

# CSC 208 Ethics in Technology

## Syllabus

(Counts also for credit for the PI domain of Liberal Studies)

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### **Part One: Summary, Textbook, Online Resources, D2L, Contact with the Professor**

#### Summary of the course

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Welcome to CSC 208 Ethics in Technology.

Computing Technology with its rapid expansion has had profound effect on our private and public lives. Our ability to make judgements about the advisability of the use of technology is often outrun by the pace of its development.

The course proposes to be a kind of pause, a time to analyze and reflect in order to make considered judgements about some of this technological development. The basic question behind this pause to reflect is the question, “just because we can do it technically, should we?” This is the so called ethical question. We will look at the nature of ethics and include an overview of classical ethical approaches to issues as related to our technical world, particularly our connected world of the internet. Issues such as hacking and its impact on nations, data usage and analysis with its concerns for privacy and manipulation, the impact of technology on social and economic equality and similar issues will be treated. We will also read some primary sources of philosophers noted for their ethical investigations. We will see how ethical considerations depend on other philosophical views, such as what it means to be human, whether we perceive our world is monistic or dualistic. The course is research and writing intensive, i.e., practically all assignments are writing assignments of various lengths.

**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites in either Computer Science or Philosophy. However you should note that you should be able to stream video (there are video lessons and video materials, e.g., from Youtube) and you should be able to produce documents either in Word or in .pdf form. All course submissions are online – see below under online resources.

#### 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>; for learning outcomes see: <http://www.depaul.edu/university-catalog/academichandbooks/undergraduate/university-information/liberal-studies-program/liberal%20studies%20learning%20domains/Pages/philosophical-inquiry.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**

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

1.) Students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems. **Fulfilled especially in D2L Content Thinking and Judgement;**

- 2.)Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment. Fulfilled in D2L Content Ethical Theories, Final Project, Content on Privacy, Hacking and Social implications of technology
- 3.)Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems. See Ethical theories, especially relation to other philosophical issues. Assignment on linking philosophy of the human being and world views.
- 4.)Students will be able to engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context. Several primary source readings of philosophers with short essay assignments on the reading.
- 5.)Confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition. Cf. #4
- 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. Six short module assignments of two pages each, one final project of 3 to 5 pages.

### PID Writing Expectations

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All assignments with the exception of the midterm exam will be writing assignments. Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 10 pages of writing for this course. Generally, templates and detailed instructions will accompany these writing assignments. This fulfills a university requirement for courses in the PID division of Liberal Studies

### Online Resources.

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I Course Management system; D2L, access <http://d2l.depaul.edu>. Login with Campus Connect; Click on CSC 208.

On this site you will find the following: (see blue navigation bar at top)

- 1.) Content –like an online textbook
- 2.) Checklists: section by section explanations, links to resources, video lessons etc. You check there off as you do them. (goes toward your “participation grade see below part Two)
- 3.) Assignments:
  - a. instructions for all assignments

- b. due dates (deadline to turn in the assignment to get the maximum grade ; end date: the date when the system will no longer allow a submission – this applies to only the midterm quiz and the final project
- c. submission space with an attach file place where you attach your assignment
- d. submit button

II Numerous online resources in such things as Google, Youtube, and news and information sites.

Required Textbook:

*Introduction to Ethical Theories, A Procedural Approach* by Douglas Birch

Recommended:

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Print Textbook : Quinn, M. J. (2017) Ethics for the Information Age, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.  
NY:Pearson/Addison Wesley. ISBN-13: 978-0-13-429654-8

<http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/ethics-for-the-information-age-0134296540>

Various articles, videos, book chapters as recommended or presented in class. Because the current ethical theories are so vast in scope, it would be difficult for one or two sources to contain all the information and considerations that a thoughtful person would bring to this questions.

My Contact Information

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Email is best for quick response: [EALLEMA1@dpu.edu](mailto:EALLEMA1@dpu.edu).

Office hours will be posted online. See D2L site.

**PART TWO : Grading: Assignment values, course points, evaluation criteria**

Class Point Distribution:		Letter Grade Equivalents	
<b>I Three module short (2 page) reports</b>		92-100 pts	A
Assignment #1	10pts	89-91	A-
Assignment #2	15 pts	86-88	B+
Assignment #4	15 p0ts.	82-85	B
	40 pts	80-81	B-
<b>II. Midterm (Assignment #3)</b>	25 pts	76-78	C+
<b>III. Final Project</b>	25 pts	72-75	C
<b>IV Participation</b> (checking D2L Checklist items		70-71	C-
and timely submission of assignments	10pts	<70>60	D
Total Course pts	100 pts	Below 60	F

## **PART THREE: Course Mechanics:**

### Class Attendance

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You are required to observe deadlines (due dates and end dates in D2L) even though those may be for online submission of assignments, quizzes etc. You are also required to keep up with the D2L Checklists by checking off tasks completed. Please see the instructions for this in the Video on How to do The Course.

