



AI Ethics Today

Course Information

Course Title: AI Ethics Today

Course Number and Section: CS696 - IS685

Term: Fall 2026

Class Meeting: F2F, Wednesdays, 06:10 pm-09:00 pm

Instructor: James Brusseau

Email: jbrusseau@pace.edu

Office location: Online

[Credits: UG/G, 4/3]

Course description

We will explore the contemporary ethics of computer science and engineering with thought experiments, discussions, and case studies. This is a discussion class, based on provocative cases. Students will learn the central ethical principles guiding today's information technology, and apply the theory in the real world. We will address questions about privacy: What is it, and why do we want it? We will investigate dilemmas in fairness and social wellbeing as they rise alongside the digital revolution. Finally, we will ask whether AI serves humans, or do we serve AI? Through the course, students will learn to develop an ethical understanding of their own work, to respond to ethics committees, and to produce ethical evaluations of technological projects compliant with recent legal and regulatory requirements.

Prerequisites

None.

Notes

1. This is a course in learning by doing. Class attendance and participation are required.
2. This is an electronics-free classroom. No screens allowed. (Until final review each week.)

Course learning objectives

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- participate as leaders in AI ethics discussions;
- capably describe and apply the nine principles of AI ethics: Autonomy, Dignity, Privacy, Fairness, Solidarity (Equity), Social Wellbeing, Explainability, Safety, Performance.
- ensure an ethical dimension adheres to their work;
- utilize prominent frameworks for applying ethics evaluations to AI tools, including the NIST *AI Risk Management Framework*, the EU *Assessment List for Trustworthy AI*, and the earlier *Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI*.
- respond to recent laws in the United States and Europe dictating that ethical evaluations (sometimes called audits) accompany AI development and deployment. This capacity will serve students well in the job market.

Instructional Materials

Required

- **Textbook:** There is no textbook that needs to be purchased. The textbook will be the professor's online lectures plus the student summaries. Each week a group of students will summarize the previous week's lecture, and the results will be accumulated through the semester to create a textbook for the course that students write themselves.
- **Online resources**
 - Online resources may be made available throughout the semester on the different covered topics, including news articles from publications like technological reviews, podcasts, videos, interviews, documentaries, and similar.

Grading Policy

Grades for this course will be determined through a number of assignments and exams. Different kinds of assignments feed into the strengths of different students and provide you with a range of opportunities to show what you have learned.

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade
Team presentation (Lecture summary)	33%
Individual presentation (AI ethics app/case)	33%
Final exam (AI ethics)	33%
Participation Multiplier (in-class participation)	x (A/10) (A=attendance, Range = 0 - 11)
Total	100%

Pace University's grading scale (%) is as follows:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89.99

C = 70-79.99

D = 60-69.99

F = 0-59.99

Exam, Group presentations, Team presentations

Exam. Format will be short answer and essay questions, concentrated on the 9 principles of AI ethics developed in the class through the Brusseau lectures.

Individual presentations. Group projects will bridge the gap between theory and practice with an applied project to be discussed in class. Then, groups will work on their projects independently – with in-class updates. At semester's end, they will present their work.

Team lecture presentation. Weekly team/individual presentations, with teams (depending on the class size) presenting on the previous week's lecture by Brusseau.

Participation multiplier. General participation plus weekly responses to class question about examples. Weeks 2 – 14. Scored 1 or 0. (Every session students will be asked to respond to a question pertaining to the previous week's material and receive a score of 0 or 1. There will be 11 sessions where this will be asked, and the total will be divided by 10, and then that number will be multiplied by the summed score of the other grades.)

Grading Criteria and Expectations, applicable to each writing activity as noted below:

Students will be asked to write a summarizing response to the professor's lectures, and then re-write. The process works as follows:

1. While listening to the lecture, outline the main points. Then write a report that captures the main ideas. The goal is to capture the important points of the lecture. Ideally, someone could skip the lecture and read only the report and get the big ideas.
2. The first re-write will be tutored by an AI agent (ChatGPT being a good choice). You should use the AI to make the summary "better." You will need to decide how to do that.

Paper must be submitted by Wednesday at 6 pm. Sentences and bullet points as part of the paper are acceptable. **The idea is to efficiently capture the big ideas of the video lecture in your own words. (Providing your own examples is highly encouraged!)**

Team members can work together or independently, but if working together everyone must do an equal share of the work.

If you work as a team, then one person should turn the paper in. If you work independently, then each person should submit their part.

The grading rubric is composed of two elements, each worth 50% of the final score. The elements are **Completeness** and **Clarity**: Are all the major points captured and summarized? Is the grammar and syntax solid? Is the presentation readily comprehensible to a nonspecialist? Also, did you use your own personalized examples to help explain the major points?

