

CSC300: Computers and Society (Fall 2025)

Lecture Time and Location

LEC0101: Thursday 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (KP 108)

LEC5101: Monday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (BA 1170)

Instructor

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Postdoctoral Fellow

Department of Computer Science

The University of Toronto

Tutorial Information and Teaching Assistants

- **Lead TA** Yasaman Rohanifar (yasamanro@cs.toronto.edu)
- Tutorial Information Page on Quercus (subject to change till the end of the first week)

| Section | Tutorial TA | Tutorial TA's Email | Day and Time | Location |
|---------|------------------|--|----------------|----------|
| A | Alaa Hamid | al.hamid@mail.utoronto.ca | Mon: 2000-2100 | BA 2155 |
| B | Chenxinran Shen | elise@cs.toronto.edu | Mon: 2000-2100 | BA 2139 |
| C | Rayan Awad Alim | rayan.alim@mail.utoronto.ca | Mon: 2000-2100 | BA 2145 |
| D | Sheza Munir | sheza.munir@mail.utoronto.ca | Mon: 2000-2100 | BA 2159 |
| E | Md Arid Hasan | arid.hasan@mail.utoronto.ca | Thu: 1700-1800 | MY 360 |
| F | Alaa Hamid | al.hamid@mail.utoronto.ca | Thu: 1700-1800 | BA 2145 |
| G | Aarjav Chauhan | aarjav.chauhan@mail.utoronto.ca | Thu: 1700-1800 | ES 4001 |
| H | Taneeza Agrawaal | taneeza@cs.toronto.edu | Thu: 1700-1800 | BA 2165 |

Overview

'Computers and Society' introduces a wide range of interconnections between computers and society. In this course, students will learn the basic values that drive today's computer industry and how those often strengthen or differ from many moral values held by different communities in our world. This course will introduce the students to various theories from philosophy and social sciences to develop a deep understanding of the ethical tensions around the relationship between computers and society. This class is designed to help the students gain this knowledge, along with strengthening their writing, debating, and designing capabilities to make them the next-generation computer scientists who are ethical, responsible, and caring.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Define and explain key concepts & terms in the course (ethics, privacy, equity, etc.).
- Develop a critical perspective on the recent evolution of computer and software technology and its impact on society.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the ethical tensions around emerging computing practices.
- Critically think and develop methods to produce ethical applications of computing technologies.
- Develop writing skills that are necessary to articulate an argument in a scholarly discussion.

Recommended Texts (Optional)

- [Code 2.0](#), by Lawrence Lessig [[Download](#)]
- The Age of Surveillance Capitalism, Shoshana Zuboff
- Algorithms of Oppression, Safiya Noble

Evaluation Scheme

| Topic | Percentage | Description |
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| Reading Responses | 60% | <p>After each module, the students are required to submit an assignment based on that module. There are four modules in this course. So, the students will be submitting four assignments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will be 4 assignments in total, each due at 11:59 PM, Monday of the week the next module starts• Each response will be graded on a scale from 1 to 15• Detailed rubrics will be provided with the questions• The grade of each week's reading response is expected to be published over Quercus within 10 days from the submission deadline. There might be a delay due to unavoidable circumstances. |
| Tutorial Participation | 18% | <p>Students will be graded based on their performance in the Tutorials. The tutorials will include activities that are directly related to the class lecture (hence, attending the class lectures is important). While different tutorials will have different activities, the evaluation will be based on the student's understanding of the subject matter and participation in the tutorial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will be 11 tutorials in total• Each tutorial will be graded on a scale from 1 to 2• The best 9 grades will be counted for the final grading• Detailed rubrics will be provided during the tutorial by the TAs• The grade of each tutorial is expected to be published over Quercus within 5 days of the tutorial. There might be a delay due to unavoidable circumstances. |
| In-term Assessment | 22% | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two hours long in-person exam• A combination of MCQ and short-answer questions• Exact details TBA. |

