WHAT’S ALL THIS ABOUT ETHICS?

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Ethics is the field of Philosophy devoted to the study of what we should do because it is right, or alternatively, how to achieve good
KNOWLEDGE

- Ethics is the field of Philosophy devoted to the study of what we should do because it is right, or alternatively, how to achieve good
- Why do we care about Philosophy?
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- Some (most?) of you want to get a PhD – Doctor of Philosophy!
- Professional ethics plays an important role in what you do.
WHAT ARE ETHICS?

- Various classes of ethics study, including normative, applied, and meta-ethics
  - We are more concerned here with normative ethics – what you should do in any given situation
- Various classes of application, including personal, professional, and societal
  - We are interested in professional ethics, which should match personal ethics
BASIC ETHICS
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  - Dismissal of charges if procedures (e.g., Miranda) not followed
  - “I had to follow orders” (no)
SCIENTIFIC ETHICS: RESPECT

- Respect for science
- Respect for colleagues
- Respect for subjects
- Respect for the public
RESPECT FOR SCIENCE

- Fundamental issue is to adhere to good scientific principles
  - Do not misrepresent results
  - Always present full results
  - Be open to alternative results and refutation
  - Disclose and avoid conflicts of interest
  - Do not represent expertise you do not have
- Most all – remain objective!
RESPECT FOR COLLEAGUES

- Always provide credit for those who contribute to your results
- Do not take credit for work you did not do
- Cite support work appropriately
- Evaluate new and contradictory results as objectively as possible, or declare conflicts
- Always evaluate results rather than colleagues
- Provide reasoning and citations in reviews
RESPECT FOR SUBJECTS

- Be aware of rules for human research (and animal research, if appropriate)
- Treat subjects as people rather than as items
- Respect and protect privacy; provide appropriate security
- Provide opportunities for informed consent, and withdrawal (autonomy)
- Never use improperly-obtained results
- Do not blame subjects for unexpected results
RESPECT FOR SOCIETY

- Do not endanger others with experiments
- Be aware of impact of results, and seek to mitigate harmful results
- Respect property rights
- Be prudent in use of public funding
- Seek to integrate new knowledge into common use
- Use your expertise when you see a problem
ENGINEERING ETHICS

- Design and build with failure consequences and modes in mind (safety, security)
- Protect privacy
- Protect property rights
- Know personal limits and represent them accordingly
  - Includes staying current
- Recognize social norms and accommodate them if possible
SUMMARY CONCEPT

Present in many systems of ethics:

“Treat others – colleagues, subjects, and the public – as you would wish to be treated in a similar situation.”
ISSUES

- Plagiarism
- Fabrication of data/results
- Whistleblowing
- Misconduct of various forms
  - Academic
  - Professional
- Leadership
FOR MORE INFO

ACM Code of Ethics <http://www.acm.org/about/code-of-ethics>

SE Code of Ethics <http://www.acm.org/about/se-code>


CITI <http://www.citiprogram.org/>


LANGURE Intro Course <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/comstock/langure/Corecourse.htm>