
70-79.99	C
60-69.99	D
<60	F

## Exams and Quizzes:

Exam # 1 demonstrates the student's knowledge of the lecture material in the first five lectures of the semester. Exam # 2 reflects the student's understanding of the lecture material in all ten lectures. Essay questions will require proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling to receive full credit. Quizzes and exams may contain multiple-choice, true/false, short essay, or matching questions. Makeup versions of quizzes may be different from the original quiz taken by the class.

## Assignments:

All assignments are to be completed and submitted via Canvas. Do not send assignments that are late via email attachment to me. All work must be recorded in Canvas. Upon request, I will give you instructions on how to submit a late or replacement assignment via Canvas.

## Make-up Work:

Makeup work or quizzes will be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Makeups will be given only for unusual circumstances such as emergencies or documented illnesses. If possible, requests for a make-up assignment should be made before the due date and time of the assignment. Late assignments without a valid excuse may receive a zero.

## Assignment Policy:

All assignments are due by the specified date and time in Canvas. All assignments must be individually and independently completed and represent the student's own effort. Assignments that are basically identical will be considered either plagiarized or a derivative of another student's work **and will result in an "F" grade for the course.**

## Lecture Q & A:

Questions regarding the class in general, grades, or assignments should be emailed to the professor. Students should also feel free to ask technical questions regarding the material being covered in lectures by emailing the professor. Questions do not have to address specific material presented in a lecture. For instance, if the lecture is about artificial intelligence (AI), a question might address anything relevant to the subject, such as asking where to find an excellent introductory article on AI.

## Course Registration:

Students must register for this class as soon as possible to be assured of enrollment. Joining the class late will require the makeup of all work within **one week** of joining the course.

## Withdrawals:

Students must officially withdraw from this class; otherwise, they will receive an "F" for the course.

## University Policies and Information

- **Withdrawing from Class** - Students you are allowed to withdraw (drop) from this course through the University's Withdrawal Portal. Texas law prohibits students who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Make sure to consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress as well as the financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and financial aid for additional guidance. CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule. CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms.
- **Final Exam Policy:** Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members are required to maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.
- **Incomplete Grade Policy:** If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in lieu of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all course work or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and (c) the student presents these reasons prior to the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average for a student.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to complete all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate Grade. If a grade has not been assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or to NC if the course was originally taken under the CR/NC grading basis.
- **Grade Appeal Policy:** - UT Tyler's Grade Appeal policy requires the completion of a Grade Appeal form for this action to take place. The grade appeal begins with the instructor of your course. If you do not agree with the decision of the instructor, you may then move your appeal to the department chair/school director for that course. If you are still dissatisfied with the decision of the chair/director, you may move the appeal to the Dean of the College offering that course who has the final decision. Grade appeals must be initiated within

sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade. The Grade Appeal form is found on the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

- **Disability/Accessibility Services:** The University of Texas at Tyler has a continuing commitment to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities who may need accommodation(s) in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources Office (SAR) as soon as possible to explore what arrangements need to be made to ensure access. If you have a disability, you are encouraged to visit the [SAR Portal](#) (<https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/>) and complete the New Student Application. For more information, please visit the [SAR webpage](#) or call 903.566.7079.
- **Military Affiliated Students:** UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with me if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make me aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. I am willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. Campus resources for military affiliated students are in the [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#). The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu, or via phone at 903.565.5972.
- **Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct:** The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).
- **FERPA** - UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [University Policy 5.2.3](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements in protecting your confidential information.
- **COVID Guidance:**
  - *Information for Classrooms and Laboratories:* Students are expected to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories). The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.
  - Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, digestive issues (e.g. nausea, diarrhea), or a higher than normal temperature should stay at home and are encouraged to use the [UT Tyler COVID-19 Information and Procedures \(Links to an external site.\)](#) website to review protocols, check symptoms, and report possible exposure. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email [saroffice@uttyler.edu](mailto:saroffice@uttyler.edu).
  - *Recording of Class Sessions:* Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.
- **Absence for Official University Events or Activities:** This course follows the practices related to approved absences as noted by the Student Manual of Operating Procedures ([Sec. 1 -501](#)).
- **Absence for Religious Holidays:** Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious holiday are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of the semester.
- **Campus Carry:** We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.

