

CSC 208 Ethics Technology

CSC 208–602

Spring Quarter 2024

Meeting times:

MW MW 11:50AM-1:20PM Lewis Center Room 1216

Meetings are face-to-face

Complete [course information can be found on D2L](#)

John Paulett

Email: jpaulett@depaul.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00–4:30 PM (Remote by Zoom)

Zoom Link <https://depaul.zoom.us/j/2269741443>

Emails are responded to within 24 hours during the work week.

Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

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 with these changes is 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.

Prerequisites

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

PID Learning Domain Description & Learning Outcomes

PID Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems. Students will develop these skills through writing analytical papers, weekly writing submissions, class discussion, and a final project requiring the writing of a personal code of ethics.
2. Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment. Students will develop these skills through writing analytical papers, weekly writing submissions, class discussion, case studies, current events, and a final project requiring the writing of a code of ethics.
3. Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems. Students will develop these skills through readings, writing analytical papers, weekly writing submissions, class discussion, and a final project requiring the writing of a personal code of ethics.
4. Students will be able to engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context. Students will develop these skills through weekly reading responses and class discussion.
5. Confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition. Students will read sections of original works and discuss them in class and in weekly reading responses.
6. 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. Students will write an analytical paper in the form of a Final Project.

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. Students will meet this requirement by weekly reading responses, and a Final Project.

CSC 208 Course Objectives

Students will learn how to apply philosophical frameworks—Kant's 1st & 2nd categorical imperative, act utilitarian, rule utilitarian, social contract, Rousseau, Mill, Aristotle's Virtue Ethics, Moral Rights Theory, Rawls's Theory of Justice, John Stuart Mill's Harm Principle, Joel Feinberg's Offense Principle—to concrete computer science ethical issues. We will cover Intellectual Property, Computer Reliability, Privacy, Fake News, Networks, and professional ethics.

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 their 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.

Develop Skills Most Sought After by Employers — Most Valuable Career Skills of 2022

By Rebecca Lake:

<https://www.investopedia.com/personal-finance/most-valuable-career-skills/>

Textbooks

Required

1. Birsch, Douglas. (2023) Introduction to Ethical Theories, A Procedural Approach Second Edition. IL:Waveland Press, Inc. ISBN: 1-4786-4938-0; ISBN 13: 978-1-4786-4938-3 <https://waveland.com/browse.php?t=628>

Recommended

1. Lunsford, Andrea A. (2016) The St. Martin's Handbook. 9th, NY:Bedford Publishing. <https://www.macmillanlearning.com/college/us/product/The-St.-Martins-Handbook-Paper-Version/p/1319107532>

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.

3. A dictionary and thesaurus, which can be found at the library, or online.

Important Dates

Important dates, including last day to drop, last day to withdraw, are posted at:

<https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

Select: 2024, Winter Term, Deadline

Drop Dates <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

Classroom & Grading Policies

Engagement: Participation is required and will be monitored through on-line forums, classroom discussion, small group work, and other classroom activity. Participation is 10% of the Final Grade.

Late work policy : Assignments are not accepted after the due date. The assignment drop box will close at the due date and time. The grade for an unsubmitted or late assignment will be recorded as Missing / No Credit.

If you experience extenuating circumstances that prohibit you from submitting your assignment on time, contact the instructor before the due date and explain the reason for an extension request.. Extensions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Extensions are not granted after the due date.

Attendance and Lateness: Much of our learning happens while working with peers, discussion, and participation in a community. These are learning experiences that are

almost impossible to make up individually. If you have concerns about your ability to attend in-person class sessions this quarter, please reach out to your counselor as soon as possible.

Attendance and lateness will make up 11% of your final grade.

If you have reason for an excused absence or lateness, you should complete the Request for [Excused Absence or Lateness Form](#) before the absence or lateness. The instructor will consider your request and respond to you. Points will not be deducted for excused absences. Points are deducted for unexcused absences and lateness. Your attendance will be measured by your presence in our in-person class sessions. After one absence, your final Participation grade will be marked down by 10 points for each additional absence. Lateness beyond 5 minutes from the beginning of the class will be recorded as half an absence (5 Points) for grading purposes.

