



INLS 384: Information and Computer Ethics
School of Information and Library Science
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Meeting time: Thursday 2:00 – 4:45 pm

Meeting location: Manning 208

Course credits: 3

Instructor: Dr. Dianne Martin diannem@unc.edu

Office hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction and analysis of the ethical issues of the information age using ethical principles and analysis skills. Discussion of issues most salient to information professionals, e.g., intellectual property, privacy, access/censorship, social impact of computerization, and ethical codes of conduct. For undergraduates only.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Explore and engage with professional codes of ethics
2. Probe ethical issues from an international and interdisciplinary perspective
3. Embrace diversity and multiculturalism in dealing with ethics
4. Learn how to make ethical decisions in specific contexts
5. Argue your position persuasively in oral and written form
6. Prepare and analyze case studies

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Baase, Sara and Henry, Timothy. *The Gift of Fire: Social, Legal and Ethical Issues of Computing Technology* (5th Ed). Pearson, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-0134615271

COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA (Grades are not curved. You get what you earn.)

Weekly participation in class discussion	30%
Ethics Scenario Evaluation	10%
Science Fiction Report / Analysis	25%
Symposium Poster Presentation	35%

INLS 384 Schedule of Topics:

Spring 2023

Assignment

Week 1 Jan. 12	Introduction to Course History of Information, Computers; Lecture 1 in-class notes	Discuss role of tools
Week 2 Jan. 19	Ethical Worldviews: Developing a Moral Framework Listen to Lecture 2 PPT notes; read Baase, chapt. 1	Discuss personal ethics
Week 3 Jan. 26	Professional Codes of Ethics Doing an ethics scenario analysis Listen to Lecture 3 PPT notes; read Baase, chapt. 9	Discuss codes of ethics

Week 4 Feb. 2	Science Fiction and AI Listen to Lecture 4 PPT notes	Discuss ethical issues in sci fi Ethics Scenario Analysis due Feb. 3
Week 5 Feb. 9	Privacy Listen to Lecture 5 PPT notes; read Baase, chapt. 2	Discuss privacy issues
Week 6 Feb. 16	Freedom of Speech/ Censorship Listen to Lecture 6 PPT notes; read Baase, chapt. 3 read GW notes on Freedom of Expression	Discuss censorship issues
Week 7 Feb. 23	Intellectual Property Listen to Lecture 8 PPT notes; read Baase, chapt. 4	Discuss copyright issues Science Fiction Report due Feb. 24
Week 8 Mar. 2	Creating Research Posters Media Specialist, Undergraduate Library	Poster Design Exercise
Week 9 Mar. 9	Crime /Hacking Listen to Lecture 9 PPT notes; read Baase, chapt. 5 Read Martin article on <i>Cybersecurity Ethics</i>	Discuss hacking issues Poster Proposal due Mar. 10
March 13-18 UNC Spring Break		
Week 10 March 23	Social Impact Issues Listen to Lecture 10 PPT notes; Read Baase, chapt. 6 Read Martin Article on <i>ENIAC Press Conference</i>	Discuss social impact issues
Week 11 Mar. 30	Errors, Failures, Risks, Reliability Listen to Lecture 11 PPT notes, read Baase, chapt. 8 Read Martin Article on <i>AI Ethics by Design</i>	Discuss reliability issues Poster Outline, Bibliography due Mar. 31
April 6	Wellness Day – No Class	
Week 12 April 13	Research Poster Presentations in class 15-minute presentations with 3 minutes for Q&A; Poster due April 14	
Week 13	Symposium for the Social Good Friday, April 21, 8 am – 3 pm	
Week 14 April 27	Ethical issues on the Internet Identity, Power, Access Listen to Lecture 12 PPT notes; Read Baase, chapt. 7 Read Martin article on <i>Reverse Panopticon</i>	Discuss online ethics

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Weekly Participation in Class Discussion (30 points): Each student will be graded based upon active involvement in the weekly class discussion. The weekly discussions will focus on current issues related to the local and global impact of computer systems and the Internet. This means completing the weekly reading assignments, watching and listening to the online lectures, thinking about them, and participating in the discussion to express your opinions! *Note: You will NOT get an A in this class if you do not participate in the class discussion.*

Ethics Scenario Evaluation (10 points): Evaluate an ethical scenario twice - once from the viewpoint of your personal ethical framework and once using the Code of Ethics of a professional society; then **compare and contrast** the two evaluations (total of 2-3 pages each).

Science Fiction Report /Analysis (25 points): Read one science fiction short story or book or watch one science fiction film that presents a **point of view** about the relationship between technology and humans. Prepare a 3-4 page written report describing that point of view followed by your analysis of that point of view.

Research Poster for the Symposium on Information and Social Good (35 points): You will work in teams of three to research a current issue related to information and computer ethics and create a research poster to be presented at the symposium on April 26. Participation in the symposium is mandatory to receive a grade in this aspect of the course. You will receive more guidance with detailed instructions about this assignment regarding due dates and deliverables.