## Student Resources

### Resources to assist you in this course

- [UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource \(SAR\) Office \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- [UT Tyler Writing Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [The Mathematics Learning Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Upswing \(24/7 online tutoring\) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Robert Muntz Library \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and [Library Liaison \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Canvas 101 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
- Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
- LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
- [The Career Success Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [UT Tyler Testing Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

### Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- [UT Tyler Counseling Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)(available to all students)
- [TAO Online Support Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)(online self-help modules related to mental & emotional health)
- [Military and Veterans Success Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)(supports for all of our military affiliated students)
- [UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [UT Tyler Registrar's Office \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Office of International Programs \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Title IX Reporting \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Patriots Engage \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

Evaluation Method	
1. Lecture Quizzes	2. Exams
3. Textbook Quizzes	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
<b>Course Objectives: By the end of this course students should be able to:</b>	
1.	Describe the basic components of ethical reasoning [1,2]
2.	Consider what ethical decisions you would make throughout the various scenarios [1,2]
3.	Describe the basic principles of significant moral theories [1,2]
4.	Explain how theorists define the constituents of a profession [1,2]
5.	Explain what defines a professional [1,2]
6.	Explain how advances in technology call for new privacy protection laws [1, 2]
7.	Explain how the Internet has affected intellectual property laws [1,2]
8.	Describe best practices on how to help prevent computer failures [1,2]
9.	Explain how social networking sites and online games have the potential to change an individual's self-concept from a single 'true' self to multiple explicit personas [1,3]
10.	Explain how current free speech laws are interpreted when applied to recent methods of expression [1,2]
11.	Describe how the arguments of theorists are applied to protect vulnerable members of society [1,2]
12.	Explain what it means for a technology to be pervasive and for it to be autonomous [1,2]
13	Discuss how empathy is built in a tech-obsessed world [3]

**Tentative class schedule:**

<b>Week #</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Class Activities</b>
Week 1	January 10-16	Complete the Week 01 Student Introduction survey, Watch Lecture # 01 – Introduction to Ethical Thinking and the Ethical Brain, Take Lecture Quiz # 01
Week 2	January 17-23	<b>MLK Day January 17 - all offices closed; no classes on campus</b> Watch Lecture # 02 – Virtue Ethics, Situationism, EQ and Empathy, Take Lecture Quiz # 02
Week 3	January 24-30	Watch Lecture # 03 – Introduction to the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct plus the lecture on ACM and SIGCAS Research, Take Lecture Quiz # 03
Week 4	January 31 to February 6	Watch Lecture # 04 – Intellectual and Intangible Property Lecture Parts 1 & 2, Take Lecture Quiz # 04
Week 5	February 7-13	Watch Lecture # 05 - Establishing a Culture of Trust, Take Lecture Quiz # 05
Week 6	February 14-20	<b>Take Exam # 1 Covering Lectures 1-5</b> (February 14 any time between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm), Watch Lecture # 06 – STUXNET and Digital Weapons, Take Lecture Quiz # 06
Week 7	February 21-27	Watch Lecture # 07 – E-Government, E-Democracy, E-Voting, and the Digital Divide, Take Lecture Quiz # 07
Week 8	February 28 to March 6	Watch Lecture # 08 – Robots and Autonomous Systems, Take Lecture Quiz # 08
Week 9	March 7-13	<b>Spring Break – no assignment</b>
Week 10	March 14-20	Watch Lecture # 09 – Society and Artificial Intelligence, Take Lecture Quiz # 09
Week 11	March 21-27	Watch Lecture # 10 – Cryptocurrency, BlockChain, and Hash Graph, Take Lecture Quiz # 10
Week 12	March 28 to April 3	<b>March 28 - Last day to withdraw</b> Exam # 2 Covering Lectures 1-10 (March 28 any time between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm), Read Textbook ( <i>The Future of Feeling: Building Empathy in a Tech-Obsessed World</i> ) Chapters 1 & 2, Quiz on Text Chapters 1 & 2
Week 13	April 4-10	Read Textbook Chapters 3 & 4, Quiz on Text Chapters 3 & 4
Week 14	April 11-17	Read Textbook Chapters 5 & 6, Quiz on Text Chapters 5 & 6
Week 15	April 18-24	Read Textbook Chapters 7 & 8 plus the Epilogue, Quiz over Text Chapters 7 & 8 plus the Epilogue
Week 16	April 25-30	<b>Study Day is April 25</b> <b>Discussion Final Exam April 26</b> (Covering only the textbook and related subject matter any time between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm) April 30 - End of the 15-Week session

Topics may be added or subtracted accordingly as the semester goes according to need. This syllabus is subject to change by the instructor.