

Sample Syllabus, Winter, 2004:

College of Information Science and Technology
Drexel University
Winter, 2004
INFO780 Online

*Information Ethics:
Identity, Knowledge, and Community*

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<http://drexel.blackboard.com>

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Course Description:

Using the broad organizing trajectories of Identity, Knowledge, and Community, the course will build an understanding of contemporary issues and professional practice upon a foundation of both traditional and alternative ethical traditions. Specifically, decision-making strategies and public policy issues will be considered around the major themes of Information Ethics:

- Access,
- Ownership,
- Privacy,
- Security, and
- Community.

Headline issues to be covered include:

- intellectual property rights and intellectual freedom;

- the uses and misuses of health, financial, and other personal information;
- the Patriot Act, homeland security, and civil rights; and
- machine intelligence and nanotechnologies.

Finally, the field of Information Ethics among the areas of applied ethics dealing with information and communications technologies will be considered as examples of scholarly communication and knowledge creation in the information sciences.

For more details please see the Extended Course Description handout.

Assignments:

The major assignment for this course will be the building of an electronic portfolio containing weekly assignments such as brief essays, pathfinders, searching exercises, and a topic project of the student's choice.

Weekly postings (Weeks 2-9) will be due on Mondays by noon of each week. Weekly postings should be between 200-300 words and should reflect the readings with engagement with the assignment question or topic. You may use charts, tables, and hotlinks in your text and may attach small audio and video files if you wish. I'd advise that you compose offline and copy/paste to the Discussion Board. Keep back up files.

Grades will be based upon the following:

1. (60%) Term Project: The Completed Electronic Portfolio
2. (40%) 8 Weekly Postings—Weeks 2-9

Completed portfolios due Week 9 will be shared and constructively evaluated by other class members with grading done by Dr. Smith.

A= 90-100
B= 80-89
C= Below 79

Dr. Smith will post or send grades privately to your email and/or to your Digital Drop Box. Constructive feedback will be a co-operative process on the Discussion Board. Most of the time you will be asked to respond to at least two other students' postings. We'll start with the person before and after you in the roster.

Some General Ground Rules for Information Ethics and for Online Classes with Dr. Smith at Drexel IST:

1. We use the APA style for documentation.
2. We will use the Microsoft Office products. Please prepare your assignments in Word (or html). If you do not have PowerPoint, you can download a free reader from <http://www.microsoft.com>
3. We will be using an electronic portfolio site on the web. If you have your own web site, you may also want to post your files there. Be sure to keep a copy of the files from your portfolio.
4. You will be posting your weekly assignments to the Discussion Board. Be sure to send backup copies to the Digital Drop Box and to my email. When you send files to the Digital Drop Box or to email, use **your last name** as the file name with some indication of the assignment. For example, smithWeek1 (Marti Smith's Week 1 file.)
5. Make sure that you have your Drexel email account in order. Note that free email services and AOL are not compatible with the Bb system. You don't want to miss your messages. Be sure that you have a signature file in your email.
6. If you are not familiar with the Drexel library services, the Bb system, and our technical support services (CRC and IRT), be sure to take some time in the first weeks of class to explore these areas on the web. <http://www.library.drexel.edu> The library provides us with access to a large number of electronic databases to assist you in your search for articles and other materials. You may also receive a Dialog password to use for the purposes of this class. Use the excellent resources available to us. There are links to many of the library

resources on the Bb External Sites. If you need articles that are not available online, the library will mail them to you— FEDEX if necessary.

7. The first week of class (or even before), make sure that you have the proper plug-ins and can use the different parts of the course site. For plug-ins, see a list at the External Links on the Bb site. You may also find the Bb IST Info101 site useful to learn Bb. <http://drexel.blackboard.com>
8. Make sure you can use the Digital Drop Box. Send a file to the Drop Box during the first week to make sure it works for you. Use the SEND and not the ADD button.

Special Needs and Accommodations: Please discuss any special needs in time for plans for special accommodations can be made. If you have a disability and need special help, you must identify yourself to the Drexel Disability Office (Robin Stokes, Director).

Texts to Purchase:

Required:

One of the following:

Margaret Atwood, *The handmaid's tale*. Any edition.

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*. Any edition.

Text:

Herman Tavani. *Ethics and technology: Ethical issues in an age of information and communication technology*. See <http://www.wiley.com/college/tavani>

Optional: (In this course, you will have the choice of using readings from these books and/or of selecting articles from the Hagerty library collection of electronic journals. The reading books below may be valuable in your professional library.)

Optional Readings Books:

Richard Holeton (ed.) (1997), *Composing cyberspace: Identity, community, and knowledge in the electronic age*. WCB/McGraw Hill.