Detailed Deadlines

- [Course Calendar and Important Dates](#)

| Date | Topic | Notes |
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| Module 1: Basic Concepts | | |
| (Jan 5, 2026/ Jan 8, 2026) | <p>Lecture 1: Introduction and Context Setting</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langdon Winner, <i>Do Artifacts Have Politics?</i> • Jenna Burrell, <i>How the Machine “Thinks”</i> (from <i>Race After Technology</i>, ed. Benjamin) | No Tutorial |
| (Jan 12, 2026/ Jan 15, 2026) | <p>Lecture 2: Theories of Ethics</p> <p><u>Before Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Philosophy of Ethics and Morality - Introduction to Ethics (Moral Philosophy) - What is Ethics? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Video companion: Cheatsheet.pdf • Read: Are regulatory changes keeping pace with automation • Watch the first few episodes of the TV show “The Good Place” 😊 <p><u>After Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Perspective Algorithmic injustice: a relational ethics approach • Optional reading: Lafollette, Hugh, (Ed.). 2020. <i>Ethics in Practice: An Anthology</i>. 5th ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell. Pp. 31-52, 62-71 | <p><u>Tutorial 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Concepts of Normative Ethics (Deontology, Consequentialism, Virtue Ethics, Relational Ethics) • Main Discussion: Applying ethical frameworks to a case study |

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| <p>(Jan 19, 2026/ Jan 22, 2026)</p> | <p>Lecture 3: The Politics of Technology</p> <p><u>Before Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch: Why we need to understand the politics inherent in technology Evan Barba TEDxTysonsSalon ● Read: The Politics of 'Platforms' by Tarleton Gillespie A Summary <p><u>After Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read: Brey, Philip. "Artifacts as social agents." Inside the politics of technology: Agency and normativity in the co-production of technology and society (2005): 61-84 <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" ● Pinch and Bijker, "The Social Construction of Facts and Artefacts" ● NYTimes profile of Bruno Latour ● Tarleton Gillespie, The Politics of Platforms ● Philip Brey, Artifacts as Social Agents | <p><u>Tutorial 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review: Concepts of politics of technology (Technological Realism, Social Constructivism, Hybrid Constructivism, Differentiated Constructivism) ● Main Discussion: How to answer Assignment #1 effectively ● Activity: Politics of ChatGPT |
| <p>Assignment 1 Due: 28 Jan 2026</p> | | |
| <p>Module 2: Data and Society</p> | | |

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| <p>(Jan 26, 2026/ Jan 29, 2026)</p> | <p>Lecture 4: Politics of Data</p> <p><u>Before Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it means to be Black in Brazil • The problem with sex testing in sports • Weapons of Math Destruction (Chapter 3) <p><u>After Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excavating AI • Bowker, G.C. and Star, S.L., 2000. Sorting things out: Classification & its consequences. MIT Press. Chapters 3 & 4 <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miceli, M., Schuessler, M. and Yang, T., 2020. Between subjectivity and imposition: Power dynamics in data annotation for computer vision. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 4(CSCW2), pp.1-25. | <p><u>Tutorial 3:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Data collection, classification, and infrastructures • Think, pair share: Share examples of data misrepresentation • Activity: Politics of imagenet annotation |
| <p>(Feb 2, 2026/ Feb 5, 2026)</p> | <p>Lecture 5: Privacy + Copyright/AI</p> <p><u>Before Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook Listening to Users Isn't Just a Privacy Scandal • Glenn Greenwald: Why privacy matters • Podcast: Platform Capitalism (optional) <p><u>After Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nissenbaum, Helen. "Privacy as contextual integrity." Wash. L. Rev. 79 (2004): 119 • The limits of transparency: Data brokers and commodification | <p><u>Tutorial 4:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Definitions of privacy • Discussion: How Amazon Ring and Alexa violate Privacy by Design • Activity: Fusion technology and privacy. |

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| <p>(Feb 9, 2026/ Feb 12, 2026)</p> | <p>Lecture 6: Surveillance, Power, and Visibility</p> <p><u>Before Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Introduction to Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish - A Macat Sociology Analysis • Harvard professor says surveillance capitalism is undermining democracy <p><u>After Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browne, Simone. 2015. <i>Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness</i> • Zuboff, Shoshana. 2015. "Big other: surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization." <i>Journal of Information Technology</i> 30(1): 75-89 | <p><u>Tutorial 5:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Asymmetric Information, Panopticon, Synopticon, Banopticon • Discussion: Google and Asymmetric Information • Activity: Surveillance and Information Asymmetry in Tim Horton's Application |
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Reading Week (Feb 17-20, 2026)
No Lecture or Tutorial

