Information Ethics
INF 385T
28285

"A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention" – Herbert A. Simon

"Eliminating the distinction between information rich and poor countries is critical to eliminating economic and other inequalities" – Nelson Mandela

"Technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral"
– Melvin Kranzberg

"Technological progress is like an axe in the hands of a pathological criminal" – Albert Einstein

"Our intuition about the future is linear. But the reality of information technology is exponential, and that makes a profound difference. If I take 30 steps linearly, I get to 30. If I take 30 steps exponentially, I get to a billion." – Ray Kurzweil

"It is impossible to work in information technology without also engaging in social engineering."
– Jaron Lanier

Fall 2017
UTA 1.504
Thursdays 12:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Instructor: Dr. Kenneth R. Fleischmann
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Office Hours: Mondays 2:45-3:15 pm, Thursdays 2:45-3:15 pm, by appointment, or via e-mail

I. Course Description:

Recent advances in the production, use, and management of information present many new opportunities, and also raise ethical challenges that we must confront. Is it wrong to share music with friends using peer-to-peer networks? Is it wrong to use metadata from service providers in an effort to prevent terrorism? Is it wrong to intentionally and knowingly distribute false information via social networking sites? Is it wrong to create new information technologies that will be within the financial reach of only a small subset of the global population? Is it wrong to design self-driving cars that may make life or death decisions?

In the first half of this course, we will cover a wide range of ethical theories, including non-Western and feminist theories. Specifically, theories covered will include virtue ethics, utilitarianism, the categorical imperative, social contract theory, Indian ethics, Islamic ethics, Ubuntu, rational egoism, Buddhist ethics, classical Chinese ethics, ethics of care, and situated knowledges. We will also cover additional ethical theorists selected by students, which may include religious figures, philosophers, politicians, innovators, fictional characters, or others.

In the second half of the course, we will apply ethical theories to confront ongoing critical information ethics issues. Specifically, information ethics issues covered will include intellectual property, privacy and security, information reliability, information equality, and artificial intelligence. Finally, research paper presentations will introduce additional information ethics challenges selected by students, based upon semester-long research papers developed iteratively with feedback from the instructor and peers.

II. Course Aims and Objectives:

Upon successfully completing this course, you will:
• Gain awareness of a wide range of ethical theories and learn to apply them to key problems in information ethics
• Identify key problems in information ethics and propose solutions to these problems
• Articulate your own values and understand and appreciate the values of others

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III. Tentative Course Schedule: *This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice.*

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
8/31	Introduction to Information Ethics	N/A	Attendance & Participation (AP)
9/7	Ethical Perspectives I	Pence, G. (1993). Virtue theory. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 249-258). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Goodin, R. E. (1993). Utility and the good. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 241-248). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. O'Neill, O. (1993). Kantian ethics. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 175-185). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Kymlicka, W. (1993). The social contract tradition. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 186-196). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.	AP Discussion Questions (DQs) due 9/7 @ 9 am
9/14	Ethical Perspectives II	Bilimoria, P. (1993). Indian ethics. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 43-57). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Nanji, A. (1993). Islamic ethics. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 106-118). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Prinsloo, E.D. (1998). Ubuntu culture and participatory management. In P.H. Coetzee & A.P.J. Roux (Eds.), *The African Philosophy Reader* (pp. 41-51). New York: Routledge. Smith, T. (2006). Rational egoism: A profile of its foundations and basic character. In *Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics* (pp. 19-47). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.	AP DQs due 9/14 @ 9 am
9/21	Ethical Perspectives III	De Silva, P. (1993). Buddhist ethics. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 58-68). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Hansen, C. (1993). Classical Chinese ethics. In P. Singer (Ed.), *A companion to ethics* (pp. 69-81). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Haraway, D. (2003). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. In C.R. McCann & S.-K. Kim (Eds.), *The feminist theory reader: Local and global perspectives* (pp. 391-403). New York: Routledge. Held, V. (2008). Gender identity and the ethics of care in globalized society. In R. Whisnant & P. DesAutels (Eds.), *Global feminist ethics* (pp. 43-57). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.	AP DQs due 9/21 @ 9 am
9/28	Select Additional Ethical Perspectives: NO CLASS	N/A	Selected Class Reading due 9/26 @ noon Ethical Theory Report due 9/28 @ noon
10/5	Ethical Perspectives IV	Readings TBA (Student Generated)	AP DQs due 10/5 @ 9 am
10/12	Ethical Perspectives V	Readings TBA (Student Generated)	AP DQs due 10/12 @ 9 am

