

INFO 498 – LIS 598: Information Ethics

Instructor: Adam D. Moore

Hours: Tues, Thurs, 11:30—12:30 and by appt.

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Overview: In this class we will explore different moral theories along with numerous problems related to information ownership and control. Issues to be discussed include: intellectual property, file sharing, free speech, privacy, and national security.

Goals and Objectives:

- Students are expected to master the various philosophical theories, problems, or issues presented. For example, what is consequentialism?
- Students are expected to develop and display a facility to do original constructive or critical work on the topics covered.
- Emphasis on critical thinking and correct reasoning. Students are expected to know what an argument is and how to evaluate arguments.

Text: *Information Ethics: Privacy, Property, and Power*, A. Moore Ed. (University of Washington Press, 2005)

Several articles will be posted on E-course reserves:

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/services/course/>

Requirements:

4 Quizzes	60%	240 points
Group Presentations/Work	20%	80 points
Term paper	20%	<u>80 points</u>
		400 points

TENTATIVE COURSE READINGS AND CALENDAR

Week 1	March 27	Introduction to Information Ethics Distribute syllabus, Discussion Case: Vietnam Photo Read: Mathiesen “What is Information Ethics,” e-course reserves, Moore and Unsworth, “Introduction to Information Ethics,” p. 11
Week 2	April 3	Introduction to Ethics Read: Regan, “Introduction to Moral Reasoning,” p. 30; Mill, “Utilitarianism,” p. 47; Kant “The Metaphysics of Morals,” p. 66; Michelfelder, “Our Moral Condition in Cyberspace,” e-course reserves (<i>Group Presentation</i>)

Week 3	April 10	<p>Security and Hacking Read: Spafford, “Are Computer Hacker Break-ins Ethical?” e-course... Moore “Privacy, Intellectual Property, and Hacking: Evaluating Free Access Arguments,” e-course reserves Klang, “Spyware” e-course reserves (<i>Group Presentation</i>) Palmer, “Ethical Hacking,” e-course reserves Carlin, “A Farwell to Arms,” e-course reserves</p>
Week 4	April 17	<p>Free Speech, Democracy, and Information Access Read: Mill, “Selections from <i>On Liberty</i>,” e-course reserves; Meiklejohn, “Free Speech as an Absolute,” e-course... (<i>Group Presentation</i>); Greenawalt, Rationales for Freedom of Speech,” p. 278</p>
Week 5	April 24	<p>Free Speech, Democracy, and Information Access Read: Volokh, “Freedom of Speech and Information Privacy: The Troubling Implications of a Right to Stop People From Speaking About You,” e-course reserves; Allen et al., “Privacy, Photography, and the Press,” p. 355 (<i>Group Presentation</i>)</p>
Week 6	May 1	<p>Privacy: Its Meaning and Value Read: DeCew, “Privacy,” e-course reserves; Moore, “Privacy: Its Meaning and Value,” e-course reserves</p>
Week 7	May 8	<p>Privacy Read: Nissenbaum, “Privacy as Contextual Integrity,” e-course reserves (<i>Group Presentation</i>); Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis, “The Right to Privacy,” p. 209</p>
Week 8	May 15	<p>Privacy, Accountability, and Government Surveillance Read: Etzioni, “Technology, Rights and Safety,” e-course reserves (<i>Group Presentation</i>); Allen, “Privacy Isn’t Everything: Accountability as a Personal and Social Good,” p. 398; Lilly, “National Security at What Price?” p. 417 Barlow vs Denning, “The Clipper Chip,” e-course reserves (<i>Group Presentation</i>)</p>
Week 9	May 22	<p>Intellectual Property Read: Palmer, “Are Copyrights and Patents Morally Justified,” p. 123 Breakey, “Liberalism and Intellectual Property,” e-course reserves (<i>Group Presentation</i>)</p>
Week 10	May 29	<p>Intellectual Property Moore, “Intellectual Property and the Ethics of File Sharing” e-course reserves</p>

Term Paper due Tues May 29th in class

Quiz 4, Thursday, May 31st in class

Overview of Requirements:

1. **Four Quizzes (60% 240 pts).** These quizzes will test for knowledge of the material presented in readings and lectures. Format: multiple choice, true/false, and short answer.
2. **Group Presentation/Work (20% 80 pts).** Each student will participate in a group presentation (3 students per group) during the term. The project will be to present an assigned article to the class and to lead a discussion and critique of the issue(s) presented. PowerPoint/Handouts are expected, videos, dialogues/debates, etc. are welcome (anything goes as long as it is relevant to the issue being presented). Each group **must** meet with the TA prior to the presentation and receive feedback on the proposed presentation agenda and discussion topics. The class presentation and ensuing discussion should take about 40 minutes. A group project sign-up sheet will be passed around early in the term. There may also be various group assignments to be completed in class throughout the term.
3. **Term Paper: (20% 80 pts).** The term paper is to be a critical examination of one or more of the arguments presented in the assigned readings. The assignment is intended to be primarily an independent piece of scholarship; some additional readings will probably be necessary, but comprehensive knowledge of the literature is neither expected nor desired. The point is to struggle through the issue you choose in a philosophically sophisticated way, making sense of the issues involved and the arguments that surround them, and defending a position which you find tenable on the basis of those arguments. Papers handed in late will be marked down a letter grade for each day past the due date. **Note:** A "Term Paper Requirements" handout will be posted on e-course reserves.

