

CSCI 494: Final Paper

Select a question/issue within the context of social/ethical issues as raised by or applicable to computing technology; write a paper of 10–16 pages that addresses the question based on class readings, discussions, and other readings you may locate. You will also produce an expanded bibliography that evaluates the readings used (details below), and you will present your paper to the class.

Your paper should:

- clearly lay out the question;
- note the relevant ideas/materials from the course readings;
- explain common/likely positions; and
- argue (with support!) for a position.

It is important that you try to bring your specifically Christian understanding to bear on the issue. At the same time—especially if you are addressing a matter of public policy—you will need to marshal arguments that are accessible to non-believers as well.

Warning: Notice that you are required to select a question and take a position. Failure to do so will result in a disappointing grade.

See the “Final Topics” page on the class wiki for some suggestions about topics.

Presentations

Most of one regular class meeting will be devoted to presentations of your papers. You will have about *fifteen minutes* to present; that means your presentation will have to waste no time, and you will probably have to focus it even more narrowly than your paper. There will be limited additional time for questions and discussion; we will arrange the schedule so that related papers are presented together.

Bibliography with evaluation

Finding peer-reviewed articles is a plus, but other sources may be appropriate as well. In evaluating those sources, however, you will need to pay close attention to their character. For example, there are some more trustworthy web sites (such as Freedom to Tinker), and there are useful articles in reputable non-scholarly publications (though you still need to distinguish there between informational and opinion pieces). You will need to be especially careful about the random web site you find and publications/forums that are devoted to advocacy.

Separate from your paper, you will need to produce an annotated bibliography that discusses the quality of the sources you cite. This should explain the nature of each work, and it should explain how each source can be appropriately used and what limitations apply. You may provide that evaluation through some combination of bibliographic notes and a brief essay.

Timeline

Each portion is due at the scheduled start of class.

Feb 12 Preliminary topic due (in writing; e-mail or paper).

Mar 5 Firm statement of topic; preliminary annotated bibliography with evaluation due.

Apr 16 Draft of your paper due; to be shared with the class.

Apr 23 Presentation and discussion of your paper.

May 8 Final version of your paper due.