

**MICHEL**

So critical computational empowerment. That's one of the key concepts that Professor Fox Harrell, who was one of our guest speakers, discussed during his visit to class. And it was a big hit in the class. Because, as you know, we have many engineers, scientists in the course. And many of them are so used to the notion of coding, of computation, being supposedly neutral when it comes to ideology. And to the societal tendencies.

**DEGRAFF:**

But what Fox should really clearly is that those hierarchies of power, that this course is about, really, are themselves embedded in these codes. In these codes that create video games, virtual reality platforms. So if we're not aware of these hierarchies, and how they are coded-- really coded-- in those platforms, then we become prey to them without even knowing. We accept their assumptions, and we reinforce our own attitudes that might put down women, or immigrants, or Muslims, or gay people. So we will become part of these hierarchies and maintaining them.

But also what Fox showed in his visit is that, once you understand how coding can encode those hierarchies, then we can actually create codes that will, in turn, give us more flexibility for identities that are more inclusive. And more humane towards, especially, women, and blacks, and Latinos, and Muslims, et cetera.

So the one thing that Fox did in his visit was to show us one of his platforms where he brings together people on different sides of a conflict. So one case that he showed was this conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. So there's this perform where you can bring those soldiers together, who fight on opposite sides, and through that, they get to better empathize with each other's identities, and biographies, and life circumstances. So that was really a powerful concept for the students to get to understand. How coding can indeed help us code a better world for all.