**Ethics Short Essay Assignment – draft due 10/16 (bring hardcopy to class), final due 10/23 (to csportal)**

A successful software engineer must have a wide and varied skill set. A competency in coding is required by default, but so is the ability to clearly communicate to multiple stakeholders. Another valuable skill is an ability to deliberately reflect on how one’s professional ethics and conduct might contribute to a “better” world.

To practice these two skills, this course offers students an opportunity to complete an individual writing assignment. Students will read essays related to the practices of successful software engineers and write an essay in response. While there is no limit to the thesis’ length, short essays may not be longer than 500 words.

# Assignment List

1. Read “Silicon Valley programmer indicted for manslaughter,” can be found here: https://ethics.csc.ncsu.edu/risks/safety/killer\_robot/
2. Submit short essay on one of the following topics (as relates to the reading and ethics) for in-class peer review. Cannot be turned in late.

Topics: programmer psychology, team dynamics, user interfaces, software process models, software testing, the nature of requirements, software theft, privacy, "when is the software good enough?"

1. Revise short essay and submit revised essay via csportal by 10/23/15..

# Grading Rubric for the Short Essay

Students may earn up to 100 points for the short essay. The short essay will be graded according to the rubric below:

# The short essay contains a well-formed, concrete thesis whose scope is defensible in 500 words (25 points).

* 1. **Clarity (up to 5 points).** It is easy to find the thesis.
  2. **Content (up to 10 points).** The thesis is concrete and well-scoped.
  3. **Construction (up to 10 points).** The thesis consists of at least one main opinion, one argument, and one counter-argument.

# The short essay demonstrates that the student read the original reading (25 points).

* 1. **Facts (up to 25 points).** The paper review should refer to material found in the original reading. It should have at least two facts from the original reading, not all of which

should be on the first page of the reading. As facts from the original reading are cited, the essay appropriately cites the original author.

# The short essay contains high-quality evidence and arguments that support the thesis (40 points).

* 1. **Evidence (up to 20 points).** There are facts in the short essay not found in the original reading. The facts are relevant to the thesis. These facts come from appropriately-cited sources and the facts’ sources and persuasiveness are of high-quality.
  2. **Argument (up to 20 points).** The arguments used to defend the thesis are logical and supported by the evidence.

# The short essay demonstrates a basic knowledge of English. (10 points)

* 1. **Grammar and spelling (up to 5 points).** This is self-explanatory.
  2. **Terms (up to 5 points).** In other kinds of writing, the author is encouraged to vary words to spice up their writing. Not so in the technical domains. Varying terms confuse the issues.

# The short essay is short.

* 1. **Length (up to 10 point deduction).** Essays will not be rewarded for length; they will be rewarded for brevity and clarity. If the word count is greater than 500 words, up to 10 points will be deducted from the total score.

# The short essay was revised.

* 1. **Revision history (up to 5 points extra credit).** The student submits a copy of the original essay and the peer review worksheet. The new essay appears to have been substantially revised based on the peer review.