Course Description

Information systems and technology play a central role in the daily lives of billions of people while also providing structures and opportunities for new types of business, new approaches to old business models, and alternative approaches to political governance. As prospective information professionals and scholars, **you** will be directly involved in charting the path forward for the next wave of information artifacts and practices. Along the way, you will be confronted by difficult questions about how to distribute the benefits and risks of information technologies among companies, government officials, activists, communities, families, and individuals like yourself. Information technologies open up new possibilities for sharing, interacting, and innovating, but not every technology or exchange of information is desirable or beneficial for everyone affected. We require tools, frameworks, and strategies to make the best decisions about data, information, and technology.

Ethics is the study of decision making based on moral reasoning. It influences the construction and direction of law and the application of public and corporate policy. Technologies can be designed in multiple ways, and choices about how or what systems and services to put into the world reflect the needs and wants of many types of people. Such choices require thoughtful consideration about the kind of society we want to live in now, and to create for future generations.

This class is designed to provide the student with a framework for analyzing the social, political, ethical, legal, and economic issues surrounding information, information technologies, information practices, and the information industries. The class will outline well-established strategies for constructing arguments and reaching conclusions. It will also explore policy and ethical issues of information access and control on topics that include: privacy, intellectual property, free expression, security, employment, criminal justice, business, and research.

Required Course Materials

Textbook: Ethics for the Information Age (7th Ed). by Michael J. Quinn. Pearson Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0134296548

Each week, there will typically be assigned selections from the textbook, as well as other readings and videos. Some items will be required and others will be optional.

Student Outcomes/Learning Goals

Students will be able to specify and discuss fundamental issues of ethics, law, and policy affecting information production, aggregation, transfer, and use.

Students are expected to develop and display a facility to do original and critical work on the topics covered.

Students are expected to master the various philosophical theories, problems, or issues presented. For example, what is consequentialism? When is it a useful ethical framework? When does it

work less well? How can we apply this theory (or some other) to a current ethical dilemma regarding information systems?

Grading

Quizzes	25%	100 points
Lecture Participation	12.5%	50 points
Section Participation	12.5%	50 points
Critical Essay	12.5%	50 points
Peer Review	5%	20 points
Final term paper	32.5%	130 points
Total	100%	400 points

Assignments

This course provides a brief overview of ethics, law, and policy for the Information field. There are primary assignment deliverable is an 8-12 page paper in which you will demonstrate your understanding of an argument posed by an author discussed in this course. You will offer counter arguments and synthesize them with those of the author.

A 3-5 page critical essay in which you summarize the key arguments will be due prior to the final term paper in the following format:

> **Part I.** From an article from the list provided, clearly present (explicate) the author's position and arguments (if the author gives a number of arguments then pick one or two that you consider to be the most central). Be sure to explain what conclusion(s) they are arguing for and what evidence or support they give for their conclusion(s). Note: this is the most important part of the essay because it lays the groundwork for the rest of this assignment and potentially for your final essay assignment. This is not a book report. Emphasis should be on identifying and presenting the central argument(s).
>
> **Part II.** Give, in your view, the most damaging criticism of the argument or position explicated in Part I. Be sure to develop your criticism in some detail. Where exactly does the author go wrong? What empirical claims (matter of fact claims) do they make that are false if any? Do not use the shotgun method — don't briefly mention five or six problems, develop one or two in detail. If there are multiple arguments offered by the author, pick one

In addition there will be shorter assignments, quizzes, and other activities both in lecture and in your course sections.

Participation grades will be based on your participation in activities assigned during lecture or in your lab sections. In lecture, participation includes several reading 'check-ins' in the form of very short quizzes, as well as individual and/or group work requiring the submission of a work product. In most cases, you must be present to earn participation credit. Your instructor or TAs may, at their discretion, assign work that involves online participation only. There is no makeup work possible for missed participation credit.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Introduction – Information Ethics?

- Velasquez et. al. What is Ethics? https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/
- Regan, T. (2005). Introduction to Moral Reasoning. In A. D. Moore (Ed.), *Information ethics: Privacy, property, and power* (1st ed). Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Cahn, S. M., Kitcher, P., & Sher, G. (Eds.). (1990). The Elements of Arguments. In *Reason at work: Introductory readings in philosophy* (2nd ed). San Diego, Calif: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- (Optional) Weston, A. (2000). *A rulebook for arguments* (3rd ed). Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co.