Assignment 2 Due: 25 Feb 2026

Module 3: Computing, Fairness, and Equity

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| <p>(Feb 23, 2026/ Feb 26, 2026)</p> | <p>Lecture 7: Race, Gender, and Intersectionality in Computing</p> <p><u>Before Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Are There So Few Women in Computer Science? • A Brief History of Women in Computing • The next frontier in gender rights is inside databases. <p><u>After Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costanza-Chock, S., 2018. Design justice: Towards an intersectional feminist framework for design theory and practice. <i>Proceedings of the Design Research Society</i> • Bardzell, S., 2010, April. Feminist HCI: taking stock and outlining an agenda for design. In <i>Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems</i> (pp. 1301-1310). | <p><u>Tutorial 6:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Extraction and Manufacturing • Activity: Primary, secondary, and tertiary impact of your computer use. |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Optional) D'ignazio, C. and Klein, L.F., 2020. Data feminism. MIT press. Introduction & Chapter 4 | |
| (Mar 2, 2026/ Mar 5, 2026) | <p>Lecture 8: Development, Colonialism, and Computing Futures</p> <p><u>Before Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEDxTokyo - Kentaro Toyama - 05/15/10 - (English) OLPC's \$100 laptop was going to change the world — then it all went wrong <p><u>After Class:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philip, K., Irani, L. and Dourish, P., 2012. Postcolonial computing: A tactical survey. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 37 (1), pp.3-29 Toyama, K., 2015. Geek heresy: Rescuing social change from the cult of technology. PublicAffairs. Introduction and Chapter 1 (Optional) Download Milan, S. and Treré, E., 2019. Big data from the South (s): Beyond data universalism. Television & New Media, 20 Television & New Media, 20 (4), pp.319-335 | <p><u>Tutorial 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review: Right to repair, E-Waste, Recycle Activity: Choose one of the devices you own and think of creative repurposing solutions. Reflect in groups: what have you done with your discarded electronics? |
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| (Mar 9, 2026/ Mar 12, 2026) | <p>Lecture 9: AI and Fairness</p> <p><u>Before the Class:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gender, Race, and Intersectional Bias in Resume Screening via Language Model Retrieval by Kyra Wilson, Aylin Caliskan Download Gender, Race, and Intersectional Bias in Resume Screening via Language Model Retrieval by Kyra Wilson, Aylin Caliskan Assessing risk, automating racism by Ruha Benjamin | <p><u>Tutorial 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> |

Module 4: Computing, Labor, and Materiality

(Mar 16, 2026/
Mar 19, 2026)

Lecture: 10 – Extraction, and Repair

Before the class:

- Anatomy of an AI System
- This man worked undercover in a Chinese iPhone factory
- Special report : Inside the Congo cobalt mines that exploit children
 - AI's excessive water consumption threatens to drown out its environmental contributions

After the Class:

- Taffel, Sy. "Escaping attention: Digital media hardware, materiality and ecological cost." Culture Machine 13 (2012)
- Hogan, Mél. "Big data ecologies." Ephemera 18.3 (2018): 631

Tutorial 9:

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(Mar 23, 2026/
Mar 26, 2026)

Lecture 11: AI and the Future of Work

Before the Class:

1. Algorithmic management in a work contextLinks to an external site.
2. A typology of artificial intelligence data workLinks to an external site.

After the class:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUIM1uZEzqk>

Tutorial 10:

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| (Mar 30, 2026/ Apr 2, 2026) | Lecture 12: Computing, AI and Energy Emissions TBA | <u>Tutorial 11:</u> • |
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Assignment 4 Due: 1 Apr 2026

TA Office Hours

TA office hours take place on the following days and times via Zoom

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You should email the TA who is scheduled for your chosen time 24 hours in advance. The Zoom link is also posted on Quercus. Feel free to use this time to ask any questions you may have about the course.

