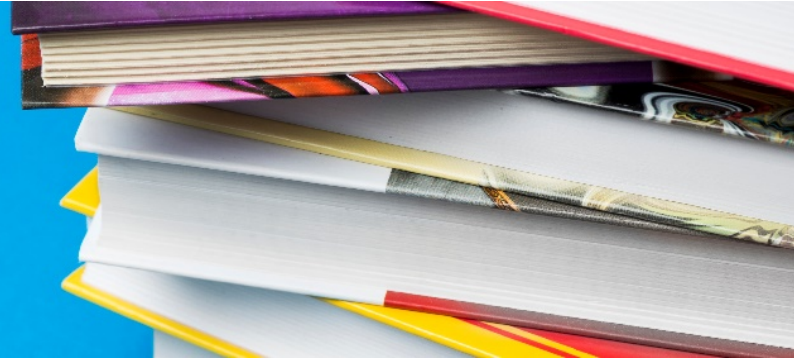# Short Syllabus

Course Title

Gender, Race and Algorithms

Lecturer

Dr. Galit Wellner

Contact details

galitwellner@tauex.tau.ac.il
Meeting by appointment

Semester

Fall

Short Description

In her book *Weapons of Math Destruction,* Cathy O'Neal shows how mathematical calculations found at the heart of banking algorithms discriminate against minorities by setting higher interest rates for loans in poor neighborhoods. Buying a house is more expensive for minorities. The same logic applies in algorithms used by the police for practices known as predictive policing. Likewise, female sellers on Ebay are likely to receive fewer dollars for the same goods, just because of their gender. We cannot escape these algorithmic biases – they reside in face recognition systems, automatic CV screening, credit limit calculations (when applying for a new credit card), and automatic translations, to name just a few.

In this course, we will explore case studies of racial and gender biases that involve AI technologies, using the tools of philosophy of technology. These tools will assist us in examining how technologies shape our society, and how we see the world through their mediation. We will learn how to detect the biases and think together how to solve the bias problem in algorithms.

Final grade components

Minor assignments: none

Midterm: a short paper (2 pages) - 20% of the final grade.

Final requirement: Final paper - 5-6 pages long (double-spaced, excluding bibliography) – 70%. Submission dates are set by the university and the Liberal Arts program and must be respected.

Participation: active participation in class/Zoom - 10%.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.

Additional requirements