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>

I do not make judgements on prolonged absence due to illness or other serious personal reasons. Especially, I do not make such judgements in the week or so before the close of the class. In the case of illness, or other issues, a student should 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>

### Accommodations for various needs:

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Reasonable accommodations will be made for religious observance and university activities.

Students with disabilities:

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.

### Incomplete Grades

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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. Neither is, “I just got behind because I had other courses demanding my attention.”

### Academic Integrity Policy

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

### Plagiarism

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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

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Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. You will receive reminders to do this evaluation beginning before and up to the final examination week. You are encouraged to fill out these evaluation. It helps.

## **PART FOUR: Detailed Course Schedule**

### **Week One:**

*Class One:* Preliminaries, mechanics, course intro, expectations. D2L Checklists One and Two; The indictments of 12 Russian Military Officers on July 13. brief overview of “philosophy”, “ethics”, “technology issues” Introduction of the issue: If it can be done, should it be done. Plato’s Apology. The role of thinking and the life of thoughtful examination of issues.

*Class Two:* cont of previous then presentation of The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica research problem.

How an ethical issue arises Birsch text Ch 1 lectures on ethical consciousness.

Assignment One:

### **Week Two**

*Class One:* Computer Technology background. Birch Text; other references

*Class Two:* (? ATP= As Time Permits) Intro to General Presentation of Ethical Theories  
D2L Checklist on Ethical Theories

Text Ch. 2

**Deliverable:** Module Report Form Computer Technology background.

### **Week Three**

*Class One:* Ethical Theories cont. A problem followed through at least three ethical approaches

*Class Two:* Privacy problem like FB-Camb problem followed through Aristotle, Hume and Sartre. Chart of how to analyze an ethical theory presented. Text Ch3; notes and primary source materials presented online in Checklist.

**Intro and preliminary exercise leading to the midterm.** .

### **Week Four**

*Class One:* Privacy, Data Analytics basics, models and algorithms, the business of selling personal data. Quinn Text ch 5

*Class Two:* Data and Privacy continued; data and the government Quinn Text ch 6  
Ethical foundations of privacy examined.

D2L Checklist on Data and Privacy; Global Commission on Stabilization of Cyber;  
Joseph Nye Article on Normative Restraints in Cyber – links in Checklist.

### **Week Five**

*Class One:* Catch up and review; general feed back on Deliverables to date. intro to midterm requirements; practice midterm.



*Class Two:* ATP: intro to Security Issues and Hacking. Hacking, security: personal, social and political implications; ethical issues? D2L Content Module ; Quinn ch 7; problems: privacy (again), legal vs ethical; authority and ethics (religion, government), culture and ethics Deliverable: Assignment #3: **Online midterm due. Absolute deadline. See D2L Quizzes. Note End date and time:system shuts you out!**

### Week Six

*Class One:* cont. on Hacking etc.

*Class Two:* continuation. The Black Hat convention; the Whitehats; the Dark Internet, what is it? When is the “Dark Internet” not dark and where? Technical concerns and problems.

### Week Seven

*Class One:* Intro to social issues and ethics; social media and ethics; ethics as a social issues; Immanuel Kant and the “categorical imperative”; Does an ethical position always have to apply to society? Reading from Kant’s Essay Concerning Morality. Quinn Ch 8

*Class Two:* continuation;

### Week Eight

*Class One:* The impact of technology on society – ethical and economic issues.

Technology and equality, freedom Ch 8 Quinn

*Class Two:* Technology and diversity. Technological “imperialism”

*Deliverable:* Assignment #4 short essay on issue of your choice in weeks seven and eight.

Template provided in assignment instructions.

### Week Nine

*Class One:* The Future of the Human and Machines or is it the human machine, the intelligent machine, a hybrid human? Lectures based on Reese’s The Fourth Generation. See checklist. The Frankenstein Problem;

*Class Two:* the robots that will end work and robots that will cause massive unemployment.

### Week Ten:

*Class One:* Developing a personal ethics and having a professional ethic: Quinn ch 9 D2L content module 12;

Elements in any personal ethic: distinctions between belief, religious conviction, cultural elements, parental influences, requirements of employment and advancement. Is a personal reasoned ethic possible? Doing the final project assignment of writing out a personal ethic.

*Class Two:* course review: pulling it all together. The professor’s final course goal.

*Deliverables:* Assignment #5: **Essay on Personal Ethic – use template in assignments section on Final Project. Absolute deadline, course closes. Note the final item in this assignment and in the template provided for the personal ethic is a question based on Week Ten**

