

Data Ethics: Privacy and Manipulation

Fall 2024

Instructor: Augie Faller
Office: Dalton 104
Office Hours: By appointment at calendly.com/augiefaller
Email: afaller@brynmawr.edu

Course Description

Data ethics has become an increasingly important topic with the rise of big data and artificial intelligence. We are now tracked online and off, and our data is packaged and sold to the highest bidder. In this course we will ask: Why is privacy valuable, and how might it be protected in the age of big data? What is surveillance capitalism, and what is new about it? Are we being manipulated by algorithms that know too much about us? If so, what is the ethical harm of manipulation? Course materials will be drawn from diverse sources, and assignments will apply ethical theories to current problems. Students who took PHIL-B258: Data Ethics in Social Media in Spring 2024 should contact the instructor for permission to take this course.

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop an understanding of some central concepts and theories in contemporary data ethics, how they interrelate, and how they might apply to social issues.
2. Gain the philosophical skills to critically evaluate these theories, construct arguments, and identify potential contributions.
3. Produce philosophical writing that meets the field of philosophy's expectations regarding clarity, argument, and citation practices.

Course Materials

All course readings will be available on the course webpage.

For writing guidelines, please consult:

Jim Pryor, "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper"
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Williams and Bizup, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 11th Edition, (other editions acceptable as well)

Assignments

Participation	Class attendance and participation are expected. 10%
Weekly reflections	Each week you will write a short reflection on the reading. These will be graded as <i>full credit</i> , <i>half credit</i> , or <i>no credit</i> . 30%
Midterm paper	An essay that builds on your reflections (4–5 pages). A rubric will be provided. 20%
Coauthor final paper	A final paper that builds on you weekly reflections (6 pages) that you will write in pairs, due during finals week . 25%
Final Presentations	In the last week of class you will present you final paper plan. 15%

Weekly reflections:

By **11am each Wednesday** you will submit a 200–300 word reflection through Moodle on that week’s readings and/or class discussion. Your reflection should either identify something you found **interesting** (and explain why you found it interesting, perhaps connecting it to your own life or other courses you’ve taken) or something you found **confusing** (and explain why you found it confusing, with an attempt to make sense of what the author might mean).

Grading Policies

1. Attendance is expected. You get two unexcused absences without penalty.
2. The grading standard for this course is that a “B” reflects a minimal but satisfactory engagement with the material of the course. Anything above a “B” will reflect the quality of work submitted by the student.
3. Extensions can be granted on assignments, but you should ask at least a day in advance. If you do not make arrangements beforehand, late papers will be downgraded by 1/3 letter grade per day.

Technology in the Classroom

Please minimize your technology use in the classroom. Students should take notes using a notebook and either bring the readings printed to class or consult their notes. If you choose to use a laptop, please disable your wifi during class. **Please refrain from looking at your phone during class.** If you need an exception to this policy for person reasons, please let me know before class by email or in person.

If you are a student with a disability that has a technology accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible.

Accessibility

Bryn Mawr College is committed to providing equal access to students with a documented disability. Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Access Services. Students can call 610-526-7516 to make an appointment with the Director of Access Services, Deb Alder, or email her at dalder@brynmawr.edu to begin this confidential process. Once registered, students should schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible to share the verification form and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement. More information can be obtained at the Access Services website. (<http://www.brynmawr.edu/access-services/>)

Any student who has a disability-related need to record this class first must speak with the Director of Access Services and to me, the instructor. Class members need to be aware that this class may be recorded.

Title IX

Title IX: Bryn Mawr/Haverford College is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive living and learning environment where all can feel secure and free from harassment. All forms of sex discrimination, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence, are violations of Bryn Mawr/Haverford's policies, whether they occur on or off campus. Bryn Mawr/Haverford faculty are committed to helping to create a safe learning environment for all students and for the College community as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination, harassment, or violence, know that help and support are available. Staff members are trained to support students in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more.

The College strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of sex discrimination and/or sex-based harassment. Please be aware that all Bryn Mawr/Haverford employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors, clergy, and health-care providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the Bi-College Title IX Coordinator.

