ECS 189L: Topics in Computer Science: Black Mirror

MWF 12-1 + W 1-2 in Giedt 1007

CRN 57170   4 units

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The technologies that us computer scientists develop have profound social, ethical, and political implications—all of which we, the technical people who do the work, routinely ignore. When we *do* think about our impact, we are often superficial in our analysis, overstate the positives, and downplay the negatives. This class will use the science-fiction series Black Mirror (2011-2023) to ground an exploration of recent and future impacts of CS. Is our work improving the world or wrecking it?

Our class will be run as a seminar in which we will watch Black Mirror episodes at home and then, in class, discuss the issues they implicate. The course is intended for CS and CSE students who are introspective, engaged, and communicative. Grading is based on (mandatory) attendance, participation, student writing, pop quizzes, a classroom discussion you will lead, and a creative final project, which you will present.

The class (along with ECS 127) will be the last course I teach at UCD. It serves as my final and desperate plea that we upend our disciplinary culture and start to think as much about *if* we should do stuff as *how* to get it done.