# SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
## COMM 360 Fall 2018

Dr. Florence M. Chee                                     W 4:15PM – 6:45pm
SOC #205                                                 SOC 010, WTC
Phone 312.915.6935                                       Office Hours by appt.
Email fchee@luc.edu

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### Digital Ethics

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**Prerequisites:** COMM 100 & COMM 200 or Graduate students in Digital Media & Storytelling

**Course Description**:
There are very few corners of the world left untouched by digitization, but the need to engage ethically in these digital environments becomes increasingly evident, especially as these issues manifest in our own backyards, and the devices in our pockets. In the field of Communication, we are very familiar with some of the social issues arising from the uses and abuses of what the digital world has to offer. On the one hand, there is immense freedom and empowerment; on the other, oppression and exploitation. How will we, as an engaged populace, work to create both form and content that improves lives rather than act to diminish them?

This course is a deep-dive into the digital ethics issues of our time--of which there is a constant and steady stream of examples that affect our everyday lives through media, policy, and law. Notions of privacy and identity are constantly shifting, and yet everything about us from the biological to the social may be collected and housed in digital formats at any point, and in perpetuity. We will discuss answers to questions such as: Is it possible for a machine to have social bias?

Students will leave this course having engaged with several critical analytical perspectives, formulating their own toolkit for handling emergent issues in digital ethics, and contribute their knowledge towards creating a more just society amidst a changing world.

**Course Objectives:**
Throughout the semester, students will:
1. Build their understanding of current issues in digital ethics and communication.
2. Learn best practices for how to weave theory and practice when going between media and policymaking worlds.
3. Create a toolkit for discussing digital ethics in everyday contexts.
4. Critically assess their own communication, thinking and writing as means of expression and persuasion.
5. Present research results to a public audience using multiple contexts and platforms.

**Course Readings:**

Eubanks, V. (2017). *Automating Inequality* St. Martin's Press.
Noble, Safiya. (2018). *Algorithms of Oppression.* NYU Press.

Throughout the semester the instructor will guide students through core material that is accessible through our Sakai course system, Loyola Libraries, and the Web.
As a key learning outcome of the course, students will be able to further hone their skills engaging with a wide variety of digital media.

Technologies are permitted in the classroom with the understanding they are to be used in a mutually respectful and ethical manner for full participation in course objectives. We will discuss social media policies and consent in class.

## Course Organization:

This course consists of a 2.5 hour class once a week.

## Assignments and Grading:
1. Digital Ethics Invenstory (10%)
2. Weekly Critical Commentary (10%)
3. Scenario Exercises (15%)
4. Ethics Storyboard Poster (10%)
5. Prospectus (Proposal) (10%)
6. Take-home Exam (10%)
7. Multimedia Project/Paper (Digital ethics toolkit) (15%)
8. Final Presentation (5%)
9. Participation and Professionalism (15%)

*All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.
*All assignments must be submitted on time or marks will be deducted unless the student is in communication with the instructor (see below).

## Course Website: https://sakai.luc.edu/

Our Sakai space is where we will post information on COMM 360 online. It will also act as a central community space. So, check it often for course updates and other information. You are expected to ask questions and seek out information needed to fulfill the course requirements as an active learner. Additionally, seeking out technical skills to solve new media problems is a key element in this class (and a transferable skillset beyond our classroom). Depending on how you build your own responses to assignments, you may need to seek out more sophisticated technical skills through work in class or by taking advantage of our many workshops and resources.

## Attendance/Participation/Professionalism
This course covers a wide range of material and we have a lot of work to do together. First off (and so important), attendance is foundational. Making it to class on time and being present for the lectures, assignments, and discussions is essential to your success in COMM 360 and a sign of mutual respect. Second, teamwork is a central aspect of our daily class life, so please come prepared to talk about the readings and issues of the day.

Both the professor and your peers will be supporting and evaluating your participation throughout the semester. You are responsible to one another in fulfilling our shared course objectives that include in-depth participation and discussion grounded in the assigned material you will read before our class meetings.

Attendance counts as part of professionalism. It is your responsibility to ask classmates for announcements you may have missed by arriving late. Documentation for **university-authorized** absences must be cleared with the professor in advance. It allows your instructor to find better ways to help you as the course progresses. In the case of emergency or severe illness, death in the family, or religious holiday, notify the professor ASAP **AFTER** your first missed class, and we will find ways for you to make up any missed work. In the unfortunate event that you fall ill, especially with a contagious ailment, please aid in preventing the spread of infection by not coming to class. Rather, submit the official documentation you are able to provide the professor when you are healthy and able to come to class.

### Participation
As mentioned above, it is crucial to make your voice heard in this course. There will be plenty of different settings (lecture, the discussions, your presentations, online) to contribute to our evolving discussion over the semester.

### Deadlines/Professionalism
Assignments are due on the dates indicated in the syllabus schedule below by paper and email at the beginning of class unless otherwise specified. It is the responsibility of the student to manage any scheduling conflicts with the course or missed time. I will not grant extensions except in the direst of circumstances and under no circumstances will I grant an extension within 24 hours of a due date. So please plan your semester ahead of time. As the old adage goes: *Plan your work. Then work your plan!* Missed deadlines will be assessed a deduction of one third of a letter grade per day (e.g. from A- to B+ for 1 day late). The penalty for lateness begins immediately after class on the due date.
**All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.**
**No assignment will be accepted more than 72 hours past the due date, unless authorized by the instructor in advance of the original due date.**

### Student Meetings
In addition to our interaction in class, office hours are an important opportunity to discuss more confidential matters and/or gain one-on-one instructor feedback, real-time. Responses to emails, however, may take 24 to 48 hours depending on the nature of the inquiry and time sent. For meetings, please send me an email and we'll set a time that works. Always follow through on your appointments, as they are for your benefit. Missing a mutually agreed-upon meeting with me will negatively impact the professionalism component of your grade.

### Academic Integrity
The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. The School expects that the grades in this course will bear

some reasonable relation to established university-wide practices with respect to both levels and distributions of grades.

Please consult the Loyola School of Communication statement on "Academic Integrity" for information and guidelines.
http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml

These policies, procedures and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you be aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of these principles will result in a failing grade in the course, and be reported to the proper university office.

If you have uncertainties about any of these practices, **coming to see the professor is generally the quickest and most efficient way to clarify and resolve most issues.**

### Special Accommodations
While the instructor will accommodate student needs in the best way possible given the constraints of the course content and processes, it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. This includes providing any documents needed for accommodations for matters such as University Athletics or Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor.

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