

SYLLABUS

Course Description

As information technology continuously changes, technology professionals need to be aware of how ethics, legality and professionalism affect how we respond to challenges in the contemporary technology environment. This course addresses some of the following issues from different viewpoints: social networking, government surveillance, privacy laws, computer security and reliability, and intellectual property. Participants will be challenged to carefully consider the ramifications of different approaches in certain situations, and to think critically, to analyze thoroughly, to weigh soundly their conclusions, and to argue persuasively for their determinations in written and oral assignments.

Required Texts

Baase, Sara. *A Gift of Fire: Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues for Computing Technology*. Fifth Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2018. Available in the Loyola Bookstore.

Readings available on Sakai under “Resources”

Instructor

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Office Hours

12-2pm Thursdays

Location: Doyle 212.

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Office hours policies

Please make an appointment and arrive on time. It will make our time together more productive if you come in with a few questions already prepared.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to assist you in becoming more skilled and knowledgeable in the following areas:

- 1) Theoretical and historical understanding of vital social, legal, philosophical, constitutional and economic issues related to computing technology.
- 2) Determining the impact of privacy laws on information security policy.
- 3) Understanding some of the central issues in intellectual freedom, intellectual property and copyright law for electronic publishing.
- 4) Identifying ethical issues, and procedures and behaviors related to information security.
- 5) Recognizing issues of professional conduct in information technology case studies.

- 6) Discovering the areas most impacted by the ethical decision-making of technology professionals and sharpening the skills involved in making these decisions.
- 7) Applying ethical theories to case situations regarding the organizational use of information technology.
- 8) Understanding some of the ethical issues involved in gathering, storing and accessing information in databases.
- 9) Distinguishing some differences in ethical codes of conduct across geographical regions and cultures.
- 10) Becoming a more polished, persuasive writer and speaker on topics of professional legality and ethics.
- 11) Honing your capacities as a collaborative thinker.

Course Policies

Your work in this course sharpens the communication skills desired of leaders and innovators. Use this course to develop professional presentations and documents you would want to share with future team members and leaders. Good practices and habits will include carefully planning your work by organizing and outlining, drafting, revising and proofreading. Control the scope of your claims and aim for the appropriate tone in your written and verbal communication. Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Grading

Your grade in the course is made up of your scores on the following aspects of your work:

Presentation	20%
Midterm	20%
Reflections	20%
Participation	20%
Final	20%
Final Grade	100%

Presentations

In this course you will be working with others to hone your communication skills. Your colleagues will have the opportunity to ask you questions and provide feedback. A number of topics are listed that each student can select from and then develop a presentation. You will record and upload your presentation to the Sakai module. The assignment instructions and guidelines are found under “Assignments.” The presentation scoring rubric is on Sakai under “Resources.”

Total number of points possible: 100

Exams

These exams will be administered on Sakai and will assess your knowledge of issues, legal and ethical concepts, landmark legislation, norms, as well as the ethical and legal challenges that affect the field. The first exam will cover and second parts of the class.

Exam #1: 20 percent (Graded A-F, see scale below)

Exam #2: 20 percent of grade (A-F, see scale below).

Reflection papers

Reflection papers make up 20 percent of your final grade. These are short assignments of two full, single-spaced pages in 12pt Times New Roman typeface (that's 1000-1,200 words) that encourage the development of a more objective view of oneself and one's own learning process over time in the context of the themes of the course. This course focuses on developing professionals, and you have the opportunity here to learn from your own experience and that of your colleagues. Reflecting on your progress in the class through the themes of the course gives you insight into how you learn best, how you deal with setbacks, and what gains you are making as you grow into these new skills.

Reflections are graded based on completion, with full credit for completion, and no credit for non- or partial completion.

Submission

All reflections should be submitted via Sakai in .docx, .rtf or .pdf format the week that they are due. They are not accepted late without prior arrangement, and they are not accepted via email.

Tentative topics for reflection papers include:

Reflection #1 *Writing Sample*. Goal: introduce yourself, your interests, and expectations.

Reflection #2 Theme: The Right to Privacy

Reflection #3 Theme: Of your choosing from a selection of topics we develop in class.

Reflection #4 Theme: Of your choosing from a selection of topics we develop in class.

Total number of reflection paper points possible: 20

Exam Grading Scale:

Your exams will be graded on the following scale:

A Excellent work indicates a clear understanding of the issues and implications of a

position, including correct definitions of terms and concepts, without misrepresentation or error. Argumentation is clear and supported with examples. Philosophical, legal or ethical concepts are used appropriately to analyze the issues at hand. Vital implications of positions are clearly articulated. Central counterargument(s) are frankly and accurately presented and responded to. (A question earning an A is worth 91-100 points. There is a range here: A- (91-93), A (94-96), A+ (97-100), and so on, for each letter grade).

