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CS 415: Social Implications of Computing

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Fall 2005 Syllabus

CS 415 Social Implications of Computing

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CS 415 is a communication skills course using as its subject matter current salient issues associated with the social implications of computing. In addition to the course text, you will need to use certain reading materials in the library and elsewhere, and you will be responsible for using concepts and theories provided in class lectures and discussions.

The goal of this course is to blend social implications issues with common technical communication formats you'll need to be familiar with out in the "real world." To do this, the course is built around a research project on a social implications topic of your choice. You will propose your topic for approval in a written proposal and make a short proposal presentation to the class. You will also be required to make a formal presentation to the class on your research and turn in a formal research report.

Grades

Your grade in this course will be derived as follows:

- Proposal 30%
- Class Presentation 20%
- Research Report 50%

It's easy to see that the stakes go up as the quarter goes along, and that doing well in the research report is essential to doing well (or, for some, even getting by) in this course. Plan ahead and budget your time and resources accordingly.

Writing Assignments

The format rules for writing assignments are remarkably simple.

- First, everything you turn in must be typed or machine printed on standard 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Electronic submissions (email, FAX) are not allowed and will not be accepted.
- Second, all text must be double-spaced (single sided is preferred but not required).
- Third, you have to use easily readable fonts of traditional size - i.e., in the range of 10 to 12 points for the body of the paper.
- Fourth, you have to use traditionally sized margins on the top and bottom and the left and right sides. Margins from 3/4" to 1 1/4" are traditional enough for CS 415.

Proposal (Text, Chapter 5)

Write a 4-6 page proposal for the research project you will do in this course. Read Chapter 6 on Informal Proposals, and double check yourself against the Proposal Checklist on pp. 108-109. Make sure your proposal meets the content and format requirements specified in the CS 415 Request for Proposal (RFP) for Fall 2005.

Research Report (Text, Chapter 10. Also, see Chapters 12, 13, 14, and 18)

This paper is clearly where the rubber meets the road in CS 415. You'll have a great deal of freedom in deciding what to put in your research report, but the content should be such as to achieve all the elements of your approved proposal. As a minimum, however, the research report, which is the major deliverable of your proposal "contract," must include the following sections, along with at least one visual (illustration, chart, table, or other graphic). Use the Research Report Outline 11.1, p. 192, in the course text. Your document should include the following things:

- A short Transmittal Letter which formally delivers the document.
- An Informative Abstract of not more than 250 words.
- An Introduction that includes the purpose, problem, and scope of the report.
- A Background section (if needed) that provides theoretical and/or historical perspectives for the topic.
- A Discussion section which presents the findings and results of your research.
- A Conclusion section that summarizes the report and provides any conclusions and recommendations if appropriate.
- A List of References at the end along with needed citations throughout the report. Use the simple documentation system described in Chapter 14 of the text, pp. 247-260.

Your assignment is to produce a finished, professional research report at least 10 pages in length (not counting transmittal letter, abstract, documentation, and appendix).

Class Presentations (Text, Chapter 15)

As a communication skills course, CS 415 also requires you to stand up and make two presentations to the class: an informal presentation on your proposal, and a formal presentation to the class on your research project. The informal proposal presentation does not require visuals and should not exceed 5 minutes. The formal research report presentation must include visuals - e.g., viewgraphs, computer charts, handouts, video, etc., and must run 10- 15 minutes in length (not including any questions that may occur afterward). See Chapter 17 in your course text. After each presentation, you may also have the opportunity to answer questions on the material you presented. The schedule for class presentations will be developed during the quarter.

Class Attendance

Attendance is required.

Paper Turn-in

Papers are due at the first of the class period on the turn-in dates designated in this syllabus. Late papers receive an automatic deduction of 1/2 letter grade for the first 24 hours, and a full letter grade for every 24 hours thereafter. Papers received without all of the required parts, as described in this syllabus and in course handouts, are subject to a failing grade. Electronic submission is not permitted in this course.

Academic Deficiency and Dishonesty

CS415 is a writing intensive course, and, as such, you must do your own writing. If you extensively use materials that are not yours, even if you properly document their use, you may still fail the assignment for academic deficiency. If you commit dishonesty by plagiarizing materials that are not yours, you will automatically fail the course for academic deficiency and receive the full penalty provided by the university and college academic dishonesty policies. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of ethics and pay particular attention to the section on plagiarism. If in doubt, ask Dr. Finkelstein.

Class Schedule

- See calendars attached.

Course Texts

No text is specified for social implications topics because of the dynamic nature of the subject and the amount of readily available research materials in periodicals and on the Web.

This course is Writing Intensive and requires both a written proposal and major research report, along with a formal briefing. You should already have the required technical writing text listed below if you have taken EGR 335. If not, get it now and save it for when you do take EGR 335. The recommended grammar text is new and should prove helpful, especially since grammar will be graded along with all other aspects of your papers. This text is also required for EGR 335 (starting in Fall 05)--so if you have not taken EGR335 yet, buy it now and save it for when you do take EGR 335. Special combination packages containing both books may be available in the bookstore under EGR 335.

Required for CS 415

Leo Finkelstein, Jr., *Pocket Book of Technical Writing for Engineers and Scientists*, 2nd Ed., Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005 (ISBN:0072976837). You will need this text for guidance when writing your proposal and research report, and preparing your formal research presentation. This text is also used in EGR 335.

Recommended for CS 415

Leo Finkelstein, Jr., *Pocket Book of English Grammar for Engineers and Scientists*, 1st Ed., Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006 (ISBN: 007352946X). This text provides a review and reference for English grammar and is geared specifically to the needs of engineering and computer science students.

Writing Across the Curriculum

CS 415 has been designated as a Writing Intensive (WI) Course in the Major for engineering and computer science students.

How to get help!

Ask Dr. Finkelstein . . .

- Call him on the phone at: 937/775-5124
- Send him email at: lfinkel@cs.wright.edu or check his courses' homepage at www.finkelnet.com
- Come by his office (416 RC) . . . or check up front (405 RC)
- . . . during office hours on M W 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
 . . . by appointment on MTWT 8:30 - 4:30 (Note: he is mostly in class all day Tuesday and Thursday.)
 . . . or anytime . . . just drop by

Course Calendars and Attachments follow.