Lateness is disruptive and disrespectful. Please be on time for the class. The first lateness will not result in a deduction but every following lateness will be recorded as a loss of points.

In the case of extended 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>

Religious Observations & School Activities

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, due to religious observations.

I will make every effort to accommodate student participation in school activities, such as athletic competitions. Please let me know in advance by email if you will be absent, or need extensions on assignments, due to school activities.

Counseling

The following was taken directly from the Counseling website at

<https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/counseling/Pages/default.aspx>

We care about your mental health, especially in this stressful time. We provide tele-mental health services and connections with resources to serve our students. We are adjusting and expanding our services wherever we can in response to the changing environment caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

UCS has a diverse, caring, and competent professional staff that works from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Some students find that talking to a counselor once is sufficient to resolve their immediate concern. Our counselors can help you in a variety of ways because they are excellent sounding boards, compassionate listeners, and skillful experts in the problems of living. If further services would be beneficial, these will be discussed, and recommendations will be made by the counselor.

UCS offers primarily short-term counseling, but we do provide referrals to the community when students could benefit from longer term services. We are currently operating on virtual basis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For more details on what this might mean for you, please review our remote services guidelines below, check out our FAQs, or contact UCS.

Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need 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

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>

Respect for Diversity and Inclusion

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions, and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In our course, we strive to include diverse authors, perspectives, and teaching pedagogies. We also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. We are open to having difficult conversations and will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact us via email or during office hours.

In the wake of recent national conversations around anti-Black racism, sexual violence, the immigration crisis, and the impact of the pandemic on marginalized people, we are

more awake to the systemic inequities and injustices in our institutions, including DePaul University and the College of Computing and Digital Media, where we teach and serve. We recognize the rich diversity of our campus community and seek to offer all members of my class an equitable, inclusive, welcoming, secure, responsive, and affirming environment that fosters mutual respect, empathy, and trust.

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in university related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by university business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions

The health and safety of everyone at DePaul depend on the cooperation of all who come to campus. By taking care of yourself, you protect the entire community. DePaul's COVID-19 response plans are based on the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Chicago Department of Public Health and the university's medical advisor from AMITA Health.

Mandatory protocols must be followed by DePaul students, faculty and staff at all times on both campuses <https://resources.depaul.edu/coronavirus/guidance/health-safety/practices/Pages/default.aspx>.

Withdrawal

Students who must withdraw either from a course or from the University may do so by using Campus Connect, the University's web registration system. Students unable to use the web registration system should contact their home school/college office, whether in person, phone or email (emails must be sent from the student's preferred email listed in Campus Connect). Students who are physically unable to contact the university may designate someone to act on their behalf.

Withdrawals processed through Campus Connect are effective the day on which they are made. Withdrawals processed through the student's home school/college office are effective:

- in person: the date the student had the transaction processed in the office
- for email: the date the email was sent

- for mail: the date the letter was received

Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from the course and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

The Writing Center

I encourage you to visit the Writing Center for assistance on citing in text, reference sheets, etc.

Here is the link: <https://condor.depaul.edu/writing/>

Also see:

<https://resources.depaul.edu/student-success/tutoring/Pages/university-center-writing-learning.aspx>

Assignments and Grading

Detailed instructions for all assignments will be posted on D2L.

Assignments are not accepted late. The assignment drop box will close at the due date and time and will not allow further submissions. If there is an emergency or other reason why you cannot submit the assignment on time, you must email me before the due date and time. I try to accommodate good reasons.

Percentages are approximate. The grades are computed by total points which are represented by the percentages. Students will be informed if additional points / assignments are added.

Primary out-of-class activities will involve preparation for the next week's class meetings. In preparation for each week, there will be reading assignments that will provide the foundation for in-class discussions, quizzes, and activities, writing assignments, and completion of in-class activities.