Information about the College's Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Policy, reporting options, and a list of campus and local resources can be found on the College's website:

Bryn Mawr College Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Policy:

<https://www.brynmawr.edu/sites/default/files/migrated-files/Bryn-Mawr-College-Sexual-Misconduct->

Policy_2020-2021.pdf

Haverford College Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Policy:

https://www.haverford.edu/sites/default/files/Office/Haverford-College-Sex-Discrimination-and-Sex-Based-Harassment-Policy_Aug-2024.pdf

Notes on Academic Integrity

I regard plagiarism as a very serious matter. In this class, plagiarism consists of work taken partially or entirely from an uncited source (online content, a peer, a published article, etc.) and assumed as your own. If I have reasons to suspect plagiarizing, I will ask that you report yourself to the Bryn Mawr Honor Board. See the Bryn Mawr Honor Code and Honor Board Hearing Process in the Student Handbook for more information.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

Note: Please complete the reading and be prepared to discuss on the day it is listed.

Week 1: Introduction

Monday

No class (Labor Day)

Wednesday

1. No reading; Introduction to course

Week 2: Starting points

Monday

1. Russ Schafer-Landau, Introduction to *The Fundamentals of Ethics*

Wednesday

1. Aaron Sankin and Surya Mattu (The Markup), “The High Cost of a Free Website”
2. The Guardian, “NSA Files: Decoded”
3. OPTIONAL: Julia Angwin (The Markup), “What They Know... Now: The surveillance economy is getting creepier and more personal”

Week 3: The Right to Privacy and the Value of Privacy

Monday

1. Warren and Brandeis, “The Right to Privacy”

Wednesday

1. James Rachels, “Why Privacy is Important”

Week 4: Privacy in the Internet Age

Monday

1. Plato, excerpt from *The Republic* on the ring of Gyges
2. Andrei Marmor, “Privacy and Social Media”

Wednesday

1. Acquisti et al. (2015), “Privacy and human behavior in the age of information”
2. Thorin Klosowski (2023), “Here’s what you’re actually agreeing to when you accept a privacy policy” (NYT)

Week 5:

Monday

1. Helen Nissenbaum, “Privacy as Contextual Integrity”

Wednesday

1. Review and discussion of midterm paper

Week 6: The Panopticon

Monday

1. Foucault (1975), “Panopticism,” from *Discipline and Punish*

Wednesday

1. Blanchette and Johnson, “Data retention and the panoptic society: the social benefits of forgiveness”

Week 7: Fall break

Monday

1. No class

Wednesday

1. No class

Week 8: Privacy and Bitcoin

Monday

1. Satoshi Nakamoto. "Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System"
2. Andrew M. Bailey, Bradley Rettler, and Craig Warmke, *Resistance Money*, Chapter 2 "What Bitcoin Really Is"

Wednesday

1. Andrew M. Bailey, Bradley Rettler, and Craig Warmke, *Resistance Money*, Chapter 6 "Privacy in Public"

Week 9: Doxing

Monday

1. David M. Douglas, "Doxing: A Conceptual Analysis"
2. Bella Rios, "Doxxing or Due Diligence?" (Case Study)

Wednesday

1. Emma Betuel (for The Markup), "Should Doxing Be Illegal?"
2. Vegas Tenold, "To Doxx a Racist"

Week 10: Privacy and Manipulation

Monday

1. Christine Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil"

Wednesday

1. Onora O'Neil, "Between Consenting Adults"
2. By Robinson Meyer (*The Atlantic*), "Everything We Know About Facebook's Secret Mood-Manipulation Experiment"

Week 11: Privacy and Manipulation

Monday

1. Anita L. Allen, “An Ethical Duty to Protect Ones Own Information Privacy?”

Wednesday

1. Chomsky and Herman, Excerpt from *Manufacturing Consent*

Week 12: Manipulation and Gamification

Monday

1. Three pieces from Alec Karakatsanis

Wednesday

1. C. Thi Nguyen, “How Twitter Gamifies Communication”

Week 13: Manipulation and Politics

Monday

1. Tristan Harris, “How Technology Hijacks Peoples Minds”
2. Vincent Gabrielle, “Gamified Life”

Wednesday

No class

Week 14: Surveillance and the police state

Monday

1. Amnesty International, “Automating Apartheid”

Wednesday

1. Privacy workshop; discussion of final paper

Week 15:

Monday

1. Final Presentations

Wednesday

1. Final Presentations