

SPRING 2026: UF Honors course

COURSE TITLE: IDH2930 - UnCommon Reads: *Importance of Ethics in Advancing the Data Culture*

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Please contact me via the information below or through Canvas. Please use your “.ufl” account and include class code in the subject of the email and your name in the body of the email if you email directly.

Natya Hans, PhD Instructor
Academic Research Consulting and Services nhans@ufl.edu
Office: C2-227, Communicore Building, near HSCL libraries

CLASS MEETINGS

Time: Every Tuesday, period 7, 1:55 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. ET

Location: Honors Village, HVR1 114

OFFICE HOURS

Thursdays, 2:00 pm to 3:00pm and by appointment.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Steen, M. (2023). Ethics for people who work in tech. CRC Press. The book chapters will be available freely on the Canvas site files.

COURSE WEBSITE

Course website: E-Learning in Canvas website, <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

The E-Learning (Canvas) website is where the class syllabus, handouts, notes and assignments will be posted, along with any announcements. This site is also where you will find basic course-related information. Please remember that you are responsible for all announcements made in lecture and/or posted on the course website for this class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

“If it’s free, you’re the product.” is a phrase often touted by those with privacy concerns on the vast amount of data collected in our society. Importance of Ethics in the Advancing the Data Culture is a course that will ask questions about that data collection - by whom? For whom? About whom? Who benefits? A myriad of supplemental readings will be used to spark conversation on the current state of data science and ethics. In particular, we will critically analyze: the role of bias in data collection, use, and dissemination and how that applies to machine-learning systems, what is the culture in the data profession around ethics, how can we use data and data collection to advance society, such as in healthcare, and the effect of today’s economic framework around data and its collection.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Explain the ethical considerations involved in projects related to technology and data.
- 2) Critically analyze arguments related to ethics in data collection, use, and dissemination.
- 3) Discuss the role of ethics of data as it relates to current events or data trends.
- 4) Identify strategies for including ethical considerations in designing projects.

LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS:

Class Date	General Topics	Assigned Reading	Assignment
Jan 13	Introduction to course, the book and expectations	No reading	Introductions on Canvas
Jan 20	A humanistic approach, what do we mean with <i>ethics</i> , is technology a neutral tool	Chapters 1-3	Journal Entry #1 due by 12pm on day of class
Jan 27	Value, wellbeing, and economics	Chapter 4	Journal Entry #2 due by 12pm on day of class
Feb 3	The problem with the 'Trolley Problem', Privacy is about more than 'privacy'	Chapter 5-6	Journal Entry #3 due by 12pm on day of class
Feb 10	What is your responsibility; Software for self-driving cars, consequences and outcomes	Chapter 7-9	Journal Entry #4 due by 12pm on day of class
Feb 17	Cameras in public spaces	Chapter 10	Journal Entry #5 due by 12pm on day of class
Feb 24	Duties and rights, smart devices in our homes	Chapter 11-12	Journal Entry #6 due by 12pm on day of class
Mar 3	Relationships and care	Chapter 13	Journal Entry #7 due by 12pm on day of class
Mar 10	A social media app, virtues and flourishing	Chapter 14-15	Journal Entry #8 due by 12pm on day of class
UF SPRING BREAK (No Class)			
Mar 24	Methods to 'do ethics' in your project	Chapter 16	Journal Entry #9 due by 12pm on day of class Note: Final Project topics due in Canvas by

			end of class.
Mar 31	Human-centered design, value sensitive design	Chapter 17-18	Journal Entry #10 due by 12pm on day of class.
Apr 7	Responsible innovation, What does your next project look like, exemplars	Chapter 19 - 21	Journal Entry #11 due by 12pm on day of class
Apr 14	Wrap-up, final project presentations	Final Projects	Journal Entry #12 due by 12pm on day of class Final Project due by 12pm on day of class
Apr 21	Wrap-up, final project presentations	Final Projects	Final Project due by 12pm on day of class

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) **Weekly Class Participation**
 - a) 0 points will be given for an unexcused absence
 - b) 3 points will be given for partial participation
 - c) 5 points will be given for meaningful participation that continues the discussion
- 2) **Weekly Journal Entries**
 - a) A weekly journal entry prompt will be posted in Canvas each week. The journal entry will be a brief response to a question and reactions to the weekly reading.
- 3) **Final Project**
 - a) The final project will be an independent presentation on the topic of your choice on either data ethics in the news or data science trends. Alternative topics may be proposed via email or Canvas message to instructors by the end of class on Tuesday, Mar 24.