Schedule

<http://cs696.ethicsworkshop.org/GridSchedule.html>

Course Policies

Attendance & Participation

Discussion and participation are a major emphasis in this course. This means that it is your responsibility to come to class ready and willing to take part in group knowledge building. Participation is based on in-class involvement in discussions.

Penalty on Late Work

Late work is not accepted. No work is accepted after the last day of class.

Plagiarism

Check the section on Academic Integrity Policy below.

Online/Written Work

Proofread and check the spelling before submitting written assignments, sending emails or posting discussion items. While online communication is more relaxed, it is not careless communication. Doing a quick proof of your work before you send it may alleviate the need to clarify your posting and save you some time and potential embarrassment. Be aware of copyright and “fair use” law; do not plagiarize, and don’t forget to cite your information.

Classroom Climate

Our Pace community benefits from the richly unique experiences and individual diversity each of us bring. Intellectual growth and development happen when we engage in free and open discourse that challenges our own assumptions and beliefs. Together we all have the responsibility to create and maintain an

environment where differences are respected and valued. To that end, we will challenge all manifestations of bias and discrimination to maintain a climate of mutual respect and civility.

Whether you are learning in an online or on campus environment, the same expectations of courtesy and conduct apply. All classroom interactions should remain civil, respectful, and supportive. If you disagree with someone, aim to acknowledge your disagreement in a respectful way. Try responding with a question to open up further discussion (e.g., I'm not sure that I understand your point of view. Can you say more?). When working online, choose your words carefully. It's easy for someone to misinterpret your meaning when they can't see your expressions or hear the tone of your voice. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communication, your comments may be misinterpreted.

Pace University Writing Center (PLV)

The Pace University Writing Center, part of the Learning Commons located on the third floor of Mortola Library, is staffed by Pace graduate and undergraduate writing consultants and offers free one-on-one appointment-based sessions (in person or online). Students can bring writing from all disciplines and at all stages of the writing process, from outlines to completed drafts, as well as non-academic and personal works. Consultants will not edit any work, but they will ask thoughtful questions and offer strategies to help students improve as writers. For more information about the Writing Center, please visit pace.edu/learning-commons; for current hours of operation, refer to pace.edu/learning-commons/current-students/faq. To schedule an appointment using TutorTrac, please visit <https://www.pace.edu/learning-commons/current-students/scheduling-using-trac-cloud>. Questions? Please call (914) 773-3949 or email the Coordinator of Writing Services, Alicia Clarke-Barnes, at aclarkbarnes@pace.edu.

Pace University Writing Center (NYC)

The Pace University Writing Center, located at E207 (upstairs and on the far-left wall of the Birnbaum Library) in 1 Pace Plaza, offers one-on-one appointment-based sessions (in person or online), group sessions and walk-in sessions to writers free of charge. Students can bring writing from all disciplines and at all stages of the writing process, from outlines to completed drafts, as well as non-academic/personal works. Please note, though, that consultants will not edit any work. Rather, they will help students learn how to improve as writers. For more information about the Writing Center, please visit pace.edu/learning-commons; for current hours of operation, refer to pace.edu/learning-commons/current-students/faq. To schedule an appointment using TutorTrac, please visit <https://www.pace.edu/learning-commons/current-students/scheduling-using-trac-cloud>. Questions? Please call (212) 346-1962 or email the Coordinator of Writing Services, Grant Crawford, at gcrawford@pace.edu.

University Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity

Students in this course are required to adhere to Pace University's [Academic Integrity Code](#), which supports honesty and ethical conduct in the educational process. It educates students about what constitutes academic misconduct,

helps to deter cheating and plagiarism, and provides a procedure for handling cases of academic misconduct. Students are expected to be familiar with the Code, which can be found in [Policies and Procedures](#). Individual schools and programs may have additional standards of academic integrity. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies of the schools, programs, and courses in which they are enrolled.

Learning Commons

The [Learning Commons](#) uses an array of programs and a holistic approach to assist students with academic skills and content knowledge. We are dedicated to developing independent learners through purposeful interactions with trained, well-qualified peer and professional staff. Services offered:

- Content Support Services including, content tutoring, exam review sessions, & content preparation/support workshops
- Academic Skills Services including small group peer mentoring, academic skills workshops, and individual academic development
- Writing Support Services including, writing tutoring & writing preparation/support workshops

Procedure for Students Who Wish to Obtain Reasonable Accommodations for a Course:

The same rigorous standards for admission apply to students with and without a disability. In order to support the continued success of students with disabilities, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and is committed to ensuring equal access for students with disabilities to its facilities, programs, and activities. The University's commitment to equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities includes providing reasonable accommodations for the needs of students with disabilities.

