

CSC 208 Ethics in Technology

(PI domain credit)

Professor: Clark Elliott

Spring 2016/2017

Logistics

Class meets: MW, Lewis 1507.

Time: Section 602, 10:10 to 11:40 / Section 603 11:50 to 1:20.

Professor: Dr. Clark Elliott

email: elliott AATT depaul edu. Include "208: [your REAL subject line]" in the subject heading.

Course Management: d2l.depaul.edu

Textbooks

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

Abelson, Hal; Ledeen, Ken; Lewis, Harry; "Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness After the Digital Explosion" Addison-Wesley, Boston, 2009. ISBN13: 978-0-13-713559-2
Download from [HERE](#) in PDF form.

Background, readings provided:

Quinn, Michael J. (2017) Ethics for the Information Age, 5th Edition. Addison-Wesley, Boston. ISBN13: 978-0-13-429654-8

Grading

30% Midterm and Final—(exams and papers)

70% Assignments, quizzes, structured outlines, **participation in discussions**

-5% Missing a group discussion day. These cannot be made up. (5% deduction for each discussion missed.)

I reserve the right to replace final exam points with assignment points.

I reserve the right to raise a student's grade in the case of exceptional work in a particular area.

Grading Scale:

95%	A
90	A-
86,83,80	B+,B,B-
78,74,70	C+,C,C-
65,60	D+,D

Topics

Formal, structured, writing is a required part of this course.

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 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 ethical frameworks, which integrates 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.

Typical topics might include:

- An overview of Computer Ethics
- 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
- Networks
- Case studies
- Ethical issues of building artificial humans
- Logic
- Basic structure of computers necessary to understand ethical concerns

Academic Integrity:

Cheating, plagiarism, and unethical conduct are not allowed, and will be sanctioned, including referral to the dean's office, and failure in the class. Please refer to the Academic Handbook by which rules you are expected to abide.

Note that I reserve the right to raise the grade of a student that has demonstrated exceptional contributions in any of these areas.

All grades are subject to [Academic Integrity Sanctions](#). See the class website and the student handbook for further discussion.

"Minor points" notation

From time to time I use the point box as a communication vehicle in two specific ways, and I reserve the right to add minor points for this purpose:

- One point extra: I am tipping my hat to you for particularly fine work. That is, if you get 101 points on a 100 point programming assignment, I may be saying, "Hey, I noticed the five extra modules you wrote, and that you used SSL instead of sockets! Good job!"
 - Two points extra: If you receive two extra points, I am acknowledging an *exceptional* contribution beyond expectations, so 102 points on a 100 point assignment is something to feel really good about, and is a rare compliment.
 - Grade of "1": used as a placeholder to let a student know that I have reviewed an assignment, and am waiting for further information or work as per correspondence. A "1" will *always* be resolved to a different grade.
 - Grade of "2": a serious warning that you need to communicate with me about possible plagiarism or some other irregularity that is being investigated.
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CSC208 *Ethics in Technology*, catalogue 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."

There are no computer science or ethics course prerequisites for this introductory course.

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.

Philosophical Inquiry

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.

CSC208 students will learn how to identify ethical issues in the modern world that arise as a consequence of technologies that did not exist for previous generations. They will conduct ethical analyses on these issues. Philosophical frameworks—Kantian, descriptive and normative claims, ethical relativism, utilitarianism (act and rule), 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 formalizing the structure of ethical dilemmas as commentary about what constitutes an ethical action given a particular situation and a particular ethical framework. The expression of this commentary will be in group discussions in class, formal presentations, written structured outlines, and at least one formal paper. We will study real-world problems in the modern digital era, and analyze solutions in structured discussions.

2. ...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. Conceptual frameworks will be employed. Writing assignments, group discussions/writing, and in-class debates and presentations will be assessment tools.

3. ...analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.

Through writing assignments and group work, and quizzes 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. In our readings of the philosophical frameworks we will come to know their essential historical context. We will examine some classic philosophical questions that gave rise to the frameworks.

4. ... engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context.

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 may include writing assignments, quizzes and group work.

5. ...confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition.

CSC 208 students will read relevant sections of primary texts from the philosophical tradition and discuss their relevance to both the context of their own time and also the modern world. They will write commentary about these original sources.

6. ... 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 at least one ethical analysis paper with at least one explicit rewrite. (See “Writing Expectations” below).

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 will involve revision, which may count (but only once, not twice) towards the 10 page minimum.

CSC 208 Students will complete at least one formal paper. Rewriting will be employed. Students will complete a number of formal structured outlines that provide all the arguments for a full paper, also with rewriting. Typically students will complete far more than ten pages of writing for this course.

Students will complete an “ideas file” that contains original, informal ideas that have arisen during the course of the quarter, relevant to ethics and technology.

Course Policies

Cell phones / laptops in class:

If you need to use your cell phone or pad for any reason, or your laptop for any reason other than following the class slides and taking notes, *leave the room*. You may quietly leave and re-enter as often as necessary. Your peers devote hours out of their busy lives, and hundreds of dollars to come to each class. They deserve a vibrant, focused, environment. If

you have a special case, discuss it with the instructor ahead of time. NO TEXTING, EMAIL, FACEBOOK, etc. in the classroom.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class, or view the lecture online if they miss class and the lecture has been recorded—typically during the week the lecture is presented. Attendance will be taken on all days when there is in-class discussion, and attendance throughout the discussion is required. These absences cannot be made up. Each absence will lower the student's grade five percent.

Attitude

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom.

Changes to Syllabus

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

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. There is NO CHEATING OF ANY KIND in this class!

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

University Policies

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.

Civil Discourse

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be [Socially Responsible Leaders](#). It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course.

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.

Use the plagiarism checker when provided on D2L. Note that ONLY the specified submission formats will be accepted for credit. For example, no PDF files, no Mac Pages files.

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 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 [Campus Connect](#).