CSC208
Ethics in Technology
Spring 2015

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Office hours: By appointment, 12 –
1:30 T/Th Levan (classroom)

Course Description

Information 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 them 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 ethical frameworks, which integrate computer science and ethics, to develop the skills required to examine different sets of assumptions and question them. Case studies will provide a historical perspective for analysis.

Learning Domain Description

CSC208 Ethics in Technology is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Philosophical Inquiry domain. 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

1. Using multiple perspectives, students will be able to address, critically think about, and

analyze philosophical questions and problems.

2. Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment.
3. Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.
4. Students will be able to develop an understanding of the historical context of philosophical topics, figures and texts.
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.
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.

How These Learning Outcomes Will Be Met:

The course is organized in a series of weekly modules each of which include materials and presentation assignments, online discussion forums, an individual analysis and writing assignment or Current Events assignment, and a quiz. Materials are presented through the assignment of readings from the Quinn text, online narrated PowerPoint-based lectures, and current Internet-based materials including reading assignments, videos, and audio presentations. These include both required and optional material. Sources for the Internet-based materials include but are not limited to BBC documentaries, BBC radio presentations, Wired, YouTube videos, Supreme Court proceedings, Ted Talks, academic papers and Commonwealth Club presentations. The online discussion forums are an excellent and interesting means of exploring assumptions and incorporate the multicultural aspects represented by the students in the class. Individual analysis and writing assignments are scenario-based and related to the week's technology topic. There are three current events assignments requiring the student find an article addressing a technology-related current event with ethical issues, the identification of those issues and the application of the three frameworks to the ethical issues. In addition, for most of the modules there is a quiz to assess understanding of the module topic. This online course was awarded a Quality Matters star and is highly organized to optimize student learning.

In addition to the weekly module work, there are two self-reflection assignments which also improve critical thinking and increase awareness. The first is a personal ethics paper describing the student's personal ethical framework, comparing the framework to the main course frameworks, identifying its weaknesses and strengths, and applying it to an ethical scenario from the course. This will be delivered in two phases. The first phase will be in draft form and returned to the student with comments and suggestions for rewrites. The second phase will be the final form of the paper delivered after incorporation of instructor inputs.

The second self-reflection assignment is the final assignment and is accomplished through the use of generative knowledge-type interviews. The interview portion of the paper will be accomplished by students divided into groups of three based on their performance in the discussion forums. The results of the interviews will be used to write a letter to the instructor describing student feelings regarding ethical issues in technology, use of established ethical

frameworks on scenarios discussed in class, influence of class peer opinions on their own ideas, and changes/growth or lack thereof and why as generated by the student's work on the course. The discussion for this will start with a BBC survey on ethics taken as part of the initial module introducing ethics which is taken a second time at the end of the course.

The learning outcomes will be specifically accomplished by the following:

1. Students will learn to identify technology-related ethical issues in real-life situations, to apply philosophical frameworks – Kantian (1st and 2nd Categorical Imperatives), Utilitarian (Rule and Act) and Social Contract as well as their personal ethics frameworks – to technology- related ethical issues, and to address multicultural aspects of technology-related ethical issues by exploring these on various levels of reference including personal, local, national and international bases. In addition to the three main philosophical frameworks which will be used in class, they will learn the philosophies of ethical relativism, virtue and duty-based ethics, social policy ethics, rights and deontological theories.

2. Students will explore technology-related issues using different sets of assumptions and apply an approach of questioning whether these assumptions apply and whether they should be accepted.

3. Students will apply ethical frameworks to practice the skills required to identify ethics issues, assumptions related to these issues, and the value of these assumptions in addressing these issues.

4. Students will learn the details and history behind philosophical theories and ethical frameworks used in the class to understand the context.

Writing Expectations:

The expectation of the Philosophical Inquiry Liberal Studies Learning Domain is that students taking courses in this domain will write at least 10 pages per quarter. 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 towards the ten page minimum.