- B Good work shows a clear understanding of the issues in and implications of conceptions and arguments. It includes definitions of terms used without misrepresentation or error. Argumentation is in general clear. Most of the philosophical, legal or ethical concepts are dealt with appropriately. (A question earning a B is worth 81-90 points)
- C Adequate work shows general understanding of the issues and implications of conceptions and arguments. The presentation is generally free of misrepresentation or error. Argumentation is present. Some grasp of the philosophical, legal and ethical concepts is present such that the appropriate concepts are in play. (A question earning a C is worth 71-80 points)
- D Poor work shows little understanding of the issues at stake and their implications, misrepresents positions, and/or offers incorrect or inappropriate arguments. (A question earning a D is worth 61-70 points)
- F This grade is reserved for incomplete or unsubmitted work. Never hesitate to do your best.

Participation

Regular discussions are a major part of the course, indicated by the substantial participation portion of your final grade. Course readings, questions and issues are explored, critiqued and clarified in the Sakai course forums. Participation in the forums is logged each week. Included in assessing participation are your involvement in the discussion, and whether you engage pertinent issues and indicate familiarity with the required texts. If you are not sure how to contribute to discussions, contact the instructor as soon as possible.

See *A note about philosophy* for discussion guidelines.

Total number of points possible: 20

Attendance

This is an asynchronous online course, so we will not meet in person or online at any assigned point in time.

A note about philosophy

A common misconception about philosophy (and courses involving philosophical thinking) is that it is an arena in which people air their opinions and beliefs, all of which are equally valid simply because someone is committed to them. This misconception can cause difficulties when the holder of an opinion or belief is not prepared or inclined to examine or defend it. Yet that is precisely what philosophers do—we examine principles, beliefs and opinions (the best philosophers will test them, too). With this in mind, when you share your thoughts or test out an idea in class, 1) do not interpret an examination of your view as a personal attack; 2) engage with others who have questions about or criticisms of your position; and 3) be professional and maintain a civil demeanor.

Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with [Loyola University's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Academic honesty is vital to your education and it demonstrates personal and professional respect for oneself and your colleagues. If this course is to evaluate and strengthen your critical thinking, writing and communication skills, then each assignment must be the result of your own efforts. If you are citing information from another source, make sure you accurately document the source. Plagiarism, including unintentionally failing to cite sources properly, is a serious violation of University regulations that may result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Students engaged in academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean.

Learning Needs

If you have a specific learning need, please provide your instructor with a letter from the Services for Students with Disabilities office (located in Sullivan Center) as soon as possible so that we have adequate time to arrange the appropriate accommodations. Please do not delay.

This course deals with questions pertaining to the law of US and other governments. It is possible that members of federal law enforcement or other government agencies are present.

General outline of the course

Relevant news in the field could break, and we may shift our plans to study those events, related documents, statements, etc.

Week 1: Introduction to Ethical and Legal Considerations

1/14 Syllabus review
 Aaron Swartz, “Look at yourself objectively” & “An Incredibly Short Introduction to Applied Ethics” **on Sakai**

Week 2: “The Gift”

1/21 Baase, Chapter One (pp. 1-40)
 Important Distinctions

 Reflection #1 due

Week 3: Privacy

- 1/28 Baase, Chapter Two (pp. 50-120)
Bloustein, "Privacy as an aspect of human dignity"
Group discussion on privacy issues

Week 4: Freedom of Speech

- 2/4 Baase, Chapter Three (pp. 137-78)
"Censorship, Inc." **on Sakai**
Critical analysis: Censorship & political speech

Reflection #2 due

Select your presentation topic this week.

Week 5: Intellectual Property

- 2/11 Baase, Chapter Four (pp. 193-234)
Hayes, "A Comprehensive Current Analysis of Software Look & Feel" **on Sakai**
Group discussion: Filesharing

Week 6: Crime & Security

- 2/18 Baase, Chapter Five (pp. 247-300)
Group discussion: Whose Laws Rule the Web?

Week 7: Work, part I

- 2/25 Baase, Chapter Six (pp. 311-342)
Midterm due before 3/1

Week 8: **Spring break – no classes**

Week 9: Presentations

- 3/11 Student presentations

Week 10: Work, part II

- 3/18 Anderson, "Liberty, Equality and Private Government" **on Sakai**

Week 11: In-Depth View: The Snowden Principle

- 3/25 Greenwald/Poitras/McAskill reporting in *The Guardian* **on Sakai**
Critical analysis: What is the Snowden principle?

Reflection #3 due

Week 12: Evaluating and Controlling Technology

4/1 Baase, Chapter Seven (pp. 355-401)
Critical analysis: Topic TBD

Week 13: Errors, Failures and Risks

4/8 Baase, Chapter Eight (pp. 413-456)
Case Studies

Week 14: Professional Ethics and Responsibilities

4/15 Baase, Chapter Nine (pp. 465-95), Unforeseen & hidden risks
Critical Analysis: Software Engineering Code & ACM Code of Ethics and
Professional Conduct (Baase, Appendices)

Reflection #4 due

Week 15: End of class assessment

4/22 *Exam #2 due before 4/26*