

CSC 208 Autumn 2017 Ethics in Technology

Section 102 meets MW 13:00–14:30 in LEVAN 302

Dr. Steve Rubinow

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Office hours: MW immediately before or after class at LPC or by appointment

Office location: CDM 303

Course information can be found on D2L: <https://d2l.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. This course aims to provide a broad survey of the individual, organizational, and cultural impacts of technology and to stimulate reflection upon the social and ethical issues provoked by current and projected uses of technology. Some topics include an in-depth look at computing as it relates to workplaces, communities, public policy, legal issues, education, privacy, and moral values.

Note: CSC 208 is an applied ethics course. Ethical frameworks will be applied to case studies, scenarios, and current events. Also, note that the topic regards computing and computing related issues.

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 see: <http://academics.depaul.edu/liberal-studies/about/Pages/learning-domains.aspx>)

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.

Courses in the Philosophical Inquiry domain address conceptual issues fundamental to reflection on such philosophical topics as metaphysics (e.g., being and nonbeing, the one and the many, the nature of

reality, same and other, self and other); epistemology (e.g., the nature and possibility of knowledge, different ways of knowing, knowledge vs. opinion, truth and falsity); ethics (e.g., right and wrong action, good and bad, objectivism and relativism in ethics, social and political philosophies, the idea of value, the problem of evil); and aesthetics (e.g., the nature of beauty, aesthetic value, the possibility of aesthetic valuation). Courses address questions of how such topics impinge upon, shape, and challenge student lives.

PID LEARNING OUTCOMES AND HOW THEY ARE MET BY THIS COURSE

See: <http://www.depaul.edu/university-catalog/academic-handbooks/undergraduate/university-information/liberal-studies-program/liberal%20studies%20learning%20domains/Pages/philosophical-inquiry.aspx>

Students will be able to:

1. Address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems.
2. Evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment.
3. Analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.
4. Engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context.
5. Confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition.
6. Write an analytic essay treating a philosophical question, issue and/or problem that forwards an identifiable thesis, argument, and conclusion.

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. CSC 208 students will write a 5–6 page ethical analysis paper explicitly applying the ethical frameworks studied in class on a computing technology ethical issue. In lieu of a final exam, students will write a personal code of ethics annotated with justifications, using the frameworks that provide a full-fledged rationale for choice of principles (approximately 5 pages). As part of this project, students will also create their own framework addressing how they make ethical decisions. The code should contain a preamble, or provide additional information regarding the principals. Students will write weekly electronic/in-class critical thinking exercises in small groups that are graded and allowing for peer review/edit.

OTHER COURSE OBJECTIVES

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.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND PRINTED RESOURCES

Required Text

1. Birsch, Douglas. (2014) Introduction to Ethical Theories, A Procedural Approach. IL:Waveland Press, Inc. ISBN: 1-4786-0670-3; ISBN: 978-1-4786-0670-3 <https://waveland.com/browse.php?t=628>

Supplemental Reading

2. Quinn, M. J. (2017) Ethics for the Information Age, 7th edition. NY: Pearson/Addison Wesley. ISBN-13: 978-0-13-429654-8 <http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/ethics-for-the-information-age-0134296540>
3. (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/>
4. 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.
5. Handouts and sections from original philosophical texts that can be found in the library.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor Contact Info/Email Guidelines:

- Email is the primary mode of off-line communication with the class
- Please make certain that your preferred email address is correctly listed on Campus Connection
- When emailing, please write the subject of your email as follows: CSC 208 – purpose of email

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

All work must either be submitted in class, or on D2L, as specified.

Only exception to the rule: If you are having trouble submitting on D2L, you may email your work. This will indicate that you completed the work on time.

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

Value	Assignment	Comments
10%	Reading/quizzes/homework	The class consists of Computer Science (CS) majors and Non-CS majors. Although the level of technical content will be kept low, there will, at time, be supplementary reading list for CS majors.
20%	Current events	Approximately 5–9 with 1 page summaries/applications; some current events can address the history of philosophy. The copies you submit in class may be used for class discussion.
25%	Midterm paper	One paper and presentation. One 6–10 page (double spaced) ethical analysis paper on an approved, relevant issue explicitly applying the ethical theories discussed during the first two weeks of class <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may work alone, or in groups of 2 or 3, on this paper• Your paper is worth 75 points.• You will chose a week to present your paper. The presentation is worth 25 points and will comprise:<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ An 18 minute presentation on your topic. Use any media you want (e.g. PowerPoint, video, audio, etc.)✓ 3 questions that you would like to ask the class about the topic you have presented.