Also see companion web site at

<http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/english/holeton>

Richard A. Spinello and Harman T. Tavani (eds.) (2001), *Readings in cyberethics*. Jones and Bartlett. Also see web resources at http://www.jbpub.com/cyberethics/tools_for_learning.cfm

Albert Teich (ed.), *Technology and the Future*. Wadsworth. 8th (1999) or 9th edition. 9th edition forthcoming in Fall or Winter of 2002/2003. Also see companion web site, Albert Teich's Technology and the Future Toolkit, at <http://www.alteich.com/>

Information Ethics
Winter, 2004
Dr. Marti Smith
Sample of Readings and Assignments

Class Week 1 (January 5th to 11th): Information Ethics: Identity, Knowledge, and Community

Focus: This week our focus will be on understanding a working definition of information ethics, applied ethics in its place within philosophy, and the scope of the topics to be covered this term.

To Do:

1. (First three days) Introduce yourselves on the Discussion Board Forum and share your interest in information ethics and the topics in the course (approximately 100-125 words).
2. Read Lecture 1 and begin one or the other of the suggested fiction books. See below and the handout on Applied Ethics and Fiction. You may also want to read Robert Coles, "Our moral lives.:" and consult his *The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination*.
3. Read the article by Elrod and Smith, "Information Ethics." Note that this is an encyclopedia article currently under review for the *Encyclopedia of Science, Technology, and Ethics*, edited by Carl Mitcham.

4. Read Tavani, Chapter 1: Introduction to Cyberethics: Concepts, Perspectives, and Methodological Frameworks

4. (Due Monday, January 12th at noon or before). Read either *The Handmaid's Tale* or *Neuromancer* as examples of speculative fiction that can provide us with ways to think about the relationship between human values and information technologies. Post your entry on place of speculative fiction in the study of information ethics and applied ethics & technology (200-300 words). As you read, be thinking about other books, short stories, or movies that you would compare with the book you read? What is the importance of fiction in general in understanding ethical dilemmas? For assignment details, see handout on Fiction and Applied Ethics.

5. Think about how you want to do your electronic portfolio. You may use a web page of your own, your IST server space, the Drexel E-portfolio software, web-ready files, or something else. The idea is to experience for yourself being present in cyberspace, professionally as well as personally. How does being in cyberspace influence your sense of Identity, your understanding of Knowledge, and your sense of being in various Communities. This is your question for the final reflection on the portfolio.

Lecture 1 Outline:

- Why study information ethics?
- Basic concepts and vocabulary in philosophy, ethics, applied ethics, and public policy
- Course processes, assignments, and evaluation
- Getting acquainted, collaborative learning, and building an online community
- Learning to use the course site, including online office hours, sharing resources, and individual conferences. We will set dates and times for online office hours.

(You will be invited to attend, but you can use the archives if you can not attend. Take a look at the Archives for a sample posting and to make sure your browser can access it. We'll try to set a convenient time for everyone to attend, but chat/the virtual classroom is not required. We'll see how it works and adjust accordingly.)

Additional Suggested Readings (See Drexel databases and full-text journal, electronic reserves, or texts.):

[These readings are listed for your enrichment and will fit into the work of the course.]

- From Electronic Reserves: Make sure that you can access e-reserves and the Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- On *The Handmaid's Tale*: Use standard reference sources in literature to learn about Margaret Atwood and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Also, take a look at the ALA website <http://www.ala.org> where Atwood's book was featured as last years conference book. You may also want to use book reviews or other resources both print and electronic.
- On *Neuromancer*: Use the *Web of Science* to see how often Neuromancer has been cited in the last twenty years.
- Martha M. Smith. (1992) "Infoethics for leaders: Models of moral agency in the information environment," *Library Trends* 40, 553-70. Look for *Library Trends* in your local area.
- Rafael Capurro, "Information technologies and technologies of the self," *Journal of Information Ethics*. McFarland. (Not held at Drexel. See if you can find it in your local area.)

Also look for this article on Rafael Capurro's web site

<http://icie.zkm.de> . Note how he has built his scholarly web site to support his teaching and research. You can get there from the <http://icie.zkm.de> website.

- From Cyberethics: Moor, "Just consequentialism and computing;" Skim Chapter 6 on Professional Ethics for the major points
- From the Web: The International Center for Information Ethics, <http://icie.zkm.de> See the outline of information ethics presented by Rafael Capurro. (Also take a look at the other sites under External Links on the Bb site.)

Technical Trip: When you post, use a descriptive subject line so that it will be easy to skim. Also let me suggest that you use the COLLECT feature in Options in order to group all the postings. After you read all of the postings, please respond to at least two others-- to the person before and after you in the alphabetical class list. Please jump in and see how the process works for you. If you spend some time to experience the process now, you will be able to

manage your time better throughout the course.) No one will be able to read all of the postings throughout the term. Using COLLECT is very helpful in skimming.

Note also that there are many paths to learning and that in your reading and learning this quarter, you should feel free to explore other readings that interest you. You can refer to your readings and experiences in your postings and in your assignments. Our sharing of diverse interests and expertise will make the experience richer for us all.

