

SI 410 (AMCULT 410) 2018 Ethics and Information Technology

SUMMARY SYLLABUS

Credits: 4

Instructor:

Paul Conway, Associate Professor of Information

Graduate Student Instructor

Corina Kesler, School of Information

Time/Locations:

Lecture (001): M/We 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm; 1255 North Quad

Discussion (002): We 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm; 1255 North Quad

Discussion (003): We 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm; 1255 North Quad

Instructor Office Hours (4442 North Quad):

We 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, Th 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm, or by appointment

GSI Office Hours:

TBD

Course Overview: *Ethics and Information Technology* concerns the ethical dilemmas that exist where human beings, information objects, and social computing technologies interact. The course satisfies the LSA Upper Level Writing Requirement, so significant individual and group writing assignments reinforce learning through collaborative editing, technical documentation, and blogging on the meaning and usefulness of concepts of the philosophy of information. The course explores an emerging model of information ethics from historical and cross-cultural perspectives and then applies this model to a variety of new and emerging technologies that are inherently social in their construction and use. Examples of issues that the course covers include bias in social media interaction; remembering and forgetting; privacy and surveillance; and cheating in online gaming. Students explore the technological underpinnings of associated technology systems, experiment with individual and group interaction with technologies, and examine the mechanics of ethical and unethical behaviors.

Learning outcomes (see separate matrix on levels of learning)

1. Demonstrate competency in constructing and revising written arguments on a variety of ethical norms relating to new technologies.
2. Demonstrate literacy of current models of information ethics through blog posts and collaboratively written wiki articles.
3. Demonstrate literacy in applying ethical theories to interpret personal and group behavior.
4. Demonstrate competency in evaluating choices made by self and others when serving in the roles of writer and editor roles that expose personal, social, or multicultural differences.

Instructional objective

5. Promote competency in intense engagement in course learning activities via in-class and collaborative editing and feedback that encourage multimodal expressions.

Grading Overview: See separate documents for details on assignments and expectations.

- Overall participation in lecture and discussions (Individual) 15%
- Blog/comment on philosophy and IT (Individual + Collaboration) 20%
- Create/reflect statement on online identity (Individual + Peer Review) 10% + 10%
- Create/revise MediaWiki content (Collaboration) 15% + 30%

Attendance at all lecture sessions is very important and factors significantly into the final grade. Blogging is graded individually on initial post and on commentary and re-posts. The statement on online identity management evaluated by peers and graded individually after revisions. MediaWiki contributions are evaluated collaboratively and assessed quantitatively and qualitatively, based on revisions of individual and group contributions.

Collaborative Writing Tools

Blogger: <http://si410.blogspot.com/> [open and indexed]

SI 410 MediaWiki:

http://si410wiki.sites.uofmhosting.net/index.php/Main_Page [restricted, enrolled students]

WikiHistoryVis: <http://wikihistoryvis.herokuapp.com/> [on the fly data presentation, via API]

Required Reading: The domain where ethics and technology intersect is rich with thoughtful writing from a variety of disciplines. One purpose of the course is to sample some of this literature. Required readings come from widely diverse sources, some of which are popularly accessible and some of which are academic in origin. Many readings are drawn from the primary research journal in the field, *Ethics and Information Technology*, from a published compilation of articles by some of the best philosophers and technologists working in the area: Kenneth Einar Himma and Herman T. Tavani (eds.). *The Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics*. New York: Wiley, 2008, and from a compendium of original articles, *The Cambridge Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics*. Edited by Luciano Floridi. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Academic Integrity: All students in this course will be held to high standards of scholarship and integrity. Personal responsibility and integrity are assumed, and all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct are prohibited. Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for you or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the class. The instructor will not tolerate any conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards of the University community. Issues of academic integrity will be handled according to the policies established by LSA. <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/procedures/index.html>

Students with Disabilities: If you need an accommodation for any reason, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential. For additional information on services and support, visit UM Services for Students with Disabilities at: <http://www.umich.edu/sswd/>.

Classroom Technology Etiquette: Students are encouraged to bring notebook computers to class and to use them actively as learning tools. Students should:

- ... *use* laptops for taking notes, conducting research required for activities, and other specific classroom tasks as assigned by the instructor. During class, do not check e-mail, chat, IM, play games, or perform other off-task activities. The instructor's test of inappropriate use is untimely laughter, snickering, and other indicators of gossip.
- ... *tweet*, if you think any 140/280 characters are worth sharing with your followers or the world in general and you can protect the privacy and anonymity of fellow class members.
- ... *engage* in class activity as actively as you would in any other class. The computer should not become a barrier to interaction and engagement, but instead should help facilitate the exchange of ideas and engagement in classroom contact. If you know you are not good at multi-tasking, minimize the use of your notebook in class.
- ... *show* sensitivity to others. You should not display screen images and multimedia content that might be distracting or offensive to other members of the class, including wallpapers, screen savers, or random browsed content. Students who do not wish to be distracted by active laptop use are welcome to sit during lectures in one of two "technology-free" areas of the classroom.

Goals of Upper Level Writing Requirement (ULWR)

- build on skills and strategies developed in first-year writing courses;
- produce complex, **analytical evidence-based arguments** that address specific audiences;
- **refine their ability to write effectively** both within and beyond specific disciplines;
- use feedback to improve their writing through **revision**;
- demonstrate familiarity with the **genres and conventions** characteristic of effective writing.

Scope of writing assignments in ULWR courses:

- require a substantial amount of **polished writing**, usually between 25 and 40 pages (7500-12,000 words) over the course of the semester (or the equivalent in digital media projects), though this may vary among disciplines;
- take a variety of forms typical of academic and professional writing in particular fields, including projects that incorporate **collaboration, digital media**, or other relevant genres;
- **integrate writing with course content**;
- are **sequenced** throughout the semester to facilitate the development of ideas and concepts;
- provide **clear and explicit guidelines** to help prepare students for challenging rhetorical tasks;
- include a clear indication of when and how **writing-related instruction** will take place during lecture and/or discussion;
- provide at least **three structured opportunities** for students to receive feedback on their writing-in-progress, and requiring substantial revision of at least 50% of their writing.

Office Hours: I encourage you to take advantage of at least one office hour session during the course. I am available and willing to provide advice on all aspects of the course, including course readings, writing assignments, laboratory exercises, grading and assessment generally, as well as the topical substance of the course itself.

Course Evaluation: Your end-of-term evaluation of SI 410 is very useful to the instructor and to the School of Information. A link to the online evaluation form is in your Canvas dashboard. We will allow time in class for completion of the evaluation.