

SOULES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Computer Science Department

COSC 3315-060 Social and Professional Issues in Computing Spring 2026 Course Syllabus

Instructor: Sara McCaslin, Ph.D.

E-mail: smccaslin@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: virtual, by appointment

Preferred Form of Communication: Email. **It is the responsibility of the student to regularly check the announcements and their Patriot e-mail address.**

Class Instruction:

COSC 3315 is **fully online course** using the Canvas LMS. All material, quizzes, discussion boards, and tests are online

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 the week of February 16.

Course Description:

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

The objective 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.

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. There is no extra credit. Feel free to ask me for help if you struggle with fulfilling an assignment.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Type of Assignment	How Many Assigned	Points Possible
Test 1		100
Test 2		100
Test 3		100
Quizzes	12 x 10 pts	120
Video Assignments	2 at 35 pts each	70
Discussion Board	13 at 10 pts each	130
Total Possible Points		620

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE IS 620

Semester Percent	Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
<60	F

Tests and Quizzes:

Quizzes and tests may contain multiple-choice, true/false, multiple-answer, or matching questions. Note that Test 3 is not comprehensive. Makeup versions of tests may be different from the original taken by the class.

Late Assignments:

If possible, email me through Canvas *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.

Make-up Work:

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

Lecture Q & A:

Questions regarding the class in general, grades, or exams should be sent to me through Canvas. Students should also feel free to ask technical questions regarding the material being covered in lectures by contacting me through Canvas. 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.

Class Schedule:

WEEK	DATE	MODULE	ACTIVITIES
1	Jan 12	1	Course Introduction, Introduction to Ethics — Quiz 1, Discussion Board 1
2	Jan 20	2	ACM Code of Ethics — Quiz 2, Discussion Board 2
3	Jan 26	3	Intellectual and Intangible Property — Quiz 3, Discussion Board 3
4	Feb 2	4	Establishing a Culture of Trust — Quiz 4, Discussion Board 4
5	Feb 9	5	Cybersecurity — Quiz 5, Discussion Board 5, Test 1
6	Feb 16	6	Textbook, Chapters 1–3 — Quiz 6, Discussion Board 6
7	Feb 23	7	Textbook, Chapters 4–6 — Quiz 7, Discussion Board 7
8	March 2	8	Textbook, Chapters 7–8 — Quiz 8, Discussion Board 8
9	March 9		SPRING BREAK
10	March 16	9	Ethical Issues with AI — Quiz 9, Discussion Board 9, Test 2
11	March 23	10	IIoT, Industry 4.0, and Autonomous Systems — Quiz 10, Discussion Board 10
12	March 30	11	Autonomous Vehicles — Quiz 11, Discussion Board 11
13	April 6	12	Ethical Issues in Gaming — Quiz 12, Discussion Board 12
14	April 13	13	Cryptocurrency — Quiz 13, Discussion Board 13
15	April 20	14	TBA
16	April 27		Final Exam Week

Artificial Intelligence Policy

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, to best support your learning, **you must complete all graded assignments by yourself to assist in your learning unless instructed otherwise**. This exclusion of other resources to help complete assignments includes artificial intelligence (AI). Refrain from using AI tools to generate any course content for assignments.

Student Resources

Resources to assist you in the course

- [UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource \(SAR\) Office](#) (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#)
- [The Mathematics Learning Center](#)
- [UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction](#)
- [Upswing \(24/7 online tutoring\) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas](#)
- [Robert Muntz Library](#) and [Library Liaison](#)
- [Canvas 101](#) (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](#)
- [UT Tyler Testing Center](#)
- [Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab](#)

Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (available to all students)
- [MySSP App](#) (24/7 access to Student Support Program counseling through phone or chat and online wellness resources available in a variety of languages)
- [Student Assistance and Advocacy Center](#)
- [Military and Veterans Success Center](#) (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- [UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry](#)
- [UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [UT Tyler Student Business Services](#) (pay or set up payment plans, etc.)

- [UT Tyler Registrar's Office](#)
- [Office of International Programs](#)
- [Title IX Reporting](#)
- [Patriots Engage](#) (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information

Withdrawing from Class

Students may [withdraw](#) (drop) from this course using the [Withdrawal Portal](#). Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyle.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully [read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions](#) on using the [Withdrawal portal..](#)

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services 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. **CAUTION #3:** All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. **CAUTION #4:** All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the [Military and Veterans Success Center](#).

** Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.*

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 must 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 place 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 coursework 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 before 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.

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 meet 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 yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@uttyler.edu, 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 your faculty member 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 your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttlyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

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 to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for University Events or Activities](#) as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog](#).

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting

Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#).

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>.