Class Week 2 (January 12th—January 18th): IDENTITY-Personal Integrity, Professional Ethics, and Social Responsibility in the Age of the Smart Machine

To Do:

1. Online Discussion: Information Ethics, Moral Agency, and the Moral Imagination
2. Read Tavani,
Chapter 2: Ethical Concepts and Ethical Theories: Establishing and Justifying a Moral System
Chapter 3: Critical Thinking Skills and Logical Arguments: Tools for Evaluating Cyberethics Issues
And Tavani on Identity,
Chapter 4: Professional Ethics, Codes of Conduct, and Moral Responsibility
Appendix A, B, and C.: Codes of Ethics

3. Due January 19th: Describe one professional code of ethics in the larger context of ethics and moral systems in society. Select from the readings above and others of your choice from the Drexel indexes such as ERIC, Library Literature, LISA, etc.

Class Week 3: (January 19th—25th) IDENTITY-- Privacy in the Surveillance Society and Professional Identity

Focus: Privacy and Surveillance after 9/11:

The Patriot Act and Other Legislation and Government Policies

To do:

1. Read Tavani,
Chapter 5: Privacy and Cyberspace
Chapter 11: Social Issues II: Community and Identity in Cyberspace
2. Due on January 26th: Discuss the role of information professionals balancing security, privacy, and civil rights in the surveillance society after 9/11. Think about the meaning of professional neutrality, citizenship, and social responsibility. You may develop this topic according to your own interests. For example, the public librarian and the Patriot Act; a data mining professional in a defense company; news librarians; the children's librarian and Internet censorship; young adults and research on controversial issues; monitoring employees and patrons in the public or academic library; active membership in the ACLU; a medical librarian and germ warfare questions; a law librarian and suspected terrorists; identity theft; freedom to read and intellectual freedom traditions.

Class Week 4 (January 26th-February 1st): KNOWLEDGE— From Data to Wisdom

Online Discussion:

- The Social Life of Knowledge: Information Ethics and Societal Institutions
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Universal Declaration of Genetic Rights

To do:

1. Read Tavani, Chapter 8: Intellectual Property Disputes in Cyberspace

Class Week 5 (February 2nd-8th)- KNOWLEDGE-- Intellectual Freedom, Freedom of Speech, and Article 19: Is There a "Right to

Know"? (and the role of the online classroom in knowledge creation and sharing)

To do:

1. Read Tavani, Chapter 9: Regulating Commerce and Speech in Cyberspace and Chapter 10: Social Issues I: Equity and Access, Employment and Work

Additional Suggested Readings:

From Holeton: Fearer (Optional: Chapter 9: The Classroom of the Future

From Cyberethics: Scan the readings from Chapter 2 with special attention to ACLU and Catudal. Look at the ACLU web site and related sites. Check on kartoo: <http://www.kartoo.com>

Wisnut <http://www.wisnut.com> Vivisimo:

<http://www.vivisimo.org> using some of your search terms

Class Week 6 (February 9th-15th): KNOWLEDGE-- Intellectual Property Rights: Who Will Own Information in 2020?

Online Discussion: The Intellectual Commons and the Future of Copyright: Reflections from Lawrence Lessig and others.

Additional Suggested Readings:

From Holeton: Okerson, Bank, and Gibson

From Cyberethics: Chapter 2 with special attention to Lessig; Scan Chapter 3 with special attention to Raymond.

Recall Smith's article on Global information justice and Capurro's Information technologies and technologies of the self.

Class Week 7 (February 16th—February 22nd) COMMUNITY-- Information Democracy: Myth or Reality?

Online Discussion: Information Democracy, the Information Poor, and the Information Elite: Is there a Digital Divide?

To do:

1. Read Tavani, Chapter 6: Security in Cyberspace Chapter 7: Cybercrime and Cyberrelated Crime

Chapter 10: Social Issues I: Equity and Access, Employment and Work
Chapter 11: Social Issues II: Community and Identity in Cyberspace

Additional Suggested Reading:

From Holeton: Grossman, Katz, and Winner

From the web: Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility.

<http://www.cpsr.org>

Class Week 8 (February 23rd—29th): COMMUNITY-- Globalization

Topics for Discussion: Information, Community, and Globalization

Additional Suggested Reading:

From Holeton: Rodriguez, Hockenberry, Spender, O'Conner, Rude

Class Week 9 (March 1st- 7th): COMMUNITY-- Life in Cyberspace

To do:

1. Complete and post Electronic Portfolio by March 8th.

Online Discussion: Does the Web Change Everything? The Future of Digital Life

Class Week 10 (March 8th—14th): Review and Reflection on the Present and the Prospects for the Future of Information Ethics

To do: Review and share electronic portfolios according to instructions. See handout. (Complete by March 20th.)

Class Week 11 (March 15th- 21st): Exam Week