Ten textbook reading assignments which are assessed by in-class quizzes (usually 10-20 points.) (27%)

Four Responses. Questions on cases or readings. (Meets PID Learning outcomes #1-6) (15 points each) (11%)

Project building parts. Six writing assignments submitted weekly, which build toward the final project. (20 points each) (22%)

Final Exam/Project (Meets PID LOs #1-6). This is the revised and assembled version of the project building parts. Students will write a detailed analysis of the ethics of a technological question / issue of their choice. (approximately 10-15 pages, double-spaced in MLA or APA format). The project is done in six parts, submitted over the second half of the semester and then revised and assembled. (100 points) (18%)

Class Engagement (PID LOs #1–6) Discussion forums and other response tools such as Slide Presentations. (usually 5 points) (11%)

Participation Attendance and Punctuality. Students are expected to attend class and be on time. (11%)

Grading Categories

Type of Assignment	Planned Number of Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade
Reading / quizzes	10	27%
Written Responses	4	11%
Project sections	6	22%
Final Project	1	18%
Engagement	10	11%
Participation	20 sessions	11%

Grading Scale

A: 93-100
 A-: 90-92
 B+: 87-89
 B: 83-86
 B-: 80-82
 C+: 77-79
 C: 73-76
 C-: 70-72
 D+: 67-69
 D: 63-66
 D-: 60-62
 F: Below 60

Week-By-Week Syllabus subject to change.

Week	Topic	Reading & Activities (Readings include, but are not limited to:)
Week 1 April 1	Intro to course / Review syllabus What is ethics? Generative A.I. and Chat CPT Morality of obligation: The Ring of Gyges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch Chapter 1 • Quiz Chapter 1
Week 2 April 8	Relativism Cultural bias in ethics A.I. Moral Enhancement Moral Realism Meta-ethics Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 2 • Quiz Chapter 2 • Response #1
Week 3 April 15	Emotivism and subjectivism Joel Feinberg Principles of Harm and Offense Language and ethics Fake news and freedom of speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 3 • Quiz Chapter 3 • Response #2
Week 4 April 22	Ethical Egoism Intellectual Property Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property Corporate Ethics in Technology Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 4 Ethical Egoism • Quiz Chapter 4 Response #3

Week 5 April 29	Utilitarianism Computer Reliability and Network Security Facial Recognition Bias and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 5 Utilitarianism • Quiz Chapter 5 • Response #4
Week 6 May 6	Deontology A.I. and Deontological Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch Chapter 6 Kantianism • Quiz Chapter 6 • Final Project Part #1 AI Essay with evaluation
Week 7 May 13	Moral Rights Theory Decision Making Professional Ethics Robotics Social Contract NFTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 7 Moral Rights Theory • Quiz Chapter 7 • Final Project Part #2 Annotated Bibliography
Week 8 May 20	Virtue Ethics Who is the good person? What is the good life? What is the good society? Technology Companies' Codes of Ethics Justice Education and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 8 Aristotle's Ethical Theory • Quiz Chapter 8 • Final Project Part #3 Ethical Analysis
Week 9 May 27	Feminist Ethics Ethics of care Enlightened altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 9 Feminist Ethics • Quiz Chapter 9 • Final Project Part #4 Critique of ethical analysis

	Deep Fakes and Warfare	
Week 10 June 3	Human Rights Morality Crypto currency Tragedy of the Commons Ethics of Drones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birsch, Chapter 10 United Nations and Human Rights • Quiz Chapter 10 • Final Project Part #5 Personal Reflection and Works Cited and Formatting / Assembly
Finals Week June 10		Final Project Due including Part #6 Final Summary and Assessment

Schedule of All Assignments

Week	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11
Response		#1 4/10	#2 4/17	#3 4/25	#4 5/1						
Quiz	Ch 1 4/3	Ch 2 4/8	Ch 3 4/15	Ch 4 4/22	Ch 5 4/29	Ch 6 5/6	Ch 7 5/13	Ch 8 5/20	Ch 9 5/27	CH 10 6/3	
Final Project						#1 5/8	#2 5/15	#3 5/22	#4 5/29	#5 6/5	Completed Final with conclusion 6/13

University Policies

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

More information can be found at

<https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>

Posting work on online sites, such as Hero:

All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

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](#).