Rules for All Written Assignments:

All written assignments will be turned in through Sakai. You will find an assignment section in the course site where you can upload your assignments. When the assignment is graded, you will be able to see your grade with comments in the Sakai system. As the semester progresses, you will be able to see your total grade accumulate as each assignment is graded.

Academic honesty and integrity:

The grading and academic standards for this course follow the conventions established at SILS. The School's basic academic policies are at <http://sils.unc.edu/programs/msls/policies.html>. The Honor Code, which prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the completion of assignments, is in effect in this class. Please familiarize yourself with the UNC-CH Instrument of Student Governance. It is very important that you both attribute your sources and avoid excessive use of quotes (see separate handout called "In Your Own Words" in the "Resources/Assignments" section of Sakai). Be aware of the University of North Carolina policy on plagiarism. Your written work must be original. Ask if you have any doubts about what this means. All cases of plagiarism (unattributed quotation or paraphrasing) of anyone else's work, whether from someone else's answers to homework or from published materials, will be officially reported and dealt with according to UNC policies (Instrument of Student Judicial Governance, Section II.B.1. and III.D.2, <http://instrument.unc.edu/>) You will be asked to sign a statement when you turn in each assignment that the work you are turning in is your own work.

CRITERIA FOR GRADING THE REQUIRED CLASS ASSESSMENTS

Weekly Participation in Class Discussions (30 points)

The majority of the class meetings will focus on student directed discussion of the lectures and readings. Therefore, the success of these discussions depends upon your watching the lectures and completing the readings **before each class**. Please arrive on time prepared to be an active and respectful participant. **Based upon what you watched and read, you should arrive each week with one question or interesting insight in writing on a 3 by 5 card to share with your discussion group.**

1. Attendance is expected for each class (no free days), so please inform the instructor before class if you cannot be there. You will lose points if you don't inform the instructor ahead of time.

2. Discussion Participation: Each week the class will be divided into groups of 4- 5 students. You may in a different group each week. You will be given a set of issues to discuss with your group. You will be graded based upon how much you participate in the discussion, the quality of your comments, and your helpfulness and ability to further the conversation. Additionally, each week you may be assigned to one of two roles in the group on a rotating basis:

- **Facilitator:** You will be responsible for organizing the discussion for your group. During the group discussion you will facilitate (coordinate) the discussion by keeping the group focused, asking for clarifications, more information, etc.
- **Reporter:** You will be expected to take notes during the discussion so that you can report out the major points covered by your group during the discussion. You will sit with a panel of Reporters at the front of the room and will be expected to represent your group's point of view on the topic.

Ethics Scenario Evaluation (10 points)

Purpose: An important purpose of this course is enable you to develop analysis skills to make decisions on ethical and impact issues that may arise related to computer systems you develop and implement in the future. An effective way to do that is to analyze hypothetical situations or scenarios that present ethical dilemmas based upon several criteria.

Assignment: In this assignment you will be given a scenario to evaluate in four parts:

1. First provide a brief description of the scenario in your own words. Identify all of the stakeholders and list alternative actions that could have been taken.
2. Analyze the scenario from your own set of personal values. What are your metaphysical, epistemological and axiological views of the world as related to the handout on ethical systems? Answer the question "how do you think" rather than "what do you think." State your reactions to the actions/decisions of the people in the scenario based upon your worldview. (You will not be graded upon your values, but upon how well you can state them as related to the scenario.)
3. Analyze the scenario using the Code of Ethics of a professional society stating the

specific principles from the code that apply to the scenario and what the right course of actions are based upon that code.

4. Finally, you will compare and contrast the conclusions made in part 2 and part 3. Did your worldview differ with the professional code and how? Or was it similar and how? (It may help you to complete this part if you state which worldview you think the code is based upon.)

Science Fiction Report Guidelines (25 points)

Purpose: You are to read a science book or short story or view a science fiction movie. The purpose of this assignment is to examine how technology is portrayed to the public through fiction. Is it presented by the author as a good, evil or neutral force in society? Is it presented as being under human control or evolving on its own? The technology discussed does not have to be imaginary or futuristic - the book could have been written a century ago about technology that now exists. In that case, it would be interesting to discuss how the view of the author matched what actually happened with the technology.

Assignment: The format of the report is as follows:

1. Briefly summarize the story. Don't give all of the plot details.
2. List the issues that the story addressed in the context of this course.
3. State the view of the author regarding the particular technology used in the story - good, evil, neutral, in control, etc.
4. State your analysis of that view - do you agree or disagree with the author and why? Does the book or movie provide any insights into the local and global impact of computer technology as we see it developing today?

Examples of Science Fiction works can be found on Sakai (you are not limited to that list.)