Cyber Ethics
Fall 2016

Objectives:
In the middle of the 20th century, the biggest concern people expressed about computers was the worry that computers might take the place of human thinking, subjecting us all to the whims of automated decision making. Half a century later that fear has subsided to some extent, yet Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Stephen Hawking, and others have all recently come out with calls for concern about potential negative consequences of AI (artificial intelligence). In any case the introduction of computer technology into our daily lives has introduced pressing ethical issues that challenge all of us.

Some of those challenges include protection of privacy, philosophical ethics (theory of justice), professional ethics (licensing of software engineers), online ethics (responsibility for what's on the internet), property (laws about downloading), accountability (violence in games), intellectual property rights (plagiarism), and cyber attacks (viruses).

Congress has made some laws governing the internet, but most members of Congress are not sufficiently computer literate to really understand what the issues are. How much technical education is necessary for our population as a whole to enable them to make moral judgments about computing behavior? Who should write laws to govern the internet?

The purpose of this course is to develop a context in which students can address these issues. They will do so by reading a collection of current essays and articles written by experts in the field of cyber ethics and to react to this material through discussion, oral presentation, and writing papers on some of these topics. Experts from a variety of disciplines who are familiar with how the field of cyber ethics affects their area of study will visit our class during the semester.

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Grading: 3 talks   20%
        Debate   5%
        3 papers   35%
        Notebook   20%
        Class discussion   20%
        (This includes evaluations of talks)

Attendance: Your participation in the class discussions is a critical part of the course, as is your preparation for each session.

Exams and Assignments: Students are required to turn in assignments on the dates and at the times those events are scheduled.   There will be homework assigned at every class meeting.

Notebook: Each student will keep a notebook summarizing of each class meeting. Students will write their reactions to the class discussions, illustrating their understanding of the material they have read in the context of the class discussion. The notebook is subject to collection at any time.

COURSE MATERIALS

Students will read a collection of case studies and articles from current journals having to do with cyberspace and they will discuss the ethical issues that arise in those studies. Every student will give three talks during the semester and will write three papers on appropriate topics.

Some titles of readings from which choices will be made:
Ethics and the Information Revolution
Ethics on Line
Reason, Relativity, and Responsibility in Computer Ethics
Disclosive Computer Ethics
Gender and Computer Ethics
Is the Global Information Infrastructure a Democratic Technology/
Applying Ethical and Moral Concepts and Theories to IT
Just Consequentialism and Computing
The Internet as Public Space: Concepts, Issues, and Implications in Public Policy
The Laws of Cyberspace
Of Black Holes and Decentralized Law-Making in Cyberspace
Fahrenheit 451.2: Is Cyberspace Burning?
Filtering the Internet in the USA: Free Speech Denied
Censorship, the Internet, and the Child Pornography Law of 1996
PICS: Internet Access Controls Without Censorship
Internet Service Providers and Defamation: New Standards of Liability
A Politics of Intellectual Property, Information, and the Common Good
Is Copyright Ethical?
An Ethical Evaluation of Web Site Linking
A Theory of Privacy for the Information Age
Data Mining and Privacy
Workplace Surveillance, Privacy, and Distributive Justice
Terrorism or Civil Disobedience: Toward a Hacktivist Ethic
Written on the Body: Biometrics and Identity
The Meaning of Anonymity in an Information Age
Ethical Issues in Business Computing
Software Engineering Code of Ethics
The Practitioner from Within: Revisiting the Virtues
No, PAPA, Why Incomplete Codes of Ethics Are Worse Than None at All
Moral theory and the Human Genome Project

Applying Genomic technologies in Environmental Health research
The Risks of Epidemiological Data Mining
Ethics at the Intersection of Computing and Genomics
The Control of Scientific research: the Case of Nanotechnology

Suggested Books to Find Material for Talks

Editors: Ricahrd Spinello and Herman Tavani
Title:Readings in Cyber Ethics
Publisher: Jones and Bartlett

Author: Richard A. Spinello
Title: Cyberethics Morality and Law in Cyberspace
Publisher: Jones & Bartlett
ISBN: 0-7637-3783-6

Author: Deborah G. Johnson
Title: Computer Ethics Third Edition
Publisher: Prentice-Hall
ISBN: 0-13-083699-0

Author: Michael J. Quinn
Title: Ethics for the Information Age
Publisher: Addison-wesley
ISBN: 0-321-37526-2

Author: Herman T. Tavani
Title: Ethics Technology: Ethics Issues in an Age of Information and Communication
Technology
Publisher: Wiley
ISBN: 0-471-24966-1

Author: Herman T. Tavani
Title: Ethics, Computing, and Genomics
Publisher: Jones & Bartlett
ISBN: 0-7637-3620-1

Author: Stacey L. Edgar
Title: Morality and Machines Second Edition
Publisher: Jones & Bartlett
ISBN: 0-7637-1767-3

Talks and Papers
Students will give three talks and will participate in one debate. Topics, deadlines and
specific guidelines will be given in class. Students will evaluate each talk and feedback
will be provided to each student speaker. Details will be provided in class.

Disability statement

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss his/her specific needs. I rely on the Office of Academic Support & Enrichment center in 104 Doane to verify the need for reasonable accommodations based on documentation on file in their office.

Academic integrity

The students and faculty of Denison University and the Department of Communication are committed to academic integrity and will not tolerate any violation of this principle. Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity.

Academic dishonesty is, in most cases, intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work ranging from daily homework assignments to major exams. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted – not only quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations.

As is indicated in Denison's Student handbook, available through mydenison.edu, instructors must refer every act of academic dishonesty to the Associate Provost, and violations may result in failure in the course, suspension, or expulsion. (For further information, see http://www.denison.edu/student-affairs/handbook/article7.html.)