

CS181/W Project Guidelines

The goal of the CS181/181W project is to **engage with the outside world** regarding an issue of **ethics or public policy** related to computers. Your project should have an impact outside Stanford, and should concern an issue that is not Stanford-specific. The project is expected to involve a significant amount of work and time outside of class -- it is the major assignment of the class. You must be able to quantify, explain, or demonstrate this impact in your final write-up. At the bottom of this document you can find examples of past successful projects to help you understand expectations and what significant impact looks like.

Specifications

Projects will be conducted in groups of 2-4 people, and will culminate in a write-up and optional supplementary materials (e.g. a video). The final write-up should include:

- An introduction to the issue you are addressing, why you chose this topic, and why your project matters.
- A Relevant Work section with 3-5 examples of pre-existing work and how your project builds upon and/or differs. Prior work may include, news articles, scholarly articles, protests, and/or videos. Please include the appropriate citations.
- A section describing the impact of your project, both actual and intended. Did you achieve what you hoped to achieve?
- Additional material relevant to your project category.

What we're looking for (moved from Ed): We want you to show your creativity, describe some articulable impact (or attempt at impact) on the outside world, and describe what you learned that's relevant to the learning goals of this course (and to computers/ethics/public policy) by engaging with and getting feedback/response from the real world. We want to see what you made/did (e.g. for an educational project, we need the evaluation forms from all the students and the teacher; for a protest, we want to see what you made and how it appeared in context). But in general, your submission depends on your creative impulses and what you learned.

You will have the opportunity to form groups during section when this project is introduced. All participants must have the same CA.

Proposals should fit into one of these broad types:

- *Direct Action:* Organize and stage a protest---respectfully and in compliance with the law---that takes place over >2 days and totals >2 hours. If possible, document the "protest" with a short video.
- *Journalistic:* Do something that produces **new** information that will be relevant to the reader in making better decisions. E.g., if studying the changing nature of work, spend two weekends doing HITs on Amazon Turk. Or secure a virtual interview with a decision-maker (e.g., one of the authors of the California Consumer Privacy Act). Write up the interview and arrange for it to be edited and published by **somebody who is not a Stanford student**; somebody who has done this before and will read and edit it critically. Arranging for publication (e.g. finding an outlet to pitch,

successfully pitching them, and working with them to edit and publish your article) will be a major part of journalistic projects.

- **Educational:** Contact a local middle or high-school class and teach > 20 real students about a concrete issue. Prepare materials in advance and distribute them, and solicit student evaluations from the students. Document your engagement with a short video.
- **Other:** We will entertain other proposal ideas (e.g., host a virtual campus forum or event; create an educational video) on a case-by-case basis; if you have such an idea, talk to your CA before the proposal deadline to get approval.

Important dates

- Proposals due **beginning of week 3** to your CA
- Midpoints due **end of week 6** in section
- Final projects due **end of week 9** in section
- Presentations of best projects in class on week 10

Project proposal

In your proposal (500 words maximum), please list the names of your group members, the type of project you have chosen to pursue, and a description of the project. The description should include the issue you will be addressing, what your final product will be (e.g., details on your proposed documentation, published journalistic piece, and/or educational materials), a brief summary of related work that already exists in this domain (with citations), and what you hope will be the effect of your actions.

Project midpoint

The project midpoint is a write-up discussing the concrete steps your group has taken thus far in completing your project (e.g. if your project is virtual education, please document the materials you've prepared and your communications with the school). Your midpoint report should demonstrate that you've done background research and made a substantial amount of progress on the project as a whole. In addition, the report should include any updates to the original project proposal and fully outline your engagement plan (e.g. for an educational engagement: What are the relevant logistics?).

Grade breakdown (total: 30% of final grade)

- Project Proposal: 5%
- Project Midpoint: 10%
- Overall Project/Final Submission: 15%

Best projects Winter 2018 (for inspiration)

#instamom: Students explored the psychological effects of social media fame on young children, infringement on children's privacy, and a lack of informed consent by the child. Students engaged directly with Instamoms in the comments section of popular blogs to raise awareness of these issues and discover the most effective forms of ethical reasoning with the Instamoms. They wrote a blog post titled "Attention #MommyBloggers: Tips for Keeping Your Kids Safe on Your Instagram Lifestyle Blog". Moms

loved their blog and many reposted it on their instagrams. They spoke with a product manager at Google about feature recommendations.

Automation and the Hispanic Community: Students explored the ethical dilemma of whether or not artificial intelligence companies are obliged to retrain technologically displaced workers, specifically in the fields of agriculture and construction. They interviewed people in positions of power in autonomous technology industry as well as workers themselves.

Great Data, Great Responsibility: Students explored to what extent companies are morally obligated to confirm users' consent before using their data and educate their users on how their data is being used. The 181 students taught a class at Palo Alto high school. They presented background about data collection. had the students go through an exercise designing a fake app, and presented and discussed a real-life analogous scenario.

Genetic Selection: Students looked at the ethics of embryonic genetic selection. Specifically, in which conditions genetic selection of embryos is morally allowable and whose responsibility is it to make sure this technology is not harmful. They interviewed individuals in the field, put a video interview on Youtube, and prepared a publication for *Stanford Politics*.

Autonomous Vehicles: The Road Ahead and What's Left Behind: Students explored the ethical implication of automating drivers (~3% of the US workforce) out of their jobs and who is responsible for supporting displaced workers. Students interviewed Uber drivers, Uber employees, professors, and elected representatives.

Stanford Students Against Addictive Devices: Students created a website, facebook group, and email list. They staged a protest at Apple headquarters in Cupertino and the Apple store in Palo Alto to urge the company to make their product less addictive. Business Insider, Vanity Fair, Fox News, and other outlets covered the story, and the San Mateo County Supervisor requested a meeting with the students.