

Honors 131
Fall 2009

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, but with the introduction of computer technology into our daily lives, other more pressing ethical issues are challenging 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), 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 some of 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 address these issues 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.

Instructor: Joan Krone
211 Olin Hall
587-6484

Grading:	3 talks	20%
	3 papers	40%
	Notebook	20%
	Class discussion	20%

Textbook: Readings in CyberEthics, second edition, by R.A. Spinello & H.T. Tavani

Attendance: Your participation in the class discussions is a critical part of the course, as is your preparation for each session. Each student will be asked to lead at least one 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 of summaries for 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 how their fellow students have spoken about that material. 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

Recommended Books:

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

On Reserve in the Library:

Author: Herman Tavani
Title: Ethics & Technology
Publisher: John Wiley

Author: Michael Quinn
Title: Ethics for the Information Age
Publisher: Addison Wesley

Author: Sara Baase
Title: A Gift of fire
Publisher: Pearson

Author: Richard Spinello
Title: Cyberethics: Morality and Law in Cyberspace
Publisher: Jones & Bartlett

In addition to the reading, students will learn how one of the most prevalent encryption schemes is done, with the idea of putting their newly acquired technical expertise into the context of ethical behavior in cyberspace.

The Talks

The first talk will be a 5 minute presentation.

The second will be 7 minutes.

The third will be 10 – 12 minutes.

After each talk, students will turn in their evaluation form for that talk. Each student will meet with the professor to get feedback from both the professor and the student evaluations. The professor will convey useful information from the evaluation forms to the speaker, but will keep the names of who said what confidential.

Disability statement

Any student who 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>.)