10/19	Global Information Ethics Choosing an Information Ethics Issue to Analyze	Ess, C. (2006). Ethical pluralism and global information ethics. *Ethics and Information Technology*, *8*, 215-226. Mutula, S.M. (2014). Ethical dimensions of indigenous knowledge systems. *ESARBIA Journal*, *33*, 96-108. Pohle, J. (2015). UNESCO and INFOethics: Seeking global ethical values in the information society. *Telematics and Informatics*, *32*, 381-390. Bielby, J. (2015). Comparative philosophies in intercultural information ethics. *Confluence*, *2*, 233-253.	AP DQs due 10/19 @ 9 am
10/26	Privacy and Security Choosing and Applying Ethical Theories	Caswell, M., & Cifor, M. (2016). From human rights to feminist ethics: Radical empathy in the archives. *Archivaria*, *81*, 23-43. Drake, J.R. (2016). Asking for Facebook logins: An egoist case for privacy. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *139*, 429-441. Norwawi, N.M., Alwi, N.H.M., Ismail, R., Wahid, F., & Alkaenay, N.M. (2014). Promoting Islamic ethics on privacy in digital social network for user data protection and trust. *'Ulūm Islāmiyyah Journal*, 13, 115-127. Chatterjee, S., Sarker, S., & Valacich, J.S. (2015). The behavioral roots of information systems security: Exploring key factors related to unethical IT use. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *31*(4), 49-87.	AP DQs due 10/26 @ 9 am
11/2	Intellectual Property Giving Peer Feedback	Nill, A., & Geipel, A., Jr. (2010). Sharing and owning of musical works: Copyright protection from a societal perspective. *Journal of Macromarketing*, *30*, 33-49. Orozco, D., & Poonamallee, L. (2014). The role of ethics in the commercialization of indigenous knowledge. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *119*, 275-286. Lawson, S. (2017). Access, ethics, and piracy. *Insights*, *30*(1), 25-30. De Corte, C.E., & Van Kenhove, P. (2017). One sail fits all? A psychographic segmentation of digital pirates. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *143*, 441-465.	AP DQs due 11/2 @ 9 am Ethical Analysis Draft due 11/2 @ noon
11/9	Information Reliability Peer Review Discussion	Boudana, S. (2016). Impartiality is not fair: Toward an alternative approach to the evaluation of content bias in news stories. *Journalism*, *17*, 600-618. Nordby, H. (2015) The importance of reliable information exchange in emergency practices: A misunderstanding that was uncovered before it was too late. *BMC Medical Ethics*, *16*(46), 1-6. Guzzetti, F. (2016). Forecasting natural hazards, performance of scientists, ethics, and the need for transparency. *Toxicological & Environmental Chemistry*, *98*, 1043-1059. Hazelton, J. (2013). Accounting as a human right: The case of water information. *Accounting, Auditing, & Accountability Journal*, *26*, 267-311.	AP DQs due 11/9 @ 9 am Peer Reviews due 11/9 @ noon

11/16	Artificial Intelligence Presenting Your Analysis	Floridi, L. (2017). Robots, jobs, taxes, and responsibilities. *Philosophy & Technology*, *30*, 1-4. Etzioni, A. (2017). Job collapse on the road to new Athens. *Challenge*, *60*, 327-346. Etzioni, A., & Etzioni, O. (In Press). Incorporating ethics into artificial intelligence. *The Journal of Ethics*. JafariNaimi, N. (In Press). Our bodies in the trolley's path, or why self-driving cars must *not* be programmed to kill. *Science, Technology, and Human Values*.	AP DQs due 11/16 @ 9 am
11/23	Thanksgiving: NO CLASS	N/A	N/A
11/30	Ethical Analyses Part I	N/A	AP Ethical Analysis Report due 11/30 @ noon
12/7	Ethical Analyses Part II	N/A	AP

IV. Course Requirements:

1. **Class attendance and participation policy**

   (a) Because the vast majority of the learning in this class will occur within the classroom, you are required to attend class regularly. Attendance will be taken during each class period. Absences will only be excused in situations following university policy (illness, religious holy days, participation in University activities at the request of university authorities, and compelling absences beyond your control) with proper documentation and timely notification (prior to class for non-emergencies). Excessive tardiness may be considered as an unexcused absence except in situations following university policy.

