

COSC 3050
Ethics for the Computer Professional
Spring 2016

Course Assessment

1 Introduction:

Course is being limited to 24 students. This is IMPORTANT. Regardless of what the students may want, in terms of class size, keeping it small enough to utilize the "flipped" concept is really, really, necessary. So limit it to graduating seniors, then allow in juniors if there is space.

A 1 credit course, meets 1 day a week. Basic course is assigned readings, on-line quiz related to those readings, and in-class discussion/case studies based on those same readings. Every week the class is divided randomly into groups, given the case studies, encouraged to discuss in small groups, then "present" to the class.

Final exam this year was again very simple, write a brief paper.

The first day of class (week 1) was limited to a brief discussion of the course, an overview of ethics, having the students complete the Philosophic Inventory. The readings for the next time, fill in the informational gaps for those categories the inventory uses.

2 Instructors Evaluation of Course:

I still think the course is going well. As always, some of the students do not read all the material, but the quizzes do make them read at least some. Attendance is part of the grade and all of the seem to make a real effort to get to class, on time, or at least let me know if they cannot make it. Pleasantly surprising.

The students seem to like the format, and I certainly do. The hardest part is trying to find new examples of the broad categories I am using. But there is generally something, and most of the material is "timeless" so it is not a severe problem. However, this semester I found that there is even less readily available online with an ethical bent. I think we are in one of those "Ethics, I don't need no stinking ethics" phases. You would think Nixon was still in the White House.

The final exam paper is still a good choice. Instead of giving them weeks for a course paper and have them put it off till the last minute, not do any real research, and write very badly,

I give them the assignment after the last class meeting. They choose a topic from one of a short (3 or 4) list that I supply at the last minute, and write an opinion paper. Have to have some (little) research. The paper does not require citations but they do have to supply a bibliography. I thought of making them write it in class, using a Blue Book but decided I did not need the agony of trying to read their handwriting.

The biggest issue with the paper this year, and I was not especially concerned by it, is that they did not do especially well providing a specific thesis statement. Additionally, the papers tended toward the “this is good” or “this is bad” categories instead of what I had hoped for, the ethical implications or ethical basis for good and bad. But then we all have problems expressing that. I need to rework the assignment document to be more specific about things like exactly how to focus the paper and how many references I expect.

Still like NOT giving lectures, especially on the philosophical categories (like existentialism). Especially true this semester where I have four courses with over 170 students. For such a short (1 credit hour) class, that has primarily seniors enrolled, having them read to fill in their knowledge gaps seems to just make more sense. The biggest student complaint of course is still “too much to read”.

3 Performance Indicators to Assess:

The course, as has already been stated, is primarily a seminar course. It consists of reading assignments, very brief quizzes on those readings that are given primarily as incentive and thought pieces, in-class discussion of simple case studies, and a final paper. As such, the grades are primarily attendance. A faculty member in a public institution can discuss ethics, but surely cannot dictate ethics to any of the students. The instructor can say she personally believes that something is good or bad, ethically or morally correct, or legal or illegal. But that is all. Therefore assessment for this course is extremely difficult if is anything beyond insisting that the students consider the material and be able to actually have an opinion.

As such I will provide documents relating to the individual topics but only one assessment for student performance for the entire course. There were 24 students assessed. The assessment consisted of the following.

- Reading their quiz answers and giving full credit if they had an answer at all and that answer was for the question asked. This was the portion that to a large extent caused the students to read the provided material.
- Attendance/participation in the weekly class discussions: if they attended they participated because their fellow students insisted on it in small group settings.

There were 24 students assessed for the course.

Excelled: 24 students
Mastered: 0
Partially Mastered: 0
Below Expectations: 0

Perf. Ind. e.1: Recognize ethical issues involved in a professional setting.

Case studies/readings/quiz topics: Performance, harassment, professional responsibility.

Perf. Ind. e.2: Describe current issues in security.

Case studies/readings/quiz topic: Security

Perf. Ind. e.3: Describe current issues in privacy.

Case studies/readings/quiz topic: Privacy, free speech

Perf. Ind. e.4: Respect and honor ethics in writing assignments.

Their final papers were all reasonable, the biggest problems being grammatical errors especially for our foreign students.

Final paper

There were 24 students assessed.

Excelled: 22 students

Mastered: 2

Partially Mastered: 0

Below Expectations: 0

Perf. Ind. g.1: Understand the impact of computing solutions on society in a global economic context.

Case studies/readings/quiz: Visas, whistle blowing

Perf. Ind. g.2: Describe non-technical computing issues such as sustainability, entrepreneurship, and outsourcing.

Case studies/readings/quiz: Codes of conduct, social society, visas (same from g.1)

Perf. Ind. h.1: Read and report on papers in the technical literature.

Same as e.1, e.2, e.3, e.4, g.1, g.2 and the final paper. The assessment of this item is included in the first assessment.

Perf. Ind. h.3: Review articles, chapters, or presentations from the professional literature.

Same as e.1, e.2, e.3, e.4, g.1, g.2 and the final paper. The assessment of this item is included in the first assessment.

The documents associated with these are in subdirectories labeled with the Performance Indicator such as G.1.