CSC 208 Ethics in Technology
Counts for credit for the PI domain

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All information for this course can be found on D2L:
https://d2l.cdm.depaul.edu

Summary of the course

Computing Technology and the rapid pace in which it has advanced have had a tremendous impact on our lives. Changes have been swift and the human capacity to deal them limited. It has been said that our technology has outpaced our humanity. This course will research the new responsibilities technology presents and our ability to deal with these changes in an ethical manner. Students will employ a framework for ethical analysis, which integrates computer science and ethics, to develop the skills required to examine different sets of assumptions and question them, resulting in an informed evaluation of issues.

Note: CSC 208 is an applied ethics course. The works of individual philosophers will not be studied in depth. Instead, ethical frameworks will be applied to case studies, scenarios, and current events.

Prerequisites

No previous knowledge of computers or philosophy is assumed, or necessary.

PID Learning Domain Description

CSC 208: Ethics in Technology is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Philosophical Inquiry Domain (for description and learning goals see: http://liberalstudies.depaul.edu/docs/WritingOutcomesandLearningExpe/pi_outcomes.pdf). Philosophical Inquiry examines the most basic questions of human existence. It considers the fundamental beliefs and convictions that shape what it means to be human, our relationships with others, and the nature of the world itself. Its aim is to develop our critical, imaginative, and analytical abilities, and it enables students to understand various kinds of important intellectual problems from a variety of perspectives and approaches, interpret and assess historical and contemporary texts concerned with these issues, and articulate reasoned judgments about these most basic concerns of human life. Philosophical inquiry is thus committed to the task of reflecting on the ideas and events that make up the cultures, societies, and traditions within which we live and to enhancing our understanding of their significance and complexity. Courses in Philosophical Inquiry

support the mission of the Liberal Studies Program by fostering deeper understanding and appreciation of the worlds of meaning and of value and of the enterprise of intellectual inquiry and social dialogue.

PID Learning Outcomes and How they are met by this course

See:
http://liberalstudies.depaul.edu/docs/WritingOutcomesandLearningExpe/pi_outcomes.pdf

1. Using multiple perspectives, students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems [Develop/Increase Critical Thinking Skills and develop a Multicultural perspective].

CSC 208 students will learn how to identify ethical issues in concrete situations regarding technology and how to conduct ethical analyses on these issues. Philosophical frameworks—Kantian, descriptive and normative claims, ethical relativism, utilitarianism (act and rule), deontological theories, rights, duty-based ethics, virtue, individual and social policy ethics, and social contract—will be employed. Multicultural aspects will be addressed when dealing with access issues on a local, national, and international basis. The ethical issues of technology will be addresses on various levels—individual, organizational, national, global, and cultural. Students will develop these skills through writing analytical papers, weekly writing submissions, essay midterm, and a final project requiring the writing of a code of ethics (See "PID Writing Expectations" below).

2. Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment.

Students will examine different sets of assumptions in light of technological issues and question them—how they apply, should they be accepted, etc. A conceptual framework, as described by Spinello, Johnson, and the ImpactCS Project by Braxton and Stone will be employed. Writing assignments, group discussions/writing, and in-class debates and presentations will be assessment tools.

3. Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.

Through writing assignments and group work, students will employ ethical frameworks, which integrate computer science and ethics, to develop the skills required to examine different sets of assumptions and question them. Frameworks/Philosophers specifically addressed are: Kant, descriptive and normative claims, ethical relativism, utilitarianism (act and rule), deontological theories, rights, duty-based ethics, virtue, individual and social policy ethics, and social contract.

4. Students will be able to develop an understanding of the historical context of philosophical topics, figures, and texts.

Students will thoroughly examine philosophical theories and ethical frameworks used for ethical analysis: Kantian, descriptive and normative claims, ethical relativism, utilitarianism (act and rule), deontological theories, rights, duty-based ethics, virtue, individual and social

policy ethics, and social contract. Case studies will provide a historical perspective, while current events provide everyday relevance. Assessment tools will be writing assignments, debates/presentations using debates, and group work.

5. Students will be able to write an analytic essay treating a philosophical question, issue and/or problem that forwards an identifiable thesis, argument, and conclusion.

CSC 208 students will write a 5–7 page ethical analysis paper (midterm essay with one rewrite, totaling 10–14 pages) explicitly applying the ethical frameworks studied in class on a computing technology ethical issue (See "Writing Expectations" below).

6. Students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze ethical issues, applying philosophical tools drawn from various ethical traditions to concrete cases pertinent to a variety of subject matters.

Through writing assignments, class participation, group work, and debates students will apply philosophical frameworks—Kant, descriptive and normative claims, ethical relativism, utilitarianism (act and rule), deontological theories, rights, duty-based ethics, virtue, individual and social policy ethics, and social contract—to concrete cases regarding the following computing issues: Digital Divide (Multicultural Issues), Ethics and the Internet, Privacy and Information Access , Freedom of Speech in cyberspace, Ethical Issues and Information security, Computer ethics in the workplace, Intellectual Property, Liability, Reliability, and Safety Issues, and Networks.

PID Writing Expectations

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 10 pages of writing for this course. This writing may take the form of essays, response papers, reading journals, take-home essay exams, critical analyses, etc. At least one assignment should involve revision, which may count (but only once, not twice) towards the 10 page minimum.

CSC 208 students will write a 5-7 page ethical analysis paper (midterm essay with one 5 page rewrite, totaling 10–14 pages completed individually) explicitly applying the ethical frameworks studied in class on a computing technology ethical issue. Students have the option of participating in a debate regarding relevant issues, or engaging debate during class presentations.

