

Ethics in the News (10% of the ePortfolio)

There are three components to this assignment: 1) presenting, 2) writing, and 3) peer reviewing.

When you sign up to present, you also sign up to be a peer reviewer. Presenters toward the beginning of the semester will peer review toward the end, and vice versa. Take note of these dates.

All students will be assigned the task of **selecting an article** (or news report of some sort, i.e., video clip) that contains a science/technology-ethics issue (from a reputable media source) to share with the class.

Tips for selecting an article:

It is easy to fall into the trap of picking an article about a flashy new technology. Be wary of doing this, because it is sometimes quite difficult to generate an analytical discussion (and therefore a write-up) about the ethical issues. So, what counts as a meaningful discussion? Be prepared to ask something more specific than: Should engineers be working on this new technology with unknown risks? Instead, plan a few questions that will challenge your peers to adopt a new perspective. For examples, take a look at the featured ePortfolios. If you are not sure, ask!!

At the beginning of class, the presenter will make a five-minute presentation (without PowerPoint) in which he or she briefly summarizes the article and identifies the ethical issue(s).

The activity is designed to inform the student's ethical imagination and cultivate a new perspective on the news stories and media that we all encounter everyday. After the presentation, the student should be prepared to guide a meaningful group discussion.

INSTRUCTIONS

PRESENTERS

The **DAY BEFORE** you are scheduled to present in class:

1. Create a new post on the class blog that provides an ethical analysis of a recent article from a newspaper or science and/or engineering journal (see tips for selecting an article, above; tips for writing your analysis, below; and guidelines on the pages 4–5). In addition to posting, **email a copy of to Sunderland, Scarlet, and your peer reviewer on the day before your presentation.** See example: <http://engineeringethics.edublogs.org/2013/08/23/ethics-in-the-cloud-analysis/>

Tips for writing an analysis:

Identify and analyze the ethical issues associated with the article. Write your response in the first person (use “I”) and clearly state your starting point and perspective. Remember, this is a post that your classmates, and potentially people outside of our class will read. By engaging! Ask provocative questions! I am not grading your personal values but rather your ability to conduct an ethical analysis of the content. Be sure to consider a variety of perspectives.

2. In your post, include a reference to your article as the very top line of text. Use the following standardized format:
Month/Day/Year: News title
e.g., 05/31/12: Glasses Could Help the Blind See like Geordi La Forge in ‘Star Trek’.
3. Label your post with a catchy title that communicates one of the key ideas you would like to discuss.
4. Tag your article with whatever tags you like
5. Select the “ethics in the news” category
6. Comment on the other ethics in the news posts. You are required to comment on the posts immediately before and after your post.
7. Your final post is due ONE WEEK after you present. This is the day that you should make edits to your original post.

PEER REVIEWERS

- The day that you are reviewing, make sure to carefully read the article and the post before class.
- **Write a review** - Be sure to clearly address the specific questions provided in the guidelines (**see pp. 4–5**).
- Aim to be helpful and constructive.
- Email the review to Sunderland, Scarlet, and the author by the next class (for example, if you are reviewing on Monday, your review is due on Wednesday; if you are reviewing on Friday, your review is due on the following Monday).

RUBRIC

Fair grading measures a student's ability to recognize and communicate the ethical issues and to analyze possible courses of action, not a student's personal values or moral beliefs.

Grades will be determined with the following rubric that measures five attributes on a scale of 1 (lowest) through 5 (highest).

1. Recognition of dilemmas – (1) students fail to see problem; (5) students clearly identify key ethical issues.
2. Information – (1) students ignore important details; (5) students identify unknowns and use their own expertise to add appropriate information
3. Analysis – (1) students provide minimal analysis; (5) students cite analogous cases and stories, and incorporate appropriate theories and concepts – evidence that you have engaged the three levels of moral response (emotive, pre-reflective, reflective)
4. Perspective – (1) students have a limited perspective; (5) students have a global perspective

GUIDELINES

Your analysis should be 400 – 500 words.

Italicized comments describe the key components of a well-written analysis. Your post may follow this general format, but it is not a requirement. Your answer should be based on a close reading of the article, notes from the class discussions, and content from the assigned readings.

You will not be able to discuss every ethical issue and you won't be able to engage every concept and theory. Therefore, it is important to select the theories and concepts that are most relevant to the situation. We recognize that posts that happen earlier in the semester will include fewer references to specific theories and/or concepts – the response should reflect the

Identify the ethical issues - distinguish between those that are mentioned directly in the article and those that you consider based on the article's content.

Peer reviewers should consider the following questions:

What additional issues could be mentioned?

Did the author identify any particularly thought provoking issues? Why or why not?

Indicate your starting point – what was your initial emotive reaction and why? What attracted you to the article?

Peer reviewers should consider the following questions:

Did the author clearly explain her/his reactions? Explain how.

Provide an analysis of the most meaningful (relevant) ethical issues.

Peer reviewers should consider the following questions:

What issues did the author decide not to address? Is it clear that the author focused on the most relevant issues? What evidence do you find most convincing? What evidence is lacking?

When appropriate, draw parallels to other articles that we've discussed in class, or literature that you've read (both in class, or on your own time).

Peer reviewers should consider the following questions:

Does the author make accurate comparisons? Why or why not? Can you think of a different parallel article or issue that was not mentioned?

Include a reflection about other perspectives.

Peer reviewers should consider the following questions:

Does the author distinguish her/his perspective from alternative perspectives?

Why or why not? What evidence or examples did you find most convincing? Can you suggest another perspective that the author might have considered?