Communication
Reflecting on the Mission of Social Justice in the Research Process
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Course of Application: Comm 489 – Digital Media Senior Seminar
This capstone course for the Digital Media Major is meant as an opportunity for students to generate new, personal projects that utilize the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the rest of their courses. The projects produced demonstrate what students have learned and what they are capable of with a degree in Digital Media. Specifically, students craft projects exemplifying their ability to *analyze* artifacts, *research* issues, and *produce* content all relating to the general field of Digital Media.

Learning outcomes/goals:
Upon completing this course, students should be able to:
- Conduct research about a particular issue, platform, and/or technology related to digital media;
- Analyze the context and situation surrounding that topic including information about distribution, economics, historical context, social impact, political importance, etc.;
- Make unique contributions to ongoing academic conversations and research, primarily by analyzing case studies that have yet to be explained and inserting them into larger discourses;
- Create digital media artifacts that help demonstrate your knowledge and skills as a digital media scholar and present your work in engaging ways

Mission-Driven Teaching Component
As one of Xavier's newest majors, Digital Media students often see themselves on the cutting edge of important issues facing our world. While students succeeding in many aspects, internal reviews of the program led faculty to conclude that one of the major's SLO was coming up short: connection to the CORE. Thus I proposed that integrating Ignatian Pedagogy, focusing specifically on Jesuit principles of discernment and social justice, could help better address this SLO while also meeting Xavier's mission and *cura personalis*.

In order to help address the SLO of connecting the major to the CORE through integration of Ignatian Pedagogy, I added a component to the course specifically addressing Digital Media Ethics. Students read from the book *Digital Media Ethics* (Chess, 2009) focused particularly on various general approaches to ethical concerns including utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, feminist ethics, and more. Class discussion centered around how digital media producers, corporations, and organizations ought to reflect on the issues of today like surveillance, privacy, media literacy, hate speech, harassment, content moderation, and much more.

Implementation
The course succeeded in integrating Ignatian pedagogy in order to help achieve the SLO of connecting to the Xavier CORE and *cura personalis* more broadly. This occurred in two primary ways: in-class ethical discussion and research reflection on social justice.

Our in-class discussion of digital media ethics built strongly on the students' remembrance and experience of taking Introduction to Philosophy as part of the CORE, for most students roughly 3 years ago. This required a fair bit of personal reflection on the part of students in order to simply remember what was discussed in those classes and how those lessons impacted their work in the Digital Media major. In turn this helped achieve the difficult SLO of connection to the CORE while also participating in the Jesuit principles of discernment and social justice.

The next step was encouraged students to specifically use these ethical frameworks and considerations in their individual capstone research projects. Students chose their own topics of interest, and almost all considered the ethical stakes involved. Topics included issues like the benefits/risks of going viral online, the impact of digital applications on the landscape of gambling and sports betting, the generational gaps and issues of false presentation on social networks like TikTok, representations of virginity and sexuality on digital platforms, and many more. As one can tell from these brief topics, ethical considerations were often at the forefront of those questions.

Results
In general, I feel students succeeded in being reflective and open not only about the ethical issues surrounding digital media more broadly and their topics specifically, but I also saw a marked increase in openness among students to reflect on their own struggles with writing and researching. Questions of ethics ended up opening up discussions to students own discernment about the process of writing. Indeed, the class became not only a workshop for generating research projects, but a space for open reflecting and connecting with fellow students.

The major takeaway from this project for me is how I can best integrate these principles into a variety of classes to better create spaces of belonging and honesty for ethical and justice-based discussions. One of the advantages of doing such work with a Senior Seminar is that the students had a stronger foundation of trust and comfort with me as the instructor and with each other as well. A challenge I see in implementing this in other classes is dealing starting from a less firm foundation of trust and belonging. Here, I believe, is where the Ignatian values pair well with my work in the Diversity and Inclusion Academy to create these open spaces for discussion, opinionated argumentation, and personal reflection for all people.