How These Writing Expectations Will Be Met:

This online course relies heavily on writing to accomplish discussion and exploration of ideas. Students will individually write:

1. BBC ethics survey letter (1 to 2 pages)
2. Three Current Events article analyses (estimated 2 to 3 pages)
3. Personal Ethics description and analysis paper (estimated 4 to 10 pages)
4. Generative knowledge interviews (estimated 1 to 3 pages per student interviewed)

5. Final self-reflection letter based on Generative knowledge interviews and student's final BBC ethics survey (estimated 2 to 4 pages)

Required Materials/Software
Internet access, Word or other text software

Textbook:

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.

(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/

Internet access (all Internet materials used in this course are free)

Prerequisites: None

Grading Scale:

92 - 100	A
90 - 91	A-
88 - 89	B+
82 - 87	B
80 - 81	B-
78 - 79	C+
72 - 77	C
70 - 71	C-
68 - 69	D+
60 - 67	D
0 - 59	F

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the learners will
1. Identify the meaning of ethics and purpose in studying ethics
2. Describe, compare and contrast the learner's personal ethics framework with the Kant, Utilitarian and Social Contract frameworks
3. Describe and apply the frameworks covered in class and the learner's personal ethics framework to ethical technology issues
4. Identify the legislative milestones and ethical issues related to specific technologies covered in class

Coursework Breakdown:

Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Assignments	25%
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Personal Ethics Paper (Draft)	5%
Personal Ethics Paper (Final)	15%
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Generative Knowledge Interviews	15%
Final Letter	20%

An expanded description of each follows:

Participation: Attendance is mandatory and students are expected to participate actively in class discussions.

Quizzes: Several of the modules have quizzes related to the material in that module.

Assignments: Students will take a BBC survey on ethics and write their thoughts on the process of answering the questions as well as their thoughts on the survey. They will find three current events articles and write a summary, ethics analysis, application of personal framework, and comparison of frameworks studied in the course with the application of their personal framework to the ethics issues found in the article.

Personal Ethics Paper: Students will describe the source, inspirations for their personal ethics as well as compare and contrast these to the frameworks discussed in class as well as apply them to a given scenario. The first deliverable for this assignment is a draft which will be returned by the instructor with comments and suggestions for the final version. The second deliverable is the final version of the paper with instructor comments/suggestions incorporated.

Final Letter: Students will use Generative Knowledge interviews in small groups of three to develop ideas and thoughts for a final letter to the instructor. This letter will document feelings and thoughts about the course, changes/personal growth or lack of change by the student and other reflections on the course.

Incomplete and FX Grades

Grades of Incomplete are given only in cases of medical emergency or other highly unusual emergency situations. Please note that University guidelines require that you must be earning a passing grade at the time you request an incomplete grade. You should have completed most of

the course, with at most one or two major forms of evaluation missing. Incompletes revert to an F if they are not resolved within one quarter. If such a situation should occur, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. A grade of FX is assigned if the student quits coming to class but never officially drops the course.

Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity, particularly plagiarism, are not tolerated. Plagiarism is defined by the university as:

"..a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

a. The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.

b. Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.

c. Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.

d. The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university from taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university" (DePaul Student Handbook).

University policies on academic integrity will be strictly adhered to. Consult the DePaul University Student website for further details.

Tentative Weekly Schedule

Week 1: START HERE- Introduction to course and online learning. NO SMALL MATTER- Introduction to ethics.

Week 2: FRAMING THE WORK- Ethical frameworks including Kant, Utilitarian, Social Contract, descriptive and normative claims, ethical relativism, deontological theories, rights, duty based ethics, etc. Includes a discussion of the history of these frameworks.

Week 4: HOW DID I GET HERE? - History of Technology.

Week 5: THE DEATH OF PRIVACY – Privacy and Technology ethics

Week 6: IP AS REAL PROPERTY - Intellectual Property and Technology ethics

Week 7: WELCOME TO LIFE STREAMING – Social Media and Technology ethics

Week 8: Generative Knowledge Interviews

Week 9: VIRUSES, WORMS AND BOTS! OH MY! - Invasive Programs and technology ethics

Week 10: PROGRAM ABORT! Software failures and developmental ethics

Week 10: WORK AND WEALTH – Work and technology ethics/Start Generative Knowledge Interviews

College Policies

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 continue to provide 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 completely 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 CampusConnect.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

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: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

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: csd@depaul.edu.
Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.
Phone number: (312)362-8002
Fax: (312)362-6544
TTY: (773)325.7296