   (b) Class participation is a critical element of this course. The effectiveness of the course will be significantly impacted by the quality of your participation. Class participation is not merely attendance, but rather factors in your overall contributions to the collaborative learning environment, based on both the quantity and quality of your interactions in all aspects of the course. Discussion of class participation with the instructor is encouraged in order to ensure that you are making the most of the classroom experience and the accompanying opportunities for learning. You are expected to participate in all aspects of class discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss the required readings, as well as your perspectives on these readings. You should strive for balance in your contributions, and your participation will not be based on who speaks the loudest or the longest, but on consistent participation of significant quantity and, most importantly, quality.

   (c) Your attendance and class participation grade will be calculated by multiplying the numerical assessment of your class participation by the percentage of classes that you attend (with exceptions made for documented, university-recognized absences as noted above). Please note that regular attendance and active participation in each class session are critical for receiving a good grade in this course. For example, by actively participating in each class, you will receive a full letter grade higher than if you were to skip half of the classes or to be half-awake for all of the classes.

2. **Course Readings/Materials**

   (a) All course readings will be available on the course Canvas site

   (b) Please make sure to complete all readings before coming to class

3. Discussion Questions

At 9 am on each class day (except for the first week of class and the last two weeks of class), you will submit four discussion questions via Canvas. For each reading for the week, you should pose a discussion question that is approximately one sentence in length. Together, these four discussion questions should demonstrate that you have completed the readings for the week and that you have thoughtfully considered the readings and the overall topic. The discussion questions should be open-ended and inspire debate.

4. Ethical Theory Report & Selected Reading

The first half of the semester will focus on learning about ethical theories. The class readings will cover 12 ethical theories. However, to further augment the range of ethical theories covered, you will select an additional ethical theory, write a brief report on the ethical theory, select a representative reading for the class to read and discuss, and lead discussion on that ethical theory.

Selecting the Ethical Theory: To select your ethical theory, you will need to post to the Canvas discussion board entitled, "Additional Ethical Theories." Unlike the other Canvas discussion boards, this board will allow you to view before posting, and you MUST review all posted theories before you post yours, and ensure that your theory is distinct from those listed (a clearly distinct theory originated by a different theorist). You may change your selected ethical theory, but if you do so, you must first review all of the currently posted theory choices to ensure that your new choice does not conflict with one that has been posted since. In your post, you should name the ethical theory, provide a one-sentence explanation of the ethical theory and a one-sentence explanation of its origin (including its originator).

Selected Class Reading: You will select and submit one reading to represent the ethical theory that you have selected for your Ethical Theory Report. Your reading should be 5-10 pages in length and should be available as a .pdf file (you can find potential articles using the University Libraries' databases). You will need to submit the .pdf file by the deadline, which is prior to the deadline for the ethical theory report.

Ethical Theory Report: You need to write a 1500-2000 word report on your selected ethical theory. Your report must provide a brief history of the ethical theory, as well as describe the ethical theory in enough detail that the reader would be able to understand and apply the theory to real world information ethics dilemmas. To write your report, you should draw from and explicitly cite at least five references, one of which must be your selected class reading (described below). Citations must follow APA style (there are many online resources; I recommend: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/). Ethical theory reports will be graded according to the following criteria: quality of historical overview, quality of description, use of examples to illustrate theory, and overall coherence and clarity of writing.

Leading the Class Discussion: You will be selected to lead the discussion on your ethical theory, including your selected class reading which everyone will complete, during one of two weeks. Please come prepared to discuss and answer questions about your selected ethical theory, drawing upon the additional readings that you completed in writing your ethical theory report. Your performance in leading the class discussion will be graded based upon your familiarity with the ethical theory, your ability to explain elements of the ethical theory, and your ability to promote robust and dynamic discussion.