25%	Final project	Take home. Working alone, you will write your own personal code of ethics annotated with justifications that provide a full-fledged rationale for your choice of principles (approximately 5 pages). Keep in mind that the applicability of your framework to issues in technology should be apparent.
20%	Class participation	In class work, and professionalism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the reading/viewing before class. Please be prepared to engage in meaningful and respectful class discussion. The entire class will benefit greatly if all voices are heard. • Handle in class assignments professionally and respectfully. • Do not use electronic devices in class (see policy below). • Arrive on time and stay in the classroom until the class is over. • Group work and group evaluations.

Late work policy: Except for current events that may not be turned in late, work submitted after the due date will be penalized 10%; no work will be accepted after the last day our class meets. At the end of the quarter, your lowest current event grade will be dropped.

GRADING SCALE

A 93–100	B+ 87–89	C+ 77–79	D+ 67–69	F 0–59
A- 90–92	B 83–86	C 73–76	D 60–66	
	B- 80–82	C- 70–72		

TOPICS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Computer ethics	Freedom of speech	Intellectual property
Ethical theories/analysis methods	Privacy and Information; fake news	Liability, reliability, and safety Issues
Digital divide (multicultural issues)	Information security	Networks
Ethics and the Internet	Ethics in the workplace	Bioethics
Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Motion	Computer crime	Other topics TBD

WEEK-BY-WEEK GUIDE

This week-to-week guide is subject to change. Check assignment due dates on D2L.

1 **Week 1: September 6/11**

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Introduction to course; review syllabus; a brief history of computing.

2 **Week 2: September 13/18**

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Introduction to course; review syllabus; a brief history of computing. An introductory examination of 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, social contract.

3 ***Week 3: September 20/25***

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Focus on moral rights, social contract. Fake news and freedom of speech. Decision Making Part I – How do we decide? Examine foundational ethical questions and experiments, such as The Prison Experiment, The Milgram Experiment, Trolley Car, etc. Reflect on your decision-making process.

4 ***Week 4: September 27/October 2***

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Focus on the rule utilitarian frameworks; virtue ethics. 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.

5 ***Week 5: October 4/9***

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Focus on the act utilitarian frameworks. 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. Current Events. Presentations

6 ***Week 6: October 11/16***

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Information Privacy and Government Privacy. Current Events. Presentations

7 ***Week 7: October 18/23***

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Current events. Presentations

8 ***Week 8: October 25/30***

Reading assignments will be posted on D2L. Professional Ethics; Work and Wealth; Current Events Review all the frameworks. Decision Making Part II – How do we decide? Examine foundational ethical questions and experiments, such as The Prison Experiment, The Milgram Experiment, Trolley Car, etc. Reflect on your decision-making process. Current Events. Presentations

9 **Week 9: November 1/6**

Presentations

10 **Week 10: November 8/13**

Presentations

F **Finals Week: November 15-21**

Final Project is due during Finals week; details will be posted on D2L.

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. Thus, students are expected to prepare for class, arrive on time and remain in the classroom until the class is over, attend every class to progress satisfactorily towards course objectives, and behave in a respectful manner.
- Failure to comply will impact your class participation grade.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVATIONS

Accommodations will be made to allow students to fully express their faith. Please provide notice in advance by email if you will be absent, or need extensions on assignments, due to religious observations.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Every effort to accommodate student participation in school activities, such as athletic competitions, will be made. Please provide notice in advance by email if you will be absent, or need extensions on assignments, due to school activities.

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, during office hours, 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.

ACADEMIC POLICIES/ABSENCES

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the University Academic Calendar. Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at:

<https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Enrollment-Policies.aspx>

In the case of illness, or other excused absences, a student may contact the Dean of Students to request a formally approved absence. Upon receipt of documentation, the dean's office will notify all instructors of the student that an approved absence has occurred. The notification will maintain student privacy by

not including the reasons for the absence. Contact information may be found at:
<http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/contactus.html>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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.

Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to providing you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in Campus Connect.