Important:

Please note that the teaching team is trying their best to accommodate all the requests from all our students in this large class. We highly encourage our students to get most of their questions asked on Quercus and get the answers from there by us and other students.

- If you have more questions that you want to get answers to privately, please send an email to your TA. Make sure to start the title of your email with [CSC300].
- Please also use the TA office hour times to have your questions answered by TAs. Students will be let into the Zoom room one at a time to have their questions asked and answered privately. Be sure to schedule your office hours appointment 24 hours in advance.

- If your problem cannot be solved by the TAs, only then send an email to Lead TA, Yasaman Rohanifar (yasamanro@cs.toronto.edu) Please start the title of your email [CSC300] to ask the questions.
- If your problem cannot be solved by the TAs and Yasaman, please feel free to send an email to Dr. Das (dipto.das@utoronto.ca). Please start the title of your email [CSC300] to ask the questions.

Slides and Recording:

- Slides will be shared on Quercus before the lecture.
 - There will be NO recording of the lectures.

Assignments:

- 8.5"×11" or A4 paper size.
- Times New Roman font.
- 11-point font size.
- Single-spaced lines of text
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- Paragraph indentation of 0.5 inches.
- References will NOT be counted toward the page or word limit. Reference format: [ACM](#)
- Titles, Subtitles, Images, etc. won't be counted toward the word limit.
- You can go over the word limit, but no more than 10% of the word limit. For example, if the word limit is 500, you can use a maximum of 550 words and no more than that. You will be penalized for using more text.

Academic Integrity

We expect that all students will abide by the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit: <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/> To learn more about Academic Misconduct, visit:

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity/academic-misconduct>.

Turnitin:

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the *Turnitin* software for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the software reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin* service are described on the FAS website.

Penalty for Late Submissions

Late submissions will be graded according to the following rules

- 20% reduction if submitted within 24 hours after the deadline.
- 50% reduction if submitted within 24-48 hours after the deadline.
- No submission after 48 hours after the deadline will be accepted.

However, if a student misses a deadline for an unavoidable reason, physical emergency, or other unexpected incidents of significant magnitude, they can submit their assignment at a later date. In such cases, you have to send an email to your section TA with the necessary documents and explanations.

Please note that there is no deadline for publishing the grades of late submissions. This depends on the availability of the teaching team.

Re-grading

Errors in marking must be brought to the attention of the instructors using the course email address within 1 week (7 days, including weekends, holidays, etc.) of the coursework being returned. All the regrading requests should be made via email to your section TA.

Discussions

Students are encouraged to use Quercus to discuss course-related topics with the teaching team and their classmates. Students can ask questions there, and other students are encouraged to answer those questions if they can. The TAs will also join the discussion where and when needed.

Sickness and Accessibility

This course is guided by the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please find details here: <https://www.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

If you need to talk about any accessibility issue, please contact your TA and CC the head TA, Yasaman Rohanifar (yasamanro@cs.toronto.edu)

Additional resources for accessibility services:

- <https://clockwork.studentlife.utoronto.ca/custom/misc/home.aspx>
- <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>

Additional Resources

1. For improving your writing
 - [Writing at the University of Toronto](#)
 - [Dartmouth Institute of Writing and Rhetoric](#)
2. To know more about Ethics:
 - [UofT Center for Ethics](#)
3. [Recognized Study Groups \(RSG\)](#) are voluntary, peer-led study groups of 3 – 6 students enrolled in the same course. They're available for all A&S courses and are now fully online. In addition to supporting students' study habits and academic success, RSGs also encourage student participants to be socially connected with their peers. Last year, over 2,000 A&S students participated in RSGs for courses spanning all streams and class sizes.
4. [Meet to Complete](#) are online drop-in study sessions held exclusively for A&S undergrads. Offered multiple times per business day and led by trained A&S student-staff, these study

sessions help students to stay motivated and productive by offering daily goal-setting and the opportunity to study alongside their A&S peers.

5. UofT Library: <https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/>
6. Mental Healthcare: <http://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>