Week 2: Ethical Systems (Part I)

- Quinn, Michael J. Ethics for the Information Age. 7th ed., Pearson, 2017.
  - Chapter 2 (selections)
- Vallor, S. (2016). *Technology and the virtues: A philosophical guide to a future worth wanting*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
  - Introduction, Chapter 1 (selections)
- Crash Course in Kant (PBS Digital Studios): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bIys6JoEDw
- Crash Course on Utilitarianism (PBS Digital Studios): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a739VjqdSI
- Crash Course on Virtue Ethics (PBS Digital Studios): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrvtOWEXDIQ

Week 3: Ethical Systems (Part II)

- Held, V. (1990). Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *50*, 321–344. https://doi.org/10.2307/2108046
- Hoffmann, A. L. (2019). Where fairness fails: Data, algorithms, and the limits of antidiscrimination discourse. *Information, Communication & Society*, *22*(7), 900–915. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573912
- Philip, Kavita, et al. "Postcolonial Computing: A Tactical Survey." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2012, pp. 3–29.

- Benjamin, R. (2019). *Race after technology: Abolitionist tools for the new Jim code*. Medford, MA: Polity.
    - (Selections)

Week 4: Free Expression and the Digital Public

- Quinn, Michael J. Ethics for the Information Age. 7th ed., Pearson, 2017.
    - Chapter 3 (selections)
- Communications Decency Act § 230. https://www.eff.org/issues/cda230
- Zittrain, J. (2017). CDA 230 Then and Now: Does Intermediary Immunity Keep the Rest of Us Healthy? *Harvard Law School Working Paper*. Retrieved from https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/37844439
- Greenawalt, K. (1995). Rationales for Freedom of Speech. In D. G. Johnson & H. Nissenbaum (Eds.), *Computers, Ethics and Social Values* (pp. 664–668). Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.
- Delgado, R. (1982). Words That Wound: A Tort Action for Racial Insults, Epithets, and Name-Calling. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, *17*(1), 133–182

Week 6: Privacy: Rights and Controversies

- Quinn, Michael J. Ethics for the Information Age. 7th ed., Pearson, 2017.
    - Chapter 5 (selections)
    - Chapter 6 (selections)
- Rachels, J. (1975). Why Privacy is Important. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, *4*(4), 323–333.
- Allen, A. L. (2016). Protecting One's Own Privacy in a Big Data Economy Law, Privacy & Technology Commentary Series. *Harvard Law Review Forum*, *130*, 71–78.
- Nissenbaum, H. (1998). Protecting Privacy in an Information Age: The Problem of Privacy in Public. *Law and Philosophy*, *17*(5/6), 559–596. https://doi.org/10.2307/3505189
- Doyle, T., & Veranas, J. (2014). Public anonymity and the connected world. *Ethics and Information Technology*, *16*(3), 207–218. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-014-9346-5
- Hartzog, W., & Selinger, E. (2019, April 17). Opinion | Why You Can No Longer Get Lost in the Crowd. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/17/opinion/data-privacy.html
- Wagner DeCew, J. (1997). Chapter 5: The feminist critique of privacy: Past arguments and new social understandings. In *In Pursuit of Privacy: Law, Ethics, and the Rise of Technology* (p. 224). https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107280557.006

Week 7: Privacy: Policy and Practice

- GDPR: Understanding the General Data Protection Regulation: https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/understanding-general-data-protection-regulation.php
- CCPA: Chander, A., Kaminski, M. E., & McGeveran, W. (2019). *Catalyzing Privacy Law*. 62.

