

Reflective Writing Assignment

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During this course, many topics, perspectives and ideas were discussed and brought up that were thought provoking from all aspects of the mind. Ethical choices are made on a day-to-day basis and are reflected through the consequences of our own actions. This course has certainly developed a new way of thinking that can be used infinitely.

To begin with, the exploration of various ethical tools has been instrumental in shaping my understanding of moral decision-making. Initially, my approach to ethics was a broad sense of utilitarianism, focusing on the outcomes of actions to determine their moral worth. However, engaging with different ethical frameworks has deepened my appreciation for the complexity of moral considerations. For instance, deontological ethics, which emphasizes duties and principles, provided contrast to my utilitarian focus. This approach revealed that following moral rules and duties could sometimes lead to outcomes that are less desirable, challenging the purely outcome-based approach of utilitarianism. On the other hand, virtue ethics introduced the importance of character and moral virtues in evaluating actions, which added a layer of personal integrity and moral character to the analysis of ethical dilemmas. These tools all provided different approaches to ethical questions and provided a perspective that one view may not always have an answer.

The discussion on information cyber warfare was by far one of the more interesting pieces from the class that really highlighted how today's world experiences psychological war. Even domestically, adversaries from all around the globe try their hand at manipulating algorithms and changing the way political, financial, or global news is perceived. This form of information warfare demonstrates the ethical issues that arise from situations such as manipulating the outcome of elections, or persuading how markets react to certain news. The idea of attacking, using information manipulation, can separate parties on highly sought out topics that can change the dynamics of a society for better or worse. As this comes into play, different societies need to figure out how to maintain this and provide secure, trustworthy information, without potentially becoming unethical by infringing on the rights of the people. The importance of ethics and technology were greatly discussed and highlighted during this section, as it becomes an issue that grows.

There was also a discussion that brought to light the ethical responsibilities of businesses and how they should treat users, customers, shareholders, etc. that are tied to them contractually or even just as everyday users. Contractual ethics demonstrates how there are moral principles and ethics that should be held by all parties involved, but at the same time there are many organizations that do not necessarily choose to make ethical decisions. Regarding Facebook, and Cambridge Analytica, there were some ethical concerns brought into play when third parties were sold data of the users on Facebook. Cambridge Analytica proved to be the main culprit to use the information to design propaganda and use algorithms to target specific individuals or groups, to persuade them to vote in a certain manner. This can cause a lot of concern within society, because we, as users, entrust our information to them and do not realize that they can be pulling it and granting others the use of that information. If consent is not explicitly given, they should not necessarily have the right to do this, but if we do not understand the licensing agreements that we agree to, then there may be a loophole organizations may be using to collect data and sell it unethically. This discussion was so enlightening with how companies need to hold true to their values, or they will lose the trust of the public to use their products or services.

Reflecting on these topics has enriched my understanding of ethical analysis and its application to real-world issues. From the use of different ethical tools to the new perspectives of information cyber warfare and the far-reaching effects of data gathering, each area has contributed to a more informed perspective on ethical decision-making.