

PHIL 2106 - Information Ethics

Winter 2017

Wednesday and Friday 11:35am-12:55pm

Instructor: Dr. Trevor Smith

Office Hours: Fridays 1-3pm, 329B Patterson Hall

Email: trevor.smith3@carleton.ca

Course Description:

This course will explore a number of questions and debates in the field of information ethics. By examining various ethical approaches to different moral quandaries which have opened up due to the proliferation of the internet, the course will aim to encourage students to follow Hannah Arendt's dictum that "we must think what we are doing" with respect to technology. Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, students will develop an appreciation of the ethical, political, and legal consequences of applied problems such as net neutrality, digital piracy, online privacy, hacking, and work in the information society.

Course Textbook:

Quinn, Michael J. 2017. *Ethics for the Information Age*, 7th edition. Boston: Pearson.

Most readings listed in the course outline are from this text. Any additional readings will be posted to cuLearn.

Evaluation:

Attendance	10%	
Argumentative Essay	20%	Due Jan 27 on cuLearn
Evaluative Essay	25%	Due Mar 10 on cuLearn
Final Essay Proposal	5%	Due Mar 31 on cuLearn
Take Home Final Essay	40%	Due Apr 25 on cuLearn

Attendance provides 0.5 points per class, up to a maximum of 10 points. Attendance means being mentally present, not just physically present. Students who are causing a distraction will simply be marked absent.

Please note that all assignments will be submitted electronically through cuLearn.

The argumentative essay will be a short paper (750 words or around 3 pages) in which students will present an argument as to which of the ethical theories from week 2 they believe to be the most correct. As an argumentative essay, the students will argue why their chosen ethical approach is superior and why two other approaches are inferior.

The evaluative essay will be a short paper (1000 words minimum or at least 4 pages) which outlines how one of the themes from class (any week) has been dealt with in popular culture

(TV, movie, video game). Students should explain how the issue was presented and what ethical approach the writers took to solving the issue. Students will then evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of such an approach.

The final essay proposal shall be less than one page and answer the questions: What is your case study? What ethical questions related to this case do you plan to examine? What will your thesis statement be? The answer to each of these questions will be worth 1 point, and 2 additional points will be available for providing two relevant academic sources.

The take home final essay will be a minimum of 2000 words or at least 8 pages. For this assignment students will take their chosen ethical theory from the first assignment (or a different one if they have changed their minds) and apply it to a specific case study that was outlined in the proposal assignment. Students will perform background research on the problem and detail how this problem introduces ethical questions. Applying their chosen ethical theory, students will present an argument as to how and why this ethical theory best solves the questions that arise from their case study. Students should also consider how this ethical solution may have legal, political, economic, or professional consequences and implications.

All three papers will be written in Times New Roman 12-point font with standard 2.54cm margins. Papers will be double-spaced with no extra space after paragraphs. Students will use Chicago or MLA format for citations and references.

Late assignment policy: For the take home final essay the deadline listed is absolute. No late assignments will be accepted. For the argumentative and evaluative essays, a penalty of 5% per day will be applied.

Schedule and Readings

Jan 6: Course Introduction

Jan 11/13 Introduction to the Basics of Ethics

Read: Chapter 2 Introduction to Ethics

Jan 18/20 Net Neutrality

Read section 10.5.6 Net Neutrality, finish reading Chapter 2

Jan 25/27 Digital Piracy

Read sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.6

Feb 1/3 Intellectual Property Rights

Read sections 4.3 – 4.5, 4.7, 4.8

Feb 8/10 The Ethics of the Information Economy

Read sections 4.9, 4.10

Feb 15/17 Online Privacy and Publicity

Read Chapter 5 Information Privacy

Mar 1/3 Government Surveillance

Read sections 6.1, 6.4, 6.11

Mar 8/10 Hacking and Hacktivism

Read sections 7.1, 7.2, 7.4

Mar 15/17 Trolling, Free Speech, and Censorship

Read sections 3.5-3.8

Mar 22/24 Professional Ethics for Programmers

Read sections 9.1, 9.5, 9.6

Mar 29/31 The Ethics of Automation and Outsourcing

Read sections 10.1, 10.2, 10.4

Apr 5/7 Information Ethics into the Future

Bostrum, N. and Eliezer Yudkowsky. "The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence," in *Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*, eds. William Ramsey and Keith Frankish. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. (will be posted on cuLearn).

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2016-17)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations (both formally scheduled and take-homes), you must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of the exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 3 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 7	Classes start.
Sept. 20	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 10	Thanksgiving Day – University closed.
Oct. 24-28	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 9	Last day of classes, Fall term. Classes follow a Monday schedule.
Dec. 9	Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 9	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 5	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 20	Family Day – University closed.
Feb. 20-24	Winter Break, no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 7	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 7	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 10-25	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 14	Good Friday – University closed.
Apr. 25	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735