5. Ethical Analysis Report

During the second half of the semester, you will write a report on an ongoing information ethics issue, which can be a particular instantiation of one of the five broad themes address in the class syllabus, or from a different area of information ethics. Your analysis will first frame the issue, and then analyze how three of the ethical theories discussed in the class could be used to address the issue. You will begin by preparing a draft, review peers' draft reports, submit a final report, and present your analysis to the class. We will spend a significant amount of time in the second half of the semester helping you to select your information ethics issue and brainstorming how to develop and improve everyone's ethical analyses.

Ethical Analysis Draft: Your draft must be at least a half-complete version of your final ethical analysis. Specifically, you should have a near-final draft of the framing of the issue as well as at least one of the theory-based analyses; you should also at least list the other two theories that you plan to use, and you are encouraged to complete those sections as well to get the most useful possible feedback. The draft should be 1,000-3,000 words. You must cite at least 10 sources (at least 3 of which go beyond the class readings and your ethical theory report), and all citations must follow APA style. Drafts will be graded according to the following criteria: quality of the framing of the issue; quality of the ethical analysis; and overall coherence and clarity of writing.

Reviews of Drafts: You will be selected to review two drafts written by peers. Please prepare one-page reviews of each draft, including a brief summary of the analysis as you understood it, the strengths of the analysis, and constructive feedback on how to improve it. Reviews will be graded according to the following criteria: clarity, insightfulness, and helpfulness.

Ethical Analysis Report: Your final report must address instructor and peer feedback on the draft. Your report must be complete, coherent, and easy to read. Please make sure to proofread your report thoroughly prior to submission. The final report must be 2,000-3,000 words in length and must cite at least 15 sources (at least 8 of which go beyond the class readings and your ethical theory report). Reports will be graded according to the same criteria as the draft.

Final Presentation: During one of the last two weeks of the semester, you will present your analysis to the class in the form of an audiovisual presentation. The presentation week and length will be announced well in advance of the date. You may give a presentation using a visual aid such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or Keynote, create and demonstrate a website or other technology, or create a video. Presentations will be graded according to the following criteria: quality of research, quality of visual presentation, and quality of oral presentation.

6. Late Assignment Policy

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas by the posted deadline. Late assignments will only be excused in situations following university policy (illness, religious holy days, etc.) with proper documentation and timely notification (prior to the deadline for non-emergencies). In all other cases, assignments received after the deadline will be penalized 10% per 24-hour period. Assignments submitted even one minute late (without prior authorization or extreme emergency circumstances) will have an automatic deduction of 10% prior to grading of the assignment; otherwise perfect assignments submitted 5 days late will only receive half-credit; and 10 day late assignments will not be graded or receive credit.

V. Grading Procedures

Attendance and Participation (20%)
Discussion Questions (10%)
Ethical Theory Report & Selected Reading (30%)
    Selecting the Ethical Theory (5%)
    Selected Class Reading (5%)
    Ethical Theory Report (10%)
    Leading the Class Discussion (10%)
Ethical Analysis Report (40%)
    Draft (10%)
    Peer Reviews (10%)
    Report (10%)
    Presentation (10%)

Grading Scale:

		B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69			
A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66	F	0-59
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62			

VI. University Policies

Religious Holy Days
By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day to receive an accommodation.

Q Drop Policy
If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, typically near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop

Student Accommodations
Students with a documented disability may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/
- Please request a meeting as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations
- Please notify the instructor as soon as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible
- Please notify the instructor if any of the physical space is difficult for you

Academic Integrity
Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

"As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity."

This means that work you produce on assignments is all your own work.

Always cite your sources. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must make that clear otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course.

You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty Policy which can be found at the following web address: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

University Resources for Students

The university has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning, use these to help you succeed in your classes

The Sanger Learning Center
Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

The University Writing Center
The University Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT student, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance we provide is intended to foster students' resourcefulness and self-reliance. http://uwc.utexas.edu/

Counseling and Mental Health Center
The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. http://cmhc.utexas.edu/

Student Emergency Services
http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/

ITS
Need help with technology? http://www.utexas.edu/its/

Libraries
Need help searching for information? http://www.lib.utexas.edu/

Canvas
Canvas help is available 24/7 at https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/student-tutorials

Important Safety Information

BCAL
If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

Evacuation Information
The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, http://www.utexas.edu/safety/

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when an alarm or alert is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside, unless told otherwise by an official representative.
- If campus is closed, or if the building is locked down, class is automatically cancelled; please stay safe.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency