

DC/GAM/IT 228: Ethics in Computer Games and Cinema

Fall Quarter 2018 | T/Th 10:10am-11:40am

Location: CDM Center 224

Instructor Information

Joel Carini

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Office Hours: TBD

Location: CDM 428

Course Description

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 the 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.

Learning Domain Description

DC/GAM/IT Ethics 228 is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Philosophical Inquiry domain. 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.

Learning Outcomes

1. Using multiple perspectives, students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems in essays, projects and presentations.
2. Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment. Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.
3. Students will be able to express an understanding of the historical context of philosophical topics, figures, and texts.
4. Confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition.

5. 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.
6. Students will be able to evaluate the ethicality of individual texts and propose alterations that will make the works more ethically defensible.

Readings

There is no required textbook. All readings will be provided in .pdf format on D2L.

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92 %
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

Attendance and Participation	20%
Reading Responses	15%
Short Essays	15%
Plato and Aristotle Paper	20%
Final Exam	30%

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. At least one of the assignments will be able to be revised (and only once) as noted in the assignment guidelines.

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.

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 elevate 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. All absences will result in a reduction of 1 point from your overall attendance/participation 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

Lecture/discussion meetings occur weekly. Independent readings supplement the lecture presentations. The lecture content *and* the readings will be referenced in tests.

Each reading is accompanied by an online reading response or a short essay. Reading responses ask for at least a paragraph in answer to one or more questions about the assigned reading. Several short essays (1-2 pages) are due throughout the quarter that replace the reading response for that class meeting.

Assignments

Reasonable deadlines are given for completion of each assignment. Reading assignments must be completed by the date on which they are listed as being due in the syllabus. **Written assignments must be uploaded to D2L by the date and time specified in the syllabus. No late work will be accepted.** Any late work submitted will receive a grade of 0. 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 fail the course, receiving an automatic F grade. 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>

IMPORTANT DATES:

Sept 11 by 11:59pm - Last day to add classes

Sept 18 - Last day to drop classes with no penalty, last day to select pass/fail option

Oct 23 - Last day to withdraw from classes, receiving a grade of "W"

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

Tuesday	Thursday
	9/6 Intro
9/11 Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> "Video Games and Risks"	9/13 Kant, "The Categorical Imperative" Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i>
9/18 Adler, "Preface" Plato, <i>Republic</i>	9/20 Plato, <i>Laws</i> Plato Short Essay Due
9/25 Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>	9/27 Aristotle, <i>Ethics, Politics</i>
10/2 Adler, "Christianity"	10/4 Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> Plato-Aristotle Paper Due Monday, 10/8 (5pm)
10/9 Rousseau, "Letter to D'Alembert"	10/11 Dewey, <i>Democracy and Education</i>
10/16 Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> , Chs. 3, 11 Nozick, "The Experience Machine"	10/18 Postman, <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i>
10/23 Pieper, "Leisure: The Basis of Culture" Pieper Short Essay Due	10/25 Scruton, "Beauty"
10/30 Scruton, "Desecration"	11/1 Danto, "The naked truth"
11/6 Hanson, "How Bad Can Good Art Be?" Hanson Short Essay Due	11/8 Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories"
11/13 McGonigal, <i>Reality Is Broken</i>	11/15 Final Exam - 8:30-10:45