Scales and Criteria For Grading

General grading information for the University of Washington is available at:

http://www.washington.edu/students/genocat/front/Grading_Sys.html

When converting letter grades to points and total points to decimal grades the following scale will be used.

Letter Grade	Individual Assignment	Total Class Points	Decimal Points
A	100-93	400-370	400-385 = 4.0, 384-370 = 3.9
A-	92-90	369-358	369-367 = 3.8, 366-364 = 3.7, 363-361 = 3.6, 360-358 = 3.5
B+	89-87	357-346	357-354 = 3.4, 353-350 = 3.3, 349-346 = 3.2
B	86-83	345-330	345-341 = 3.1, 340-335 = 3.0, 334-330 = 2.9
B-	82-80	329-318	329-327 = 2.8, 326-324 = 2.7, 323-321 = 2.6, 320-318 = 2.5
C+	79-77	317-306	317-314 = 2.4, 313-310 = 2.3, 309-306 = 2.2
C	73-76	305-290	305-301 = 2.1, 300-295 = 2.0, 294-290 = 1.9
C-	72-70	289-278	289-287 = 1.8, 286-284 = 1.7, 283-281 = 1.6, 280-278 = 1.5
D+	69-67	277-266	277-274 = 1.4, 273-270 = 1.3, 269-266 = 1.2
D	66-63	265-250	265-261 = 1.1, 260-255 = 1.0, 254-250 = 0.9
D-	62-60	249-238	249-244 = 0.8, 243-238 = 0.7
E	59-0	237-0	237-0 = 0.0

There will be no curves and no extra credit in this class. You will not be graded relative to your fellow students. What this means is that it is possible for *everyone* to get an A or an E or anything in-between. In order to pass the course you must complete all assignments with an additive percentage of 60% or higher. Your written work in this course will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Accuracy of use of concepts and theories; in the presentation of the views of others.
2. Clarity of expression of your own views.
3. Cogency or Strength of the arguments that you present.
4. Completeness — every part of the assignment must be done and submitted.
5. Insightfulness displayed in your writing and presentation, where insightfulness refers to a complex attitude encompassing thought, imagination, sensitivity, and sensibility.

General Information

1. Attendance and Participation. Attendance is very important for doing well in the course. We will be discussing numerous cases, examples, beliefs, issues, and theories. Moreover the class builds upon itself — meaning that the cases, examples, and theories will come up again and again. Thus, attendance, participation, discussion, and asking questions, are all very important.
2. Policy on Missed Quizzes, Make-up Work, Late Papers.

Quizzes: Making-up a missed quiz is only possible after the presentation of a documented legitimate excuse. A documented legitimate excuse would be something like 1) a police report putting you in an accident immediately prior to the test in question, or 2) a note from your doctor and evidence of your surgery at the time in question. You must bring documentation that, 1) indicates a largely unforeseeable emergency, and 2) puts you “out of action” at a specific time.

Papers: Related to papers and written assignments *procrastination is no excuse*: Papers that are not turned in on the due date will lose a letter grade for each day late (e.g. a B paper that is one day late becomes a C paper). If you see that you will not make a deadline, contact me or your TA immediately. An extension on the due date can be granted only if (i) you contact me in advance of the due date or (ii) you have a documented legitimate excuse.

3. Cheating and Plagiarism. University policy defines "cheating" as "the practice of fraudulent and deceptive acts for the purpose of improving a grade or obtaining course credit — [cheating] includes any and all actions by a student which are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent and deceptive means." University policy defines "plagiarism" as "a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished words of another by representing the material so used as one's own work." Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Depending on the seriousness of the student's action, the student may be penalized by an "E/0" on the assignment, to an "E/0" in the course, or some other more serious penalty. The severity of the punishment is left to the discretion of the instructor.
4. Students with Disabilities. If you are a disabled student, be sure to identify yourself to the University and the instructor so that reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation within the course can be made.
5. Critical thinking and respect for others. Critical thinking is a constructive activity aimed at seeking wisdom. It is important not merely to have beliefs, but to support those beliefs with good reasons.

- Every member of the class has a responsibility to think carefully about the ideas we cover and to comment, at appropriate times, on the quality of the arguments presented. I expect students to maintain a high level of professionalism in dealing with each other in the classroom.
 - Evaluative comments should be presented in a considerate way, even if disagreement is warranted. *It is important to treat others with the respect that we would like for ourselves.*
6. General Class Rules. Disruptive behavior of any sort will not be tolerated. In general, see the Student Conduct Code. Pagers and Cell Phones: Turn them off while in class. Eating: Drinks are fine, no meals, dinners, or lunches. Lateness: excessive lateness (coming to class more than five minutes late) is not acceptable – come to class on time and be prepared to begin class at the assigned time. Talking in class: except when recognized by the professor or TA as having the floor, chatting, whispering, or talking are expressly forbidden. Such activity is disrespectful to whoever has the floor and undermines class discussion.