

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee  
School of Information Studies

**Information Technology Ethics**  
**L&I SCI 120 – 001**  
**Fall 2008**

Thursday 5:30p – 8:10p  
RiverView Residence Hall 262

**Instructor:**

Michael Zimmer, PhD  
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**Office Hours:**

Campus: Tuesday 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
RiverView (252): Thursday 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm  
(or by appointment)

**Catalog Description:**

Comprehensive overview of the current ethical issues in information and technology use.

**General Description:**

This course provides an introduction to ethical theories as they apply to information and technology use. It examines an array of long-standing and current issues facing information and technology users, ranging from free speech, privacy, intellectual freedom, security and crime, to ethics in social networking and online communities. It covers professional ethics, and promotes a critical examination and responsible use of information technologies. Case study is used to promote engagement and reflection. As the course is part of the learning communities program, it provides students with ample opportunities to engage with each other in academic work, and seeks to bring theory into practice in a meaningful way.

**Objectives:**

1. To review major ethical theories as they pertain to information technology
2. To explore current issues in information and technology issues and the ethical dilemmas that arise in light of them
3. To engage with fellow students in a learning community around ethics and ethical decision making
4. To investigate students' ethical responsibilities as members of an information and technology community

**Competencies:**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

1. Understand various ethical theories and ethical decision making models
2. Respond to and apply appropriate decisions around ethical issues in an array of information and technology practices
3. Participate appropriately and ethically in the infosphere

**Required Texts:**

- Tavani, H. (2007). *Ethics and Technology: Ethical Issues in an Age of Information and Communication Technology* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Boston: John Wiley and Sons. ISBN: 978-0-471-99803-7
- Additional readings to be distributed in class and/or made available via D2L.

**Course Schedule:** (subject to change)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>
Week 1 (9/4)	Course Introduction	
Week 2 (9/11)	Introduction to Information Technology Ethics	Chapter 1
Week 3 (9/18)	Ethical Concepts & Theories	Chapter 2
Week 4 (9/25)	Privacy & Surveillance	Chapter 5 Supplemental readings
Week 5 (10/2)	Cybersecurity & Cybercrime	Chapters 6-7
Week 6 (10/9)	Intellectual Property and Access to Knowledge	Chapter 8 Supplemental readings
Week 7 (10/16)	Midterm Exam	
Week 8 (10/24)	Free Speech and Expression	Chapter 9
Week 9 (10/30)	Social Inclusion and the Digital Divide	Chapter 10
Week 10 (11/6)	Social Networking Ethics	Chapter 11 Supplemental readings
Week 11 (11/13)	Ethics of Pervasive Computing, Robotics, and Artificial Intelligence	Chapter 12
Week 12 (11/20)	Professional Ethics & Designing for Values	Chapter 4 Supplemental readings
Week 13 (11/27)	No Class – Thanksgiving	
Week 14 (12/4)	Group Project Work	
Week 15 (12/11)	Poster Session	<i>(Note: date &amp; time of poster session to be determined, but likely at class time)</i>
Week 16 (12/18)	Final Exam	

### **Credit Breakdown:**

*(see details provided in relevant sections below)*

Attendance and participation	15 points
Reading responses (4)	20 points
Group project	25 points
Midterm exam	20 points
Final exam	<u>20 points</u> 100 points

### **Grading Rubric:**

A	94-100
A-	91-93
B+	88-90
B	84-87
B-	81-83
C+	78-80
C	74-77
C-	71-73
D	60-70
F	0-59

### **Deliverables:**

- **Reading responses:** Students must submit reading responses for four (4) of the course sessions. Reflective questions will be distributed prior to each session. It is up to the student to decide which 4 sessions to submit, *but 2 must be prior to the midterm exam, and 2 following the midterm.* Written responses are due at the start of the relevant session. *(I suggest bringing two copies: one to turn in, and one to have as a reference during in-class discussion.)*
- **Exams:** The course includes both a midterm and a final exam. Each exam will consist of short answer and brief essay questions. Review questions will be provided prior to the exams.
- **Group project:** Students will be paired to work on a group project. Projects are meant to explore the ethical dimensions of an information technology of the group's choosing. The projects are meant to be collaborative, and while some time will be allotted during the official class period, *groups will need to work together outside of class.*

Groups will informally present their project at a public "poster session" at the RiverView dorm. (Further details and instructions will be provided)

### **Class Policies:**

- **Attendance:**
  - Students are expected to attend each class, arriving prepared to participate in discussions of the class material, and, when appropriate, engage in constructive and collaborative group project work.
  - Attendance will be taken at the beginning and end of all class meetings. One class may be missed without penalty. Missing two classes will result in a penalty on the "Attendance and participation" grade element. Missing three or more classes will result in immediate and automatic failure for the entire course.
  - Exceptions require the instructor's approval in advance, and may require written documentation of medical or family emergencies.
- **Participation:**
  - Each student is expected to actively and constructively participate in class. I will note contributions by each student in each class meeting to guide the assessment of the "Attendance and participation" grade element. If you make two well informed and relevant contributions to at

least half the meetings then you should score very well. There is no need to hog the discussion, and a few quiet meetings will not hurt your score.

