

# DC 228 *Ethics in Computer Games and Cinema*

## Summer 2018

### Contact Information

- **Instructor:** Dr. Scott Kelley, Associate Vice President for Mission Integration, Office of Mission and Values
- Course: DC 228-220 (41584); GAM 228-220 (41585); IT 228-220 (41586)
- **Course Duration:** Jun 11, 2018 - Jul 15, 2018
- **Email:** scott.kelley@depaul.edu
- **Office Hours:** By appointment only. I have blocked off Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am to 1230pm to be available, but students must contact me beforehand to confirm a specific time. Since this is an online course, I am happy to talk with students on the phone, Skype, or in person.
- **Location:** 55 E. Jackson, suite 850 Chicago, IL 60604
- **Phone:** +1 (312) 362-6674
- **Preferred Contact:** via email first

You can expect a response within 24 hours.

### Course Overview

Societies function based on normative ethics utilizing common sense to distinguish between ethical and unethical behavior. Most of us are not aware of the underlying theories when arriving at ethical judgments about right and wrong. However, the fast pace of progress in information technologies and digital entertainment creates an environment, in which ethical challenges are particularly complex. In the eyes of many, games and movies are violent, offensive and immoral. This course will concentrate on analyzing the impact of digital entertainment on an individual and society. Implications of certain values embedded in games and movies will be discussed. Elements of the ethical code of conduct for a game or movie creator will be formulated. The issue of balancing individual creativity vs. cultural impact particularly on children will be discussed.

### Course Prerequisites

This is an online course. You will need at minimum:

- Frequent access to a computer that connects to the Internet.
- A working e-mail account that you check regularly (and that is updated in Campus Connection)
- Access to a software suite such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point). If you do not have access to Office, you can download a free, open source alternative such as Open Office (<http://www.openoffice.org/>) that will give you the same basic functionality.
- The ability to view video files, either in a streaming (Flash) or downloadable (mp4, mov) format.

### Required Materials

Books can be purchased from the DePaul Bookstore, or online from <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/depaul.htm>

### Learning Objectives

This course fulfills the Philosophical Inquiry learning domain of the Liberal Studies Program. 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.

By the end of the quarter students will demonstrate an ability to do the following:

1. LO1: Address, critically think about, and analyze *philosophical questions and problems*.
2. LO2: Evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment.
3. LO3: Analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.
4. LO4: Engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context. (Concept Map, Reading Engagement Activities)
5. LO5: Confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition.
6. LO6: Write an analytic essay treating a philosophical question, issue and/or problem that forwards an identifiable thesis, argument, and conclusion.

### Assessment

Participation	25%
Learning Showcase Discussion Board Contributions	25%
Key Concepts and Figures Exam	25%
Responsible Solutions Showcase	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>













### Grading Scale

A	95 – 100
A-	91 – 94
B+	88 – 90
B	85 – 87
B-	81 – 84
C+	77 – 80
C	73 – 76
C-	69 – 72
D+	65 – 68
D	61 – 64
F	Below 61

### Assessment Descriptions

**Participation (25%).** After students have read the assigned readings, they will participate in various reading engagement activities to demonstrate their basic knowledge of terms, concepts, people, and principles from the assigned readings. It is highly recommended that students read carefully and take notes before attempting to participate in the reading engagement activities. Comprehensive notes will also help with the Discussion Board posts and responses as well.

**Learning Showcase Discussion Board Contributions (25%)** Once students have completed the reading engagement activities, they will then contribute to the Discussion Board in select modules to showcase their learning.

Class Discussion Guidelines				
Accountable to the Learning Community	<b>Listen</b>  Pay attention to the statements of others.	<b>Summarize</b>  Restate the ideas of a previous speaker in new language.	<b>Build</b>  Add to the statement of a previous speaker.	<b>Mark</b>  Direct attention to the importance of another's statement.
	<b>Verify</b>  Check your understanding of previous statements & knowledge.	<b>Unpack</b>  Explain how you arrived at your answer.	<b>Support</b>  Give examples & evidence to support your answer.	<b>Link</b>  Point out the relationships among previous statements & knowledge.
Accountable to Rigorous Thinking	<b>Defend</b>  Defend your reasoning against a different point of view.	<b>Challenge</b>  Ask a previous speaker to explain & provide evidence for a statement.	<b>Combine</b>  Incorporate knowledge from multiple resources to form your ideas.	<b>Predict</b>  Draw conclusions about what might happen next, or as a result of ideas.

Created by Angela Cunningham, Bullitt Central High School, Shepherdsville, KY 40165

Evaluated collectively on a 10 point scale, all learning showcase discussion board contributions will be assessed according to the following criteria (adapted from Bauer, J.F., and Anderson, R.S. (2000). "Evaluating students' written performance in the online classroom," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 84: 65-71):

Level and Percentage	Description
<b>Level 5 Mastery 100 %</b>	Demonstrates excellence in grasping key concepts; critiques work of others; stimulates discussion; provides ample citations for support of opinions; readily offers new interpretations of discussion material. Ideas are expressed clearly, concisely; uses appropriate vocabulary.
<b>Level 4 Near Mastery 91 % or more</b>	Demonstrates excellence in most of the following: grasp of key concepts; critiques work of others; stimulates discussion; provides ample citations for support of opinions; readily offers new interpretations of discussion material. Ideas are expressed clearly, concisely; uses appropriate vocabulary.
<b>Level 3 Developing Mastery 81 % or more</b>	Shows evidence of understanding most major concepts; will offer an occasional divergent viewpoint or challenge; shows some skill in support for opinions. Some signs of disorganization with expression; transition working may be faulty.
<b>Level 2 Beginning Mastery 69 % or more</b>	Has mostly shallow grasp of the material; rarely takes a stand on issues; offers inadequate levels of support. Poor language use garbles much of message; only an occasional idea surfaces clearly; expression seems disjointed; overuse of the simple sentence and a redundancy with works and commentary; paragraphs often appear unrelated to each other. This student requires constant prompting for contributions.
<b>Level 1 Deficient 50 % or more</b>	A minimal posting of material. Shows no significant understanding of material. Language is mostly incoherent. Does not respond readily to prompting.
<b>Level 0 No Submission 0 % or more</b>	No contribution

**Key Concepts and Figures Exam (20%).** Students will complete an online exam that tests their mastery of basic terms, concepts, and figures from the reading engagement activities that provide the contexts necessary to demonstrate critical engagement with philosophical texts, questions, and arguments. The exam will be a combination of multiple choice, multiple select, matching, ordering, and True/False.

**Responsible Solutions Showcase (20%).** After reading the [Review a Framework for Ethical Decision Making](#), use it to structure your analysis, identify a moral dilemma in gaming, film, or internet technology and construct an argument that results in a specific recommendation for an individual, company, or law-making body. Essays should be no less than 1200 words, must [integrate source material](#), must demonstrate higher order thinking, and must reflect college level writing. All students must post their own analysis and respond to at least one other.

A Range: In addition to meeting all basic requirements, the essay demonstrates (a) an ability to identify and describe a morally problematic practice, (b) an exceptional capacity to reference and apply the principles covered in the course to analyze morally problematic practices and suggest responsible courses of action, and (c) an exceptional ability to identify and to articulate one's own beliefs and practices.

B Range: In addition to meeting all basic requirements, the essay demonstrates (a) an ability to identify and describe a morally problematic practice, (b) an above average capacity to reference and apply the principles covered in the course to analyze morally problematic practices and suggest responsible courses of action, and (c) an above average ability to identify and to articulate one's own beliefs and practices.

C Range: In addition to meeting all basic requirements, the essay demonstrates (a) an ability to identify and describe a morally problematic practice, (b) some capacity to reference and apply the principles covered in the course to analyze morally problematic practices and suggest responsible courses of action, and (c) some ability to identify and to articulate one's own beliefs and practices.

D Range: In addition to meeting most of the basic requirements, the essay demonstrates (a) a limited ability to identify and describe a morally problematic practice, (b) a limited capacity to reference and apply the principles covered in the course to analyze morally problematic practices and suggest responsible courses of action, and (c) limited ability to identify and to articulate one's own beliefs and practices.

F Range: Assignment does not meet the minimum requirements.

## Expectations

**Online learning.** Online learning is demanding. It requires discipline, motivation, and significant time management. Many students mistakenly assume that online learning is *easier* than face to face courses, but soon realize that they cannot keep up with the demands of the course and drop it. Students should be aware of and adequately plan for the expectations, technical requirements, and discussion etiquette. These are explained in the Online Learning Guidelines and Expectations document. Please review it carefully before beginning the course.

