

Course Report WASP Graduate School

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* One of the WASP lecturers is on sick leave and unable to participate in this report.

Ethical, Legal, Societal & Economical aspects on AI&AS, 7.5hp

Semester: Spring 2022

Number of registered students: 117

Answering frequency (course evaluation): 22 (18.8%) —probably due to the late evaluation.

Examination results

Number of students examined: 114 (3 students did not show up)

Fail: 19 (16.7%)

Pass: 95 (83.3%)

Brief summary of student viewpoints and suggestions

Results of WASP base-line quantitative questions

- What is your overall rating of the course? 3.32 (22 responses)
- Did you enjoy the course? 3.05 (22 responses)
- Was it time well spent? 3.00 (22 responses)
- Did you enjoy the AI Ethics part? 3.27(22 responses)
- Did you enjoy the legal part? 3.14 (22 responses)
- Did you enjoy the Protostrategos? 3.17 (22) (22 responses)

Answers to free text-questions to be (shortly) summarized under “Strengths” and “Weaknesses”

- What was the best aspect of the course?
- What would you suggest improving?
- What advice would you like to give to future participants?
- Other comments. Is there anything else you would like to add?

"Strengths" according to students²

- The course informs WASP students on topics outside their normal research and previous education.

¹ The report should be written by the examiner together with the teachers and possibly others, such as teaching assistants

² Based on both quantitative results and key viewpoints from students' free-text answers

- The course is structure such as to ask questions and provide students opportunities to reflect.
- Course includes guest talks by legal experts from Uppsala university.
- The use of a serious game, Protostrategos,
- It is a condensed and self-contained time-wise course.

"Weaknesses" according to students²

- The course was delivered online, reducing the immersion in the interactive elements —particularly the serious game.
- We need to provide better preparation to students who lack any fundamental knowledge into ethical socio-legal aspects.
- The current assignment (applying a high-level assessment into their own projects) contains repetition and some vague elements.
- More clear recommendations on identifying and managing ethical and legal issues on their projects.
- The serious game needs some better instructions on its last part.

Comments from teachers on the implementation and outcome of the course³

- As some students noted in their free text responses, the evaluation and report request far too late. This time gap led to just 22 students out of 117 providing any feedback and that feedback to be rather limited in scope. Similarly, our own feedback is limited based on notes we took right after the course for internal consumption.
- This is a course offered to both WASP and WASP-HS students; finding a balance between technical and non-technical content has been challenging. We believe that we have found a good balance. The course exposes WASP students to multiple concepts that are related to their work—or better yet to the impact of their work—and are in line with the ongoing efforts to add AI ethics statements in AI conferences and grant applications. We are happy to see that WASP students become active participants and the majority engage with the course.
- Due to the interactive nature of the course (e.g. problem-based learning exercises, debates between students, use of a serious game) conducting the course online is not optimal. We had to deliver the course online due COVID-19 restrictions and a decision by WASP to held all spring 2022 courses online. We managed to avoid any serious technical issues, but it did lead to some awkwardness between participants and downtime during the serious game exercise. The course format definitely does not work for any sort of hybrid setting; it needs to be completely online or in person.
- The large class (100+ students) does not enable us, unfortunately, to provide 1-to-1 discussions with students about their project and our perception of socio-ethical values, which at least one student requested.
- The guest talks from Uppsala University legal experts (Anna-Sara Lind, Magnus Strand, and Sandra Friberg) compliment well our own skillset and truly make

³ Including changes effected during the course

this a multi-disciplinary course. We plan to work with them in the 2023 version of the course too.

Proposed changes/comments/measures

- The course will move to an in-person course only given that restrictions have eased up.
- The serious game, Protostrategos, will change this year to best reflect timely issues and consider SotA research in AI ethics. The new use case will require students in smaller groups to perform an actual assessment of a high-risk AI application.
- The assignment will change such as to enable students to better reflect on ethical socio-legal issues on their own projects. The new assignment will require students to conduct a risk assessment—such as the one required by the upcoming ‘AI Act’—and subsequent ethical assessment of their research projects. Students will also be required to provide a short summary of their key reflections.
- We will emphasise the need for preparation, e.g. reading the textbook and other material, further this year.
- We are updating the course schedule such as to provide further time in popular topics (e.g. biases, XAI) and more technical discussion.