To request an accommodation for a qualifying disability, a student must self-identify and register with the Disability Services Office for his or her campus. The Office of Disability Services is housed in the Counseling Center on the New York City and Pleasantville campuses. No one, including faculty, is authorized to evaluate the need and arrange for an accommodation except the Coordinator of Disability Services. Moreover, no one, including faculty, is authorized to contact the Coordinator of Disability Services on behalf of a student.

For further information, please see [Information for Students with Disabilities](#) page.

Technological Resources:

- List of all [Pace Information Technology Services](#).
- For assistance with a technological concern contact the Pace Helpdesk at (914) 773-3648 or create a [help desk ticket](#).
- Visit the [Learning Remotely website](#)

Appropriate Use Policy for Information Technology:

Respect for intellectual labor and creativity is vital to academic discourse and enterprise. This principle applies to work of all authors and publishers in all media. It encompasses respect for the right to acknowledgment, right to privacy and right to determine the form, manner and terms of publication and distribution.

Because electronic information is volatile and easily reproduced, respect for the work and personal expression of others is especially critical in computer environments. Violations of authorial integrity, including plagiarism,

invasion of privacy, unauthorized access and trade secret and copyright violations, may be grounds for sanctions against members of the academic community.

Sex-Based Misconduct Policy and Procedure:

Pace University is committed to providing a safe environment for every member of its community and to ensuring that no student, faculty or staff member is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of any University program or activity on the basis of sex. Accordingly, the University prohibits the following forms of Sex-Based Misconduct: sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and stalking.

Instructors are a **non-confidential** resource and have an obligation to report any information about sexual assault with the Executive Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator – Bernard Dufresne, bdufresne@pace.edu, 163 Williams Street, Room 1017, (212) 346-1310. The Title IX/Affirmative Action Office is responsible for investigating violations of the sexual misconduct policy. Go [here](#) for more information about the [Pace University sexual misconduct policy](#).

Members of the University community who believe that they have been subjected to Sex-Based Misconduct are encouraged to report such incidents to the University and, where applicable, to local law enforcement. **Confidential** resources include the **University Counseling Centers, Offices of Sexual and Interpersonal Wellness** and **University Healthcare**. Contact information for those offices may be found in the self-care section below.

Self-Care:

Your academic success in this course and throughout your college career depends heavily on your personal health and well-being. Stress is a common part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected life changes outside the classroom. The Pace Community strongly encourages you to take care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of midterms and finals reach their peak. Please know there are a number of support services on campus that stand ready to assist you. I strongly encourage you to contact them when needed.

The Counseling Center Just In Case information supplies potentially life-saving mental health information to Pace University students, staff, and faculty, putting vital information and support options at your fingertips, just in case you or a friend needs help. Go to the [Just in Case page](#) on the Pace website or go to "Counseling Center" on the MyPace or the Pace Safe app.

During this academic year, the following information on [Coping Emotionally with COVID-19](#) may also be useful for you.

Department	Pleasantville	New York City
Advising Center for Exploring Majors	First-year: (914) 773-3756 (914) 773-3757	(212) 346-1798
Affirmative Action Office	(914) 923-2610	(212) 346-1310
Center for Spiritual Development	(914) 773-3767	
College of Health Professions Academic Advisement	UG (914) 773-3961 UG (914) 773-3347	UG (212) 618-6027 Grad (914) 773-3114

	Grad (914) 773-3114	
Counseling Center	(914) 773-3710	(212) 346-1526
Dean for Students Office	(914) 773-3351	(212) 346-1306
Dyson College Academic Advisement	(914) 773-3781	(212) 346-1518
International Student/Scholars	(212) 346-1368	
Lubin School of Business Academic Advisement	UG (914) 773-3531	UG (212) 618-6550 Grad (212) 618-6440
Office of Multicultural Affairs	(914) 773-3628	(212) 346-1546
Office of Sexual and Interpersonal Wellness	(212) 346-1931	
Office of Student Assistance (OSA)	(877) 672-1830	
Pace Women's Justice Center	(914) 287-0739	
Pforzheimer Honors College Academic Advisement	(212) 346-1697	
Residential Life	(914) 597-8777	(212) 346-1295
Seidenberg School Academic Advisement	SeidenbergInquiry@pace.edu	
Sexual Assault Prevention & Education	(212) 346-1931	
Study Abroad	(212) 346-1368	
Student Accessibility Services	(914) 773-3710	(212) 346-1526
Student Engagement	(914) 773-3767	(212) 346-1590
University Health Care	(914) 773-3760	(212) 346-1600