**Reading.** Liberal studies courses generally assign around 1000 pages of reading for the quarter, which is approximately 100 pages per module. Readings for each of the modules are not likely to exceed that amount and may in many cases be less than that to account for other learning activities such as watching videos. Regardless of the length of the assigned readings, students should read carefully, think critically, and take notes. These techniques are explained in detail on the Active Reading Strategies page from the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning

**Writing.** Students in Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Inquiry courses will demonstrate that they have mastered one or more of the learning outcomes through writing. It is expected that the equivalent of ten pages (which may be distributed across a series of assignments including papers, exams, journals, problem-sets and in-class writing assignments) will be required.

To successfully complete each module, students are encouraged to review the page [How do I demonstrate Higher Order Thinking](#)

**Communication.** Since this is an online course, it is unlikely that any of us will meet in person. As such, it is very important to remember that there is a person on the other end of a post or an email and to maintain the kind of respectful tone that is consistent with DePaul's Vincentian and Catholic values and is expected in the work place. Here are some recommendations for communicating with me and with other students:

- If you have general questions or comments about the course, an assignment, or a module please post them in the class questions discussion board so that other students will see them as well. Often times I receive a few emails from students asking the same question. This discussion board will serve as a knowledge bank. Note: do NOT post questions about grades or grading in this discussion board.
- If you have specific questions about your circumstances, please email me.
- If there is a need to talk on the phone, over skype, or in person, we can make arrangements that work for both of our schedules. I do not have open office hours.
- Please personalize your D2L page by adding a photo of yourself to serve as a reminder that we are communicating with a real person (and not a robot!).

## Accommodation

### Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations that can provide you with enrollment information, or inquire via email at [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

- Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use during this course. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

### Additional Accommodations

This course includes instructional content delivered via audio and video. If you have any concerns about your ability to access and/or understand this material in its default format, please notify me within the first week of the course so accommodations can be made.

### Assistance with Writing – The Writing Center

Consider contacting or visiting the [Writing Center](#) to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are free.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email. Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. Bring your assignment handout and other relevant materials to your appointments.

## Student Evaluations

At the end of this course, you will be provided with the opportunity to evaluate this course. Course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

## Academic Integrity

Work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the Student Handbook or by visiting [Academic Integrity](#) at DePaul University.

Academic dishonesty, defined clearly in the student handbook will not be tolerated. I will use my discretion, as outlined in the student handbook, for all cases of academic dishonesty. The foundation of all educational endeavors presupposes academic honesty on the part of the student in the same fashion that fair student assessment presupposes the integrity of the instructor.

Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions against plagiarism stated in the current Bulletin and Student Handbook. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic "F" in the course and possible expulsion. If you have any question or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge course materials and the works of others, be sure to consult the instructor. Proper citation procedures are provided in all writing manuals.

## **Participation, Emergencies, and Student Support**

Students who are unable to participate in class due to an emergency or personal circumstance should immediately contact the Dean of Students Office, which offers a variety of student support services. The Dean of Students can review any supporting documentation and will contact the instructor. Students requesting any adjustment or accommodation from the course schedule must consult with the Dean of Students: <https://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/>

## **Incompletes**

Incompletes are rare and problematic for students and instructors. They will be discouraged as much as possible, with exceptions made only in extraordinary circumstances. Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

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## Summer 2018

### Schedule

The course will be open from June 11 to July 15, 2018. The listed due dates are suggested deadlines to stay on track. All resources and links are available on the module pages. All work must be completed by 11:59pm on Friday, July 13th to receive credit.

Module	Due Date	Activity
<b>Module 0: Getting Started</b>	Mon, June 11th	Review all course materials in the Course Information Section
<b>Module 1: What's the Problem?</b>	Thu, June 14th	Complete all activities in Module 1
<b>Module 2: Is Ethics Just About Me?</b>	Mon, June 18th	Complete all activities in Module 2
<b>Module 3: Should There Be a Law?</b>	Thur, June 21st	Complete all activities in Module 3
<b>Module 4: Moral Absolutes or Aspirations?</b>	Mon, June 25th	Complete all activities in Module 4

<b>Module 5: How can we think about harms and benefits?</b>	Thu, June 28th	Complete all activities in Module 5
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<b>Module 6: Is morality about virtue?</b>	Mon, July 2	Complete all activities in Module 6
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<b>Module 7: Religious Ethics</b>	Thu, July 5	Complete all activities in Module 7
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<b>Module 8: Feminism and the Ethics of Care</b>	Mon, July 9	Complete all activities in Module 8
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<b>Module 9: Key Concepts and Figures Exam</b>	Wed, July 11	Complete all activities in Module 9
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<b>Module 10: What Must Be Done?</b>	Fri, July 13	
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All work must be completed by 11:59pm on Friday, July 13th to receive credit.