

INF2199H
Special Topics: Information Ethics
FALL 2016
Thursday, 9:00-12:00 BL 313
Sept. 15- Dec. 8

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Description and Objectives

This course investigates the ethical foundations of contemporary information technology. Throughout this course, we will engage with a variety of scholarly, fictional and technical texts interpreting and confronting the significance of information ethics from different disciplinary and socio-political angles. This includes issues of access, privacy, mobility, surveillance; practices such as mapping, gaming, the management of big data in social media and the health industry. We will study how information ethics affect the construction of identity, the management and regulation of intellectual property and copyright, the interpretation of piracy and open access. Ultimately, navigating this broad body of work is necessary to understand how information ethics shape and inform both the world directly concerned with Information Technology and the contemporary everyday world.

Intended Learning Outcomes

During this course you are expected to

- 1) Learn to critically and strategically engage with the ambiguities and the controversies that characterize the worlds of information and technology around you, whether you are a consumer, a producer or an aspiring policy maker.
- 2) You are expected to achieve a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of said controversies.
- 3) You will be expected to learn how to problematize, critically articulate and communicate informed analyses on given topics and case studies.

Relationship between Course Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes

Generally speaking, this course rigorously follows all the learning outcomes recommended by the Master of Information Program <http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/studies/learning-outcomes> . More specifically, it has been designed to meet the following goals: 1. To “become conversant with fundamental concepts, theories, practices, and the diverse horizons of information disciplines, and can respond to changing information practices and needs of society”; 3. To “develop the ability to contribute through research and publication, to the continuous expansion and critical assessment of the body of knowledge underlying the information and archives sciences”; and 4. To “develop an understanding of the development of theory concerning information, where it is found, and how it is used”

Readings

Available on Blackboard

Assignments

Discussion questions and class participation 20%

Because of their diverse articulation, Information Ethics tend to be controversial by definition and are widely debated. I hope to find a high level of engagement from this class. I trust that discussion will occur in a respectful, thoughtful and mature manner. We will often engage in

moderated discussions, so, please, try not to miss classes and come prepared to ask questions in order to get the discussion going. Discussions will be prompted by your questions and examples. Questions will be used in class for group discussions. We will use these questions to connect and hold together the readings question their tenets etc..

Throughout the term, you are required to find at least **4 examples** and **3 sets of questions** illustrating, or related to, the readings. **Instructions to follow on Week 2.**

Reading Responses 15% x 2 = 30%

Pick two readings (in different weeks), write a response that briefly summarizes the main arguments of each in a written commentary (MAX 500 words each), and prepare a succinct (5 minutes, Pecha-Kucha style, we will time you) presentation that encourages discussion

NOTE ON THESE 2 PORTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS: Final date to drop this course without academic penalty is Oct 31. Please, submit at least a portion of the above assignments by Oct 27 in order to get feedback (I won't accept assignments on Oct 31 for grading)

Group Report 20% Due on Dec. 8

A written ethical review report on a specific case study or a policy decision making. Report has to be well researched and accompanied by appropriate bibliography.

Instructions to be distributed on Week 3 and Groups will form on Week 4

Research Paper or Project 30% due on or before Dec. 15

A 3000 words essay or a creative/professional project (upon consultation) pertaining to one particular ethical topic studied during the course.

Instructions on Week 4

Late Assignments

Please, respect the deadlines. Students will not receive credit for late assignments. In case of emergency, or any other circumstance that may prevent you from reaching the deadlines, please, do contact me as soon as possible and we will try to find reasonable accommodation.

Grading

Grading: Please consult the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines (<http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/grade-interpretation>) and the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>). These documents will form the basis for grading in the course.

Writing Support: Please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the SGS Office of English Language and Writing Support (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/English-Language-and-Writing-Support.aspx>). The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the current workshop schedule (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Current-Years-Courses.aspx>) for more information.

Academic integrity: Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>). The iSchool has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1.(d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>). You should acquaint yourself with the Code. Please review the material in

Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the site How Not to Plagiarize (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

Cite it Right covers relevant parts of the U of T *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (1995). It is expected that all iSchool students take the Cite it Right workshop and the online quiz. Completion of the online Cite it Right quiz should be made prior to the second week of classes. To review and complete the workshop, visit the orientation portion of the iSkills site: uoft.me/iskills

Accessibility Services

If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodation, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sept. 15 Week 1 Introduction

Sept. 22 Week 2 What is Information Ethics? Learning from Science Fiction.

Floridi, L. (2013). Ch. 2 What is Information Ethics? In *The Ethics of Information* (pp. 19–28). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bear, G. (1998). Blood Music. In G. Dozois & J. Dann (Eds.), *Nanotech*. Baen Books.