Required textbooks and printed resources

Required Texts:
1. Quinn, M. J. (2013) Ethics for the Information Age, 6th edition. NY:Pearson/Addison Wesley, ISBN-10: 0-13-374162-1; ISBN-13: 978-0-13-374162-9

http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/ethics-for-the-information-age-9780132855532

2. (Free) Abelson & Ledeen & Lewis (2008) Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness After the Digital Explosion. NY:Addison-Wesley Professional, ISBN 0137135599. Download for free at: http://www.bitsbook.com/excerpts/

3. Access to the news. Possible sources: New York Times, Chicago Tribune, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, MSN, Time, Newsweek, PC World, or online newsgroups. You may find newspapers, journals, and magazines at the library or online.

Recommended:
1. St. Martin's Handbook, 5th or 6th edition, Bedford Publishing. This text is used in DePaul's required writing classes (WRD 103 and 104) and every student should have a copy. It is also available at DePaul's library.
2. A dictionary and thesaurus, which can be found at the library, or online.

Course Objectives

Improved Critical and **Creative Thinking,** and **Increased Awareness**
Students will learn how to identify ethical issues in situations regarding technology and how to conduct ethical analyses on these issues. Philosophical frameworks—Kant's 1st and 2nd categorical imperatives, social contract, rule and act utilitarian—will be employed.

Develop a Multicultural Perspective
Multicultural aspects will be addressed when dealing with access issues on a local, national, and international basis. The ethical issues of technology will be addresses on various levels—individual, organizational, national, global, and cultural.

Self-Reflection
Students will examine their own use of technology, explore their own feelings regarding ethical computing issues, recognize that these issues are applicable to our everyday lives and in a range of professional fields, and reflect on how the process of using established ethical frameworks supports, or challenges, their feelings about issues.

Contact Information

Instructor Contact Info/Email Guidelines:
- I will use email to communicate with the class.
- **I will answer emails as soon as I can, but may take a day or two**

- **Please make certain that your preferred email address is correctly listed on Campus Connection immediately.** This is the address I shall use.
- When emailing, please write the subject of your email as follows:
    Course-section LastName, FirstName question.
  For example:
    CSC 208- *your section, your last name, your first name* question

Electronics/Behavior Policy in the Classroom

- Out of respect for others in the class, please remember to turn off all electronic devices during class.
- The class is discussion based. As a result, students are expected to prepare for class, arrive on time and remain in the classroom until the class is over, attend every class in order to progress satisfactorily towards course objectives, and behave in a respectful manner.
- In addition for assistance with course content, office hours are for discussing personal issues such as grades, excused absences due to sporting events, special accommodations. The classroom is NOT the appropriate place to address these issues.
- **Failure to comply will impact your class participation grade.**

Assignments and Grading

The course uses multiple learning styles and intelligences for learning through various activities including writing an analytical paper, class discussion, labs, films, presentations, and a final project requiring the writing of a code of ethics.

Knowing your learning style is an important part of your educational process.
A free assessment to learn your leaning style can be found at:
http://www.acceleratedlearning.com/method/test_flash.html

All work must either be submitted in class, or on D2L, **as specified**.
Do not email work or place in my mailbox.

Grading:
Detailed instructions for all assignments will be posted on D2L.

- 20% – Weekly current events / Homework

- 20% – Ethical analysis paper
  - An ethical analysis paper on approved, relevant issues explicitly applying the ethical theories discussed during the first several weeks of class.

- 10% – Group Project

- 25% – Final Project

- 25% – Class Participation
  - Do the reading before class. Please be prepared to engage in meaningful/respectful class discussion. The entire class will benefit greatly if all our voices are heard.
  - Handle in class assignments professionally and respectfully.

Late work policy – You are responsible for turning in homework on time. There is no late homework accepted**.**

Topics (subject to change)

An overview of Computer Ethics	Freedom of Speech	Intellectual Property
Ethical theories/Analysis Methods	Privacy and Information Access	Liability, Reliability, and Safety Issues
Digital Divide (Multicultural Issues)	Issues Information security	Networks
Ethics and the Internet	Ethics in the workplace	Policy as it pertains to technology

Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370
Phone number: (773)325.1677

Fax: (773)325.3720
TTY: (773)325.7296

Religious Holidays

I will make accommodations to allow students to fully express their faith. Please let me know in advance by email if you will be absent, or need extensions on assignments.

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

Academic Integrity Policy

This course will be subject to the faculty council rules on the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) web site.

Plagiarism

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course requirements should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Course Overview
This guide is subject to change. Check assignment due dates on D2L.

Week 1

Introduction to course; review syllabus; a brief history of computing and overview of philosophical ethical theories

Week 2 - 5

Ethical relativism, Divine Command, Kantianism, Egoism, Utilitarianism (Act and Rule), Social Contract Theory, Introduction to Technology Policy

Week 6 - 9

Intellectual Property
Information Technology and anti-competitive pricing
What is intellectual property? What constitutes fair use? Is it wrong to copy software? Is it wrong to download music? What issues were pertinent regarding the Microsoft case? What was the outcome fair? Right-Based analysis and utilitarian analysis of intellectual property rights; proprietary software—social contract theory, Kantian perspective, rule utilitarian, act utilitarian.

Computer Reliability and Network Security
Liability, Reliability, and Safety Issues
Who is responsible for computer errors? Who is liable when a medical expert system fails? Are we too dependent on computers? What criteria should be used to evaluate computer models? Are software warranties enforceable? All cases evaluated using Kantian, descriptive and normative claims, ethical relativism, utilitarianism (act and rule), rights, duty-based ethics, virtue, and individual and social policy ethics.

Privacy

Week 10

Presentations

Week 11

Presentations
Professional Ethics