- In order to accomplish this objective, it is imperative that you prepare for class – *do the readings beforehand*.
- For class meetings dedicated to group project work, your participation will be assessed based on the constructive and collaborative use of this in-class time to work on group assignments.
- If you feel uncomfortable talking in a group, credit may be awarded for meetings during office hours, or for answers submitted in writing before the section meets (this consideration requires advance notice and approval by the instructor).
- Atmosphere for Learning:
  - Students are encouraged to participate in open and frank discussions of the course material, but are also expected to respect the opinions of other students and to engage in discussion and debates in a sensitive and respectful manner.
  - Before class begins, please turn off all cell phones, pagers, global positioning devices, and any other items that might ring, buzz, play Beethoven's Fifth, or otherwise call attention to themselves and disrupt class.
  - Fair warning of things I will take note of, but may not call you on: Coming to class late, leaving class early, sleeping in class, excessive eating in class, playing on your laptop or texting during class, doing work for other courses in class, etc. These, or similar, activities will negatively affect your participation grade.
- Assignments:
  - All written assignments must be turned in on time, either via D2L (before class time of the due date), or at the beginning of class. Any submission during/after class time will be penalized. Late submissions will not be allowed except for a confirmed emergency with instructor's approval.
  - Assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, with one inch margins. Use a 12-point kerned font such as Times New Roman. Multi-page documents should have page numbers and be stapled. *Don't forget your name, the course number, an assignment description, and the date.* Assignments turned in via D2L should be in .doc or .rtf format.
  - Rules of academic conduct require that you not use the work of others without clearly indicating it as such (using proper and consistent citation formats). Academic misconduct may result in a lowered grade, no credit for a given assignment, or removal from the course.
- Distribution of Group Credit:
  - All students within a group will ordinarily receive the same mark, reflecting the performance of the group as a whole on project and its components.
  - However, along with the instructor's evaluations, each group member will have an opportunity to (anonymously, if possible) assess the contribution made by each of their colleagues to the final results. Individual grades may be adjusted based on both instructor and peer evaluation of an individual's contributions.
- Contacting Me:
  - I will be available for *short* discussions immediately before and after class.

- *In person:* I will be in my office and available to talk to you during my scheduled office hours (see above). Other times may be available via prior arrangement.
- *By telephone:* During my campus office hours I will also be answering my office telephone. The number is 414-229-3627. So if you are unable to make it to campus or are an online student you can still call up to ask questions or seek advice.
- *By email:* I will respond to class-related emails during normal work hours, and will generally reply the same day as received (an e-mail sent after working hours, however, may not be replied to until the next morning). Please be sure to use your UWM e-mail account, identify yourself and the course, and *always* use proper and professional e-mail etiquette. (There's a good guide to student email etiquette here:  
<http://www.ust.udel.edu/action/Current%20Students/Academics/email.aspx>)

### **UWM and SOIS Academic Policies:**

The following links contain university policies affecting all SOIS students. Many of the links below may be accessed through a PDF-document maintained by the Secretary of the University:

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>.

Undergraduates may also find the *Panther Planner and Undergraduate Student Handbook* useful (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/Handbook2005-06.pdf>). For graduate students, there are additional guidelines from the Graduate School ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad\\_Sch/StudentInfo/](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/StudentInfo/)), including those found in the *Graduate Student and Faculty Handbook*:  
[http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad\\_Sch/Publications/Handbook/](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/Publications/Handbook/).

- Students with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of a course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students with disabilities are responsible to communicate directly with the instructor to ensure special accommodation in a timely manner. There is comprehensive coverage of issues related to disabilities at the Student Accessibility Center (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/MainOffice.html>), important components of which are expressed here: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACltr.pdf>.
- Religious observances. Students' sincerely held religious beliefs must be reasonably accommodated with respect to all examinations and other academic requirements, according to the following policy: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin\\_policies/S1.5.htm](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm). Please notify your instructor within the first three weeks of the Fall or Spring Term (first week of shorter-term or Summer courses) of any specific days or dates on which you request relief from an examination or academic requirement for religious observances.
- Students called to active military duty. UWM