

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
School of Information Studies

Information Technology Ethics
L&I SCI 120 – 001
Spring 2009

Tuesday/Thursday, 3:30p – 4:45p
119 Curtin Hall

Instructor:

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General Description:

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the current ethical issues in information and communication technology (ICT) use. It examines an array of long-standing and emerging issues facing ICT users, ranging from free speech, privacy, intellectual property, net neutrality, security and crime, to ethics in social networking, online communities, and online gaming. The course will discuss the ethical responsibilities of IT professionals, and promote the critical examination and responsible use of ICT. Case studies and group work will be used to promote engagement with the course material and foster a social learning environment

Objectives:

1. To review major ethical theories as they pertain to information and communication technologies
2. To explore current issues in ICT policy and the ethical dilemmas that arise in light of them
3. To engage with fellow students in a learning environment centered on ethics and ethical decision making
4. To investigate students' ethical responsibilities as members of an ICT-based ecosystem

Competencies:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

1. Understand various ethical theories and ethical decision making models
2. Respond to and apply appropriate decisions around ethical issues in an array of information and technology practices
3. Participate appropriately and ethically in the infosphere

Method of Instruction & Learning:

- Classroom lecture and discussion, complemented by film & media screenings.
- Small group work (both in and out of class time).

Prerequisites:

- No specific course prerequisites.
- Students will need basic familiarity with computers and the Internet.

Required Texts:

- Tavani, H. (2007). *Ethics and Technology: Ethical Issues in an Age of Information and Communication Technology* (2nd edition). Boston: John Wiley and Sons. ISBN: 978-0-471-99803-7
- Supplemental readings to be distributed in class and/or made available via D2L. *Print them out (double-sided) and read, highlight, and bring to class.*
- You are also encouraged to read (*and improve*) the relevant Wikipedia articles for each topic.

Course Schedule: (subject to change)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Response</i>
1/27	Course Introduction		
1/29	Introduction to Information Technology Ethics	Chapter 1 // Postman	
2/3	Ethical Theories	Chapter 2 // Laudon	
2/5	Intercultural Information Ethics	Capurro	✓
2/10	Privacy & Technology	Chapter 5	
2/12	Privacy & Technology (continued)	Dyson // Solove // Zimmer	✓
2/17	Cybersecurity	Chapter 6	
2/19	Cybercrime	Chapter 7	✓
2/24	Are we in a Surveillance Society?	Sections 7.5, 10.6–10.8 // Lyon	
2/26	Surveillance Society (continued)	<i>Documentary screening</i>	✓
3/3	Intellectual Property	Chapter 8	
3/5	Peer-to-Peer, DMCA, Fair Use	Vaidhyathan // Bowrey	✓
3/10	Review Session		
3/12	Mid-term Exam		
3/17	SPRING BREAK		
3/19	SPRING BREAK		
3/24	P2P, RIAA, & UWM	Grodzinsky & Tavani // handouts	
3/26	Digital Divide	10.1–10.3 // PBS.org page	✓
3/31	Free Speech and Expression Online	Chapter 9 (9.5-9.8)	
4/2	Search Engines and Information Gatekeepers	Grimmelmann // Zittrain	✓
4/7	Social Networking Ethics	boyd // Frontline documentary	
4/9	Social Networking Ethics (cont'd)	Gould // Albrechtslund	✓
4/14	Artificial Intelligence	Sections 11.5 // Wikipedia articles	
4/16	Human Implants & Cyborgs	Salon.com article // links	✓
4/21	Virtual Environments	Chapter 11 (334-338) // Garside	
4/23	Ethics & Online Gaming (cont'd)	Consalvo // Warner // <i>Guest speaker</i>	✓
4/28	Professional Ethics & Ethical Design	Chapter 4 // Friedman	
4/30	<i>Group Project Work Session</i>		
5/5	<i>Group Project Work Session</i>		
5/7	Public Poster Session		
	Final Exam		

Credit Breakdown:

(see details provided in relevant sections below)

Attendance and participation	20%
Reading responses (10)	20%
Group project	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%

Grading Rubric:

A	94-100
A-	91-93
B+	88-90
B	84-87
B-	81-83
C+	78-80
C	74-77
C-	71-73
D	60-70
F	0-59

Deliverables:

- **Reading responses:** Students must submit ten (10) reading/discussion responses over the course of the semester. Responses are **due** at the beginning of class on the dates marked with “✓” in the course schedule above. Reflective questions will be distributed at the beginning of the week when the response is due. See “Assignments” section below for submission guidelines and instructions.
- **Exams:** The course includes a midterm and (non-cumulative) final exam. Each exam will consist of short answer and brief essay questions. Review questions will be provided prior to the exams.
- **Group poster project:** Groups of 2-3 students will be formed to work on a group poster project. The projects are meant to explore the ethical dimensions of an information technology of the group’s choosing (with instructor’s approval). The projects are meant to be collaborative, and while some time will be allotted during the official class period, *groups will need to work together outside of class.*

Groups will informally present their project at a public “poster session”. (Further details and instructions will be provided)

Class Policies:

- **Attendance:**
 - Students are expected to attend each class, arriving prepared to participate in discussions of the class material, and, when appropriate, engage in constructive and collaborative group project work.
 - Attendance will be taken at the beginning and end of all class meetings. One class may be missed without penalty. Missing two classes will result in a penalty on the “Attendance and participation” grade element. Missing three or more classes will result in immediate and automatic failure for the entire course.
 - Exceptions require the instructor’s approval in advance, and may require written documentation of medical or family emergencies.
- **Participation:**
 - Each student is expected to actively and constructively participate in class. I will note contributions by each student in each class meeting to guide the assessment of the “Attendance and participation” grade element. If you make well-informed and relevant contributions to at least half the sessions then you should score very well. There is no need to hog the discussion, and a few quiet days will not hurt your score.

