



Spring 2024 - CDS DS 457/657 or CDS DS 482/682

How to Choose?

In the 2023 Spring semester, two similar, yet different, courses will be taught at BU: CDS DS 457/657 **Law for Algorithms** (“LfA”) and CDS DS 482/682: **Responsible AI, Law, Ethics & Society** (“RAI”).

Because of the overlapping content, we wrote the following comparison to help you choose which course to take.

Topics: There is a great overlap between the topics covered in the two courses. Issues like fairness, privacy and accountability are covered in both. However, RAI is focused on AI systems or data-driven systems, while LfA takes a broader perspective on algorithms in the eye of the law, and also covers cryptographic applications such as voting, multiparty secure computation, and zero-knowledge proofs.

Format: This is probably the most significant differentiator between the two classes. LfA is a lecture and discussion-based course, so the topics will be discussed thoroughly and deeply from a computer science and law perspective. RAI is designed as an experimental learning course: most of class time you'll be spending in working on data science-legal real-world challenges within a small team of law and CS/DS students.

Prerequisite: RAI requires from the CS/DS students hands-on background in machine learning. LfA is more theoretical in its approach and assumes students are comfortable with analysis of algorithms (at the level of, say, CS330), probability, and basic concepts of cryptography and computer security (at the level of, say, CS357).

Schedule: LfA is structured as a regular course (single 2 hours meeting per week throughout the semester), and RAI has a nonstandard schedule (8 meetings of 4 hours each, all in the second half of the semester).

Participants: Both courses will have CS/DS and Law students. LfA is formally offered only for BU students, while RAI is a joint course of four universities (BU, Tel Aviv University, Technion, and Bocconi University).

Should I take both classes?

While there is a great deal of overlap between the two courses, the differences in approach might make it worthwhile for you to take both, if you are interested in the topic. However, taking both in the same semester might be too much - especially given the non-standard schedule of RAI.

Hopefully, we managed to clarify the similarities and differences between the courses. We encourage you to contact us if you have any further questions.

LfA website:

<https://cs-people.bu.edu/kaptchuk/teaching/ds457/sp23-classpage.html>

Prof. Ran Canetti: canetti@bu.edu

RAI website:

<https://learn.responsibly.ai/>

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