Doctorow, C. (2004). Anda's game.

Sept. 29 Week 3 Access

Dijk, J. van, & Hacker, K. (2003). The Digital Divide as a Complex and Dynamic Phenomenon. *The Information Society*, 19(4), 315–326.

Robinson, L., Cotten, S. R., Ono, I., Quan-Haase, A., Mesch, G., Chen, W., Stern, M. (2015). Digital Inequalities and why they matter. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(5), 569–582.

Fuchs, C., & Horak, E. (2008). Africa and the digital divide. *Telematics and Informatics*, 25(2), 99–116.

Government of Canada, S. C. (2013, January 31). The Digital Divide in Canada.

Oct. 6 Week 4 - Mobility

de Souza e Silva, A. (2013). Location-aware mobile technologies: Historical, social and spatial approaches. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 1(1), 116–121.

Graham, M., Zook, M., & Boulton, A. (2013). Augmented reality in urban places: contested content and the duplicity of code. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38(3), 464–479.

Goggin, G. (2011). Ubiquitous apps: politics of openness in global mobile cultures. *Digital Creativity*, 22(3), 148–159.

Oct. 13 Week 5 Space and mapping

Brannon, M. M. (2013). Standardized Spaces: Satellite Imagery in the Age of Big Data. *Configurations*, 21(3), 271–299.

Willow, A. (2013). Doing Sovereignty in Native North America: Anishinaabe Counter-Mapping and the Struggle for Land-Based Self-Determination. *Human Ecology*, 41(6), 871–884

Oct. 20 Week 6 Social Media

Halavais, A. (2016). The blogosphere and its problems: Web 2.0 undermining civic Webspaces. *First Monday*, 21(6).

Dean, J. (2003). Why the Net is not a Public Sphere. *Constellations*, 10(1), 95–112.

Klang, M., & Madison, N. (2016). The domestication of online activism. *First Monday*, 21(6).

Oct. 27 Week 7 Identity and Citizenship

Lanzing, M. (2016). The transparent self. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 18(1), 9–16.

Cheney-Lippold, J. (2016). Jus Algorithmi: How the National Security Agency Remade Citizenship. *International Journal of Communication*, 10(0), 22.

Nelson, A. (2016). The Pursuit of African Ancestry. In *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation After the Genome* (1 edition, pp. 69–94). Boston: Beacon Press.

Nov. 3 Week 8 Privacy and Surveillance

Spafford, E. H. (1992). Are Computer Hacker Break-ins Ethical? *J. Syst. Softw.*, 17(1), 41–47.

Boyd, D. (2012). Networked Privacy. *Surveillance & Society*, 10(3/4), 348–350.

Freeman, L. (2005). Counterterrorism and Privacy: The Changing Landscape of Surveillance and Civil Liberties. In L. Freeman & A. G. Peace (Eds.), *Information Ethics: Privacy and Intellectual Property* (pp. 164–179).

Nov. 10 - NO CLASS**Nov. 17 Week 9 Intellectual Property, Biosecurity**

Evans, James A. (2010). Industry collaboration, scientific sharing, and the dissemination of knowledge. *Social Studies of Science*, 40(5), 757–791.

May, C. (2004). Justifying Enclosure? Intellectual Property and Meta-Technologies. In S. Braman (Ed.), *Biotechnology and Communication: The Meta-Technologies of Information*. Routledge.

Evans, N., & Selgelid, M. (2015). Biosecurity and Open-Source Biology: The Promise and Peril of Distributed Synthetic Biological Technologies. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 21(4), 1065–1083.

Nov. 24 Week 10 Big Data

Hargittai, E. (2015). Is Bigger Always Better? Potential Biases of Big Data Derived from Social Network Sites. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 659(1), 63–76.

Dalton, C., & Thatcher, J. (n.d.). What does a critical data studies look like, and why do we care? Seven points for a critical approach to “big data.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, Big Data Critical Data Studies*.

Gurstein, M. B. (2011). Open data: Empowering the empowered or effective data use for everyone? *First Monday*, 16(2).

Dec. 1 Week 11 Gaming

Kim, T., & Werbach, K. (2016). More than just a game: ethical issues in gamification. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 18(2), 157–173

Brock, A. (2011). “When Keeping it Real Goes Wrong”: Resident Evil 5, Racial Representation, and Gamers. *Games and Culture*, 6(5), 429–452.

Nov. 8 Week 12 Artificial Intelligence

Arnold, T., & Scheutz, M. (2016). Against the moral Turing test: accountable design and the moral reasoning of autonomous systems. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 18(2), 103–115.

Sharkey, A., & Sharkey, N. (2010). Granny and the robots: ethical issues in robot care for the elderly. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 14(1), 27–40.