

CS 4873 Computing, Society, and Professionalism (Spring 2020)
Week 2 (Jan 13, 15, 2020) Section Guide

0. TA will give out printed copies of the section handout (class activities) to each student

I. Questions (5 min)

- Remember each class to bring a question, observation or relevant news item for discussion

III. Call with older family member/friend (15 min)

Have each person report:

- What did they say was the most significant change in technology in their life?
 - For better?
 - For worse?
- What surprised them the most?
- What surprised YOU about what they said?

IV. The politics of artifacts (20 min)

- Review what was broadly the point of the Langdon Winner article.
 - Technological artifacts and social order
 - Inherently political technologies
- Ask each student should pick a technological artifact that has politics
 - Take a few (5 or less) minutes for people to think, if needed
 - Discuss each one in turn
 - Are the politics/consequences intentional or unintentional?
 - What role did designers of those artifacts play in the consequences?
 - Are the consequences different if it works well versus badly? (example: face recognition)
 - What consequences does this have for us as engineers?
 - Does it change how you go about things?

V. Work on the ethical dilemma using utilitarianism, given in the Class Activity of the handout (15 min). After that, each student goes in turn to present their thoughts/answers. TA to moderate discussion at the end of each activity.

VI. Related to HW 1: The 737 Max (20 min)

- Go through each causal factor in the Therac paper, and apply to the 737 Max if relevant
- Will you fly on a 737 MAX, once they are modified and declared fit for service?
 - Why or why not?
- What did Boeing employees do to help the situation?
- What more could employees have done?
 - Discuss this in the context of real pressures on real people