# CSC 208: Ethics in Computer Games and Cinema
Winter Quarter 2020

## Instructor Information
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Office Hours: M 1:30-3:30 (by appointment)
Office location: CDM 428

## Course Summary
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.

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

## PID Learning Domain Description & Learning Outcomes
PI 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, midterm essay, 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, midterm essay, 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, midterm essay, 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 and 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, a midterm, and a course paper.

## Readings

*1984,* George Orwell (Signet Classics – Amazon: $7.58)

*Brave New World,* Aldous Huxley (Harper Perennial Modern Classics – Amazon: $10.39)

## Grading Scale

| | |
|---|---|
| A | 95-100 |
| A- | 90-94 % |
| B+ | 87-89 % |
| B | 84-86 % |
| B- | 80-83 % |
| C+ | 77-79% |
| C | 74-76 % |
| C- | 70-73 % |
| D+ | 67-69 % |
| D | 60-66 % |
| F | 0-59% |

## Grade Breakdown

| | |
|---|---|
| Weekly Worksheets | 40% |
| Attendance | 10% |
| Midterm Examination | 25% |
| Life-Experiment | 25% |

## Writing Expectations

You 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, take-home test essays, critical analyses, etc.

*Notes on the Evaluation of Student Work:*

Assignment sheets, including grading rubrics according to which each assignment's components are assessed, will be available on D2L. In order to obtain the desired grade on any assignment, students must review and adhere to these guidelines. Rubrics will detail specific point breakdowns for the elements on which you will be graded. In general, written work will be evaluated according to the clarity and strength of your thesis, the coherence and specificity of your arguments throughout with specific regard to organization, and basic mechanics (i.e. spelling, grammar, and punctuation). Please allow 7-10 days for the return of graded materials.

*Note for Students for whom English is a Second Language:*

This course is based on sometimes complicated readings in English and essay writing that some English as a second language students may find difficult. It is highly recommended that such students 1) consider whether this course is right for them and 2) receive assistance for both written papers from the writing center (Lewis Center 1600).

## Course Policies

### Attendance/Participation

Each week's class consists of a combination of lectures, screenings, and class discussions and/or group exercises. Attendance is mandatory. Participation in class discussions and group exercises is mandatory. I assess both the quality and quantity of participation in class to evaluate collective learning. Students who are absent obviously cannot participate in class. For the purposes of this class, an absence is defined as not showing up for class, sleeping in class, or showing up 15 minutes late or more for a class.

You are allowed two unexcused absences for any reason that will not affect the course grade. Beyond that, a third unexcused absence will result in a reduction of five (5) points from your overall course grade; **if you are absent more than 3 times, you fail the course**.

> Note: Excused absences may be obtained *from the Dean of Students Offices* under certain circumstances and given the proper documentation.

### Course Format: Readings & Reading Responses

Lectures occur twice weekly. Independent readings supplement the lecture presentations. The lecture content *and* the readings will be referenced in tests. Each week's readings are accompanied by an online worksheet. Worksheets must be completed by the time of Monday's lecture each week. Worksheets ask for written responses to questions about the readings and will be discussed during course lectures.

**Assignments**

Reasonable deadlines are given for completion of each assignment. Reading assignments must be completed by the Monday of the week they are listed on the syllabus (unless otherwise noted). **Written assignments must be uploaded to D2L by the date and time specified in the syllabus. No late work will be accepted**. Printed submissions or submissions by email will also not be accepted. (I suggest backing up work with a Cloud file storage service, as computers do crash.) Students who do not take tests during the regularly scheduled period of time will receive a failing grade for those tests unless they have contacted the instructor in advanced to arrange for a make-up period.

**Classroom Technology Policy:** Use of cellular phones and laptops in the classroom will not be permitted. Refusal to comply with this policy will negatively impact students' participation grade or may be counted as an unexcused absence.

**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.

**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. **If the instructor finds a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy/plagiarized their work, the student will be subject to penalties up to and including course failure.**

However, you will not *need* to use outside sources besides course readings for any of your work, so plagiarism should not be an issue. Actions taken by the instructor in this regard do not preclude the university from taking further action, including dismissal from the university.

**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: http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx

**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

**Course Schedule**

|  | Monday | Readings and Worksheet, due Tuesdays, 11:59 pm | Wednesday |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 1: | Intro | Online Articles on Techno-optimism | Definitions: What are "technology" and "ethics?" |
| Week 2: | Privacy | *1984,* George Orwell | *1984* |
| Week 3: | Utilitarianism | Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* | Kantianism |
| Week 4: | Democracy and Free Speech | "The Tower of Babel" Plato, Aristotle | Religion and Philosophy |
| Week 5: | Midterm Exam | *Digital Minimalism,* Cal Newport | Personal Tech Use |
| Week 6: | Science and Technology | *Brave New World,* Aldous Huxley | *Brave New World* |
| Week 7: | Technology and Communication | Sherry Turkle, Yuval Noah Harari | "Social" Media |
| Week 8: | A.I. & Transhumanism | Josef Pieper | Humanism |
| Week 9: | Automation, Work, Leisure | Ivan Illich | The Ethical Significance of Technology |