GRADING:

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards Honors Completion Requirements. Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Requirements module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

Assignment	Description	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Weekly participation in class discussion	Active participation in the discussion (12 sessions), 5 points each	60	30%

Weekly journal entry on Canvas	Thoughtful reflection on the readings in relation to the prompt (12 posts), 5 points each	60	30%
Final project	Includes in-class presentation of project	80	40%

MINIMUM GRADE CUTOFFS

Minimum grade cutoffs are listed below. Importantly, final grades will be curved at the end of the semester.

Point Range (%) Letter Grade

>90%	A
>87%	A-
>83%	B+
>80%	B
>77%	B-
>73%	C+
>70%	C
>65%	C-
>55%	D
<55%	E

FLEXIBILITY CLAUSE

We reserve the right to modify the class schedule listed above as needed. Any changes will be made well in advance, and you will be immediately notified. Conflicts that arise due to a change in schedule can be discussed with us and will not be held against you. Scheduled Reading Assignments and Graded Assignments should not change, except due to unforeseen circumstances.

STUDENT DEMEANOR

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and to remain in class until the class has been dismissed. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having completed any required readings and performed any preparatory work that is assigned. While in class, students are expected to participate in class discussion, and to treat the other students and the instructor with respect and attention. While in class, students should not participate in texting, information seeking or viewing outside of that related to the course task at hand, talking on the phone, or other activities not related to classroom engagement and participation.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND MAKE-UP WORK

Students are expected to notify instructors of absence in advance. Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions

that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor. For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class, or any required class activity must inform the instructors as early as possible prior to the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergency situations, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered during absence from class or inability to engage in class activities because of the reasons outlined above.

STUDENT USE OF AI IN ASSIGNMENTS

Unless specifically requested or authorized by your course or clerkship director for a particular need, the use of AI on assignments, essays/reflection papers, exams, and quizzes is considered cheating, and you would be violating the UF Regulations 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. When authorized, the use of electronic and other resources, including artificial intelligence tools, requires proper attribution. You are responsible for understanding your dynamic data stewardship responsibilities to minimize personal, college, and university risk.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code on all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you witness any instances of academic dishonesty in this class, please notify the instructor or contact the Student Honor Court (392-1631) or Cheating Hotline (392- 6999). Academic dishonesty cannot be tolerated. All persons involved in cheating or plagiarism will receive a zero on the affected assignment or exam and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who require a classroom accommodation for a disability must contact the Disability Resource Center in 0020 Reid Hall (phone: 352-392-8565). Please see the University of Florida Disability Resource Center website for more information at: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>. Please note that the student must provide documentation of a requirement for accommodation by the second week of class. No accommodation is available to students who lack this documentation. If this documentation is provided later than the end of the second week, then we nor the Disability Resource Center can guarantee that these accommodations will be provided. It is the policy of the University of Florida that the student, not the instructor, is responsible for arranging accommodation when needed.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via Gatorevals. guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they

receive from Gatorevals, in their canvas course menu under Gatorevals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL HELP

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-1575

UF Title IX: inform@titleix.ufl.edu, 352-273-3721

University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Academic Resource

E-learning technical support, <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>, 352-392-4357 (select option 2), Learning-support@ufl.edu

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints On-Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

UF Student Success: For improving study skills to connecting with a peer tutor, peer mentor, success coach, academic advisor, and wellness resources, go to <http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu>

Honors Program contact information:

- Honors Program, Honors Village Complex #4, 352-392-1519
- Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu
- Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings: <https://bit.ly/UFHonorsAdvising>
- Honors Program Event Calendar: <https://www.honors.ufl.edu/news--events/calendar-of-events/>