

COSC 3050
Ethics for the Computer Professional
Spring 2019

Course Assessment

1 Introduction:

Course is being limited to 24 students per section. This is IMPORTANT. Regardless of what the students may want, in terms of class size, keeping it small enough to utilize the “flipped” or “reversed” concept is very necessary. To do this I limit it to graduating seniors, then allow in juniors if there is space. And this year, like two years ago, the number of graduating seniors was over 26 so I simply added another section. Adding another section is simple because the classroom is already free, having been assigned to the first section already.

This is a 1 credit course which meets 1 day a week. The basic course consists of assigned readings, on-line quizzes 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, told to discuss in small groups and arrive at an “answer” or perhaps “answers,” then present their conclusions to the class.

Final exam this year was 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 (attached). The readings for the next time fill in the informational gaps for those categories the inventory uses.

2 Instructors Evaluation of Course:

Course is going well. Some of the students do not read all the material, but the quizzes are a reasonable way to try to get them to read at least some. Attendance is part of the grade and all of the students seem to make an effort to get to class, on time, or at least let me know if they cannot make it.

The format of the course is good and I see no reason to change it. After four years not only is it comfortable but it is easy to change or update as needed. The finding new material is a year long process. One of the things that really helps is the ASEE digest I receive daily. It often has new items that dovetail well with the material or point me in a new direction for some research. Much of the material only changes in details so adding that is much

simpler than adding new categories.

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 to 6) topic 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. This is an electronic document with some specific criteria for its format but otherwise is more an attempt to get them to express an opinion and back it up.

The biggest issue for the paper is trying to get the students to provide a specific thesis statement. I do not grade harshly, but it does color my evaluation of the work. The papers tended toward the good or bad but are getting better about expressing implications of the work.

The “reversed” class format is great. This is the second year that I have had two sections and lecturing over this material then giving right/wrong exams would be all but impossible. The students are assigned readings for each week (materials delivered via WyoCourses) and a quiz that is also online. We divide up into random groups when we come to class, read brief “case studies” and discuss them in the groups. The class comes together after 15-20 minutes and each group shares their take/decision on the study. The students still complain that there is “too much to read” but they are not violent about it.

3 Performance Indicators to Assess:

The course is taught as 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 50 students assessed for the two sections of the course.

Excelled: 45 students

Mastered: 4

Partially Mastered: 0

Below Expectations: 1

The student “Below Expectations” attended only 15% of the class sessions and only completed 80% of the quizzes.

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.

Case studies/readings/quiz topic: Intellectual property

Final paper:

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

There were 50 students assessed.

Excelled: 49 students

Mastered: 1

Partially Mastered: 0

Below Expectations: 0

Documents: Those associated with the performance indicators can be made available as a tar-ball or zip-file if desired.

Last modified: November 11, 2019