- In order to accomplish this objective, it is imperative that you prepare for class – do the readings beforehand.
- For class meetings dedicated to group work, your participation will be assessed based on the constructive and collaborative use of this in-class time to work on group assignments.
- If you feel uncomfortable talking in class, credit may be awarded for meetings during office hours, or for answers submitted in writing before the section meets (this consideration requires advance notice and approval by the instructor).
- Atmosphere for Learning:
 - Students are encouraged to participate in open and frank discussions of the course material, but are also expected to respect the opinions of other students and to engage in discussion and debates in a sensitive and respectful manner.
 - Before class begins, please turn off all cell phones, pagers, global positioning devices, and any other items that might ring, buzz, play “My Humps,” or otherwise call attention to themselves and disrupt class.
 - Fair warning of things I will take note of: Coming to class late, leaving class early, sleeping in class, excessive eating in class, playing on your laptop or texting during class, doing work for other courses in class, etc. These, or similar, activities will negatively affect your participation grade.
- Assignments:
 - All written assignments must be turned in on time, either via D2L (before class time of the due date), or at the beginning of class. Any submission during/after class time will be penalized. Late submissions will not be allowed except for a confirmed emergency with instructor’s approval.
 - Assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, with one inch margins. Use a 12-point kerned font such as Times New Roman. Multi-page documents should have page numbers and be stapled. *Don’t forget your name, the course number, an assignment description, and the date.* Assignments turned in via D2L should be in .doc or .rtf format.
 - Rules of academic conduct require that you not use the work of others without clearly indicating it as such (using proper and consistent citation formats). Academic misconduct may result in a lowered grade, no credit for a given assignment, or removal from the course.
- Distribution of Group Credit:
 - All students within a group will ordinarily receive the same mark, reflecting the performance of the group as a whole on project and its components.
 - However, along with the instructor’s evaluations, each group member will have an opportunity to (anonymously, if possible) assess the contribution made by each of their colleagues to the final results. Individual grades may be adjusted based on both instructor and peer evaluation of an individual’s contributions.
- Contacting Me:
 - I will be available for *short* discussions immediately before and after class.
 - *In person:* I will be in my office and available to talk to you during my scheduled office hours (see above). Other times may be available via prior arrangement.

- *By telephone:* During my campus office hours I will also be accessible my office telephone. The number is 414-229-3627. So if you are unable to make it to campus, or are an online student, you can still call up to ask questions or seek advice.
- *By email:* I will respond to class-related emails during normal work hours, and will generally reply the same day as received (an e-mail sent after working hours, however, may not be replied to until the next morning). Please be sure to use your UWM e-mail account, identify yourself and the course, and *always* use proper and professional e-mail etiquette. (There's a good guide to student email etiquette here: <http://www.ust.udel.edu/action/Current%20Students/Academics/email.aspx>)

UWM and SOIS Academic Policies:

The following links contain university policies affecting all SOIS students. Many of the links below may be accessed through a PDF-document maintained by the Secretary of the University: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>.

Undergraduates may also find the *Panther Planner and Undergraduate Student Handbook* useful (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/Handbook2005-06.pdf>). For graduate students, there are additional guidelines from the Graduate School (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/StudentInfo/), including those found in the *Graduate Student and Faculty Handbook*: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/Publications/Handbook/.

- Students with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of a course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students with disabilities are responsible to communicate directly with the instructor to ensure special accommodation in a timely manner. There is comprehensive coverage of issues related to disabilities at the Student Accessibility Center (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/MainOffice.html>), important components of which are expressed here: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACltr.pdf>.
- Religious observances. Students' sincerely held religious beliefs must be reasonably accommodated with respect to all examinations and other academic requirements, according to the following policy: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm. Please notify your instructor within the first three weeks of the Fall or Spring Term (first week of shorter-term or Summer courses) of any specific days or dates on which you request relief from an examination or academic requirement for religious observances.
- Students called to active military duty. UWM has several policies that accommodate students who must temporarily lay aside their educational pursuits when called to active duty in the military (see <http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm>), including provisions for refunds, readmission, grading, and other situations.
- Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantial cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or some limited amount of other term work. An incomplete is not given unless the student proves to the instructor that s/he was prevented from completing course requirements for just cause as indicated above (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf).
- Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment). UWM and SOIS are committed to building and maintaining a campus environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person, fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect, and encourages the

members of its community to strive to reach their full potential. The UWM policy statement (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf) summarizes and defines situations that constitute discriminatory conduct. If you have questions, please contact an appropriate SOIS administrator.

- Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams and plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, ranging from a failing grade for a course or assignment to expulsion from the University. See the following document (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html>) or contact the SOIS Investigating Officer (currently the Associate Dean) for more information.
- Complaints. Students may direct complaints to the SOIS Dean or Associate Dean. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.
- Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow SOIS appeals procedures or, in the case of a graduate student, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm).
- Examinations, Finals. The Secretary of the University is authorized to prepare the final examination schedule. The time of the final examination for an individual or a class may be changed only with the prior approval of the dean or director of the respective college/school. The change will involve a postponement to a later date. For individuals with exam conflicts, a separate week at the very end of the exam week will be reserved to take one of the conflicting exams (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad+admin_policies/S22.htm).
- D2L and Student Privacy: Certain SOIS courses utilize the instructional technology Desire to Learn (D2L) to facilitate online learning. D2L provides instructors the ability to view both individual data points and aggregate course statistics, including the dates and times individual students access the system, what pages a student has viewed, the duration of visits, and the IP address of the computer used to access the course website. This information is kept confidential in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), but may be used for student evaluation.