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- Hartzog, W., & Selinger, E. (2018, August 2). Facial Recognition Is the Perfect Tool for Oppression. Retrieved August 19, 2018, from Medium website: https://medium.com/s/story/facial-recognition-is-the-perfect-tool-for-oppression-bc2a08f0fe66
- Hill, K., & Murphy, H. (2019, November 5). Your DNA Profile is Private? A Florida Judge Just Said Otherwise. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/business/dna-database-search-warrant.html
- Matsakis, L. (2019, August 2). Cops Are Offering Ring Doorbell Cameras in Exchange for Info. *Wired*. Retrieved from https://www.wired.com/story/cops-offering-ring-doorbell-cameras-for-information/

Week 8: Intellectual Property

- Moore, A. D., & Himma, K. E. (2012). Intellectual Property and Copyright. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
- *What is Creative Commons?* (2017). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPZTh2NKTm4&feature=youtu.be
- Creative Commons FAQ: https://creativecommons.org/faq/
    - (Selections)
- Burk, D. L., & Gillespie, T. L. (2006). Autonomy and morality in DRM and anti-circumvention law. *Burk, Dan and Gillespie, Tarleton. AUTONOMY AND MORALITY IN DRM AND ANTI-CIRCUMVENTION LAW, Triple C: Cognition, Communication, Cooperation*, *4*(2). Retrieved from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1146448
- Hettinger, E. C. (1989). Justifying Intellectual Property. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, *18*(1), 31–52.
- Mulligan, D. K. (2003). Digital rights management and fair use by design. *Communications of the ACM*, *46*(4), 30–33.
- Samuelson, P., Reichman, J. H., & Dinwoodie, G. (2008). How to Achieve (Some) Balance in Anti-circumvention Laws. *Commun. ACM*, *51*(2), 21–25. https://doi.org/10.1145/1314215.1314220

Week 9: Algorithms, Agency, and Fairness

- Danaher, J. (2016). The Threat of Algocracy: Reality, Resistance and Accommodation. *Philosophy & Technology*, *29*(3), 245–268. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-015-0211-1
- Buolamwini, J., & Gebru, T. (2018). Gender Shades: Intersectional Accuracy Disparities in Commercial Gender Classification. *Proceedings of Machine Learning Research*, *81*, 15. New York, NY.
- Bryson, J. J. (2010). Robots should be slaves. In Y. Wilks (Ed.), *Natural Language Processing* (Vol. 8, pp. 63–74). https://doi.org/10.1075/nlp.8.11bry
- Gunkel, D. J. (2018). The other question: Can and should robots have rights? *Ethics and Information Technology*, *20*(2), 87–99. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-017-9442-4

Week 5: Misinformation & Manipulation

- Calo, R. (2013). Digital Market Manipulation. *George Washington Law Review*, *82*, 995.
- McGrew, S., Breakstone, J., Ortega, T., Smith, M., & Wineburg, S. (2018). Can Students Evaluate Online Sources? Learning From Assessments of Civic Online Reasoning. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *46*(2), 165–193. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2017.1416320
- Susser, D., Roessler, B., & Nissenbaum, H. (2019). Technology, autonomy, and manipulation. *Internet Policy Review*, *8*(2). Retrieved from https://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/technology-autonomy-and-manipulation
- Dorf, M. C., & Tarrow, S. (2017). *Stings and Scams: 'Fake News,' the First Amendment, and the New Activist Journalism* (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 2906444). Retrieved from Social Science Research Network website: https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2906444
- How to Spot Fake News: https://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/
- McWilliams, J. (2019, April 17). "Calling bullshit": The college class on how not to be duped by the news. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/apr/16/calling-bullshit-college-class-news-information

Week 10: Professional Ethics and Accountability

- Nissenbaum, H. (1996). Accountability in a computerized society. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, *2*(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02639315
- Floridi, L., Cowls, J., Beltrametti, M., Chatila, R., Chazerand, P., Dignum, V., … Vayena, E. (2018). AI4People—An Ethical Framework for a Good AI Society: Opportunities, Risks, Principles, and Recommendations. *Minds and Machines*, *28*(4), 689–707. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-018-9482-5
- Jasanoff, S. (2016). *The ethics of invention: Technology and the human future* (First edition). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
    - (Selections)
- Kramer, A. D. I., Guillory, J. E., & Hancock, J. T. (2014). Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *111*(24), 8788–8790. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1320040111
- boyd, danah, & Crawford, K. (2011). Six Provocations for Big Data. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1926431