

**PHI 115-N
SOCIAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN COMPUTING
Spring 2019**

Meeting: T R 8:00-9:15, MM105
Instructor: Azenet López
Email: all56@miami.edu
Office: Ashe 731 (email me for appointment).

Textbook: No textbook is required for this class. Readings will be available online or on Blackboard.

Suggested:
Joseph M. Kizza, *Ethical and Social Issues in the Information Age*. Fifth edition. Springer, 2013.

Course overview:

In this course you will become familiar with important moral and social issues facing us today in the information and technology industry. You will develop the skills to construct and analyze arguments about these issues, and will identify and develop your own positions. The course consists of two parts. In the first part we will learn basic ethical theory, focusing on three major views in the contemporary debate. Then, in the second part we will discuss applied topics from the contemporary computing industry, on the light of these theories.

Learning objectives:

In this course, students will:

- Learn to think critically about important moral issues relating to the information and technology industry
- Gain a basic understanding of three major moral theories
- Learn how to write a persuasive argumentative paper
- Learn how to argue in an open-minded, fair and effective style
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills

Course requirements and grading:

Your grade will be determined by four major components: two 5-page papers, a set of daily questions, and attendance and participation. The breakdown is as follows:

10%..... Outline of first paper
30%..... First 5-page paper
 (15% rough draft, 15% revised draft)
10%..... Outline of second paper
30%..... Second 5-page paper
10%..... Daily questions
10%..... Attendance and participation

Paper outlines:

For each paper you write, you will first provide an outline. I will give you the specific criteria for the outlines later in the semester.

First paper:

Pretend that you are a computer car programmer for Tesla (or another company that produces self-driving cars). You must choose one of the ethical theories that we went over in class to program the car with. Explain each of the ethical theories that we covered, and tell me why you are or are not choosing this theory to program the cars.

This paper is intended to test your understanding of each of the ethical theories covered in class, as well as to grade your writing ability. You will first submit a rough draft. I will give you feedback on this. You will then submit a revised version of your paper, based on this feedback.

Second paper:

Defend a position on one of the applied topics on social and ethical issues in computing. This paper is mainly intended to test your argumentative and critical skills.

Daily questions:

For each of the readings, you will be required to turn in one question in written at the beginning of class. One sentence is fine. The main goal of the questions is to ensure that you are comprehending and thinking critically about the materials. They will be graded based on completion.

Attendance and participation:

You must come to class prepared, having read the assigned articles or book sections, and ready to answer (and ask) questions about them.

You are allowed to miss a maximum of three classes, without any harm to your grade. After that, the percentage corresponding to your absences will be deducted.

Grading scale:

The usual grading scale will apply (0-59% F, 60-62% D-, 63-66% D, 67-69% D+, 70-72% C-, 73-76% C, 77-79% C+, 80-82% B-, 83-86% B, 87-89% B+, 90-92% A-, 93-96% A, 97-100% A+).

Writing credit:

This class has a built-in writing credit component. If you pass the class, you will receive writing credit.

Late policy:

Late assignments are strongly discouraged and (except in cases of documented illness or documented grave emergency) will be downgraded at a rate of 5% per day late.

Academic dishonesty:

No form of plagiarism will be tolerated. Any student caught cheating in any way will automatically fail the course and may be subject to disciplinary actions by the University's Student Honor Council. If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Disabilities:

All reasonable accommodations will be made for students who require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements. Students should contact Disability Services in the Academic Development Center and should seek proper approvals from within the University.

Schedule:

(subject to change as the course develops; stay tuned for updates!)

| Date | Subject | Reading & work due |
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| T Jan. 15 | Introduction to the class | None |
| R Jan. 17 | Religion and morality | John Arthur, <i>Morality, Religion, and Conscience</i> |
| T Jan. 22 | Moral relativism | William H. Shaw, <i>Relativism in Ethics</i> |
| R Jan. 24 | Ethics of self-driving cars | <i>Exploring the Ethics behind Self-Driving cars:</i> https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/exploring-ethics-behind-self-driving-cars |
| T Jan. 29 | Self-driving cars: Questions about their programming | Answer one scenarios from: http://moralmachine.mit.edu And explain why you answered what you did. |
| R Jan. 31 | Utilitarianism | https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/#ClaUti (Read section 1. Classic Utilitarianism only) |
| T Feb. 5 | Utilitarianism (cont.) | |
| R Feb. 7 | Deontology | Mark Timmons, <i>Kantian Moral Theory</i> |

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| T Feb. 12 | Deontology (cont.) | |
| R Feb. 14 | Virtue ethics | <i>Why doesn't Batman Kill the Joker?</i> |
| T Feb. 19 | Virtue ethics (cont.) | |
| R Feb. 21 | Care Ethics | Michael Slote, <i>The Ethics of Care and Empathy</i> |
| T Feb. 26 | Care Ethics (cont.) | |
| R Feb. 28 | How to write a Philosophy paper | http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html The whole thing is worth reading, but pay special attention to these sections: "What does one do in a philosophy paper", "Make an Outline", all of section 2, "Write a draft". Pay particular attention to "Make the structure of your paper obvious." Comment/questions are optional today |
| T Mar. 5 | Is computing ethics unique? | Walter Maner, <i>Unique Ethical Problems in Information Technology</i> OUTLINE OF FIRST PAPER DUE |
| R Mar. 7 | New ethical dilemmas in technology | The Reilly Center 2017 list: http://reillytop10.com/previous-lists/2017-list/ |
| SPRING BREAK | | |
| T Mar. 19 | Privacy and the Internet | <i>The Ethics of Using Hacked Data:</i> https://bdes.datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Patreon-Case-Study.pdf |
| R Mar. 21 | Anonymity | Bruce Schneier, <i>Anonymity Won't Kill the Internet.</i> https://www.schneier.com/essays/archives/2006/01/anonymity_wont_kill.html |
| T Mar. 26 | Intellectual property rights and computing technology | https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/computer-science/#IntePropRighCompArti Read section 10.1 only (Intellectual property rights on computational artifacts) |
| R Mar. 28 | Racism and sexism in programming | <i>Can computer programs be racist and sexist?:</i> https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/03/15/470422089/can-computer-programs-be-racist-and-sexist <i>Teaching computers to be less sexist:</i> https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/08/12/489507182/hes-brilliant-shes-lovely-teaching-computers-to-be-less-sexist ROUGH DRAFT OF FIRST PAPER DUE |
| T Apr. 2 | Computing and moral responsibility | https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/computing-responsibility/ Section 1: Challenges for Moral Responsibility |
| R Apr. 4 | Ethics in artificial intelligence | https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/computing-responsibility/#ComMorAge Section 2: Can computers be moral agents? |

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| T Apr. 9 | Ethics in artificial intelligence (cont.) | <i>Ex Machina</i> |
| R Apr. 11 | Virtualization and virtual reality | Morgan Luck, <i>The Gamers' Dilemma</i> REVISED DRAFT OF FIRST PAPER DUE* |
| T Apr. 16 | Virtualization and virtual reality (cont.) | David Chalmers, <i>The Virtual and the Real</i> (Section 7 only) |
| R Apr. 18 | Online dating | Aziz Ansari, <i>Modern Romance</i> , chapter 3 OUTLINE OF SECOND PAPER DUE |
| T Apr. 23 | Friendship and social media | Laurence Thomas, <i>Friendship in the Shadow of Technology</i> |
| R Apr. 25 | Review and wrapping up | Watch <i>Black Mirror</i> episode: <i>Nosedive</i> |
| T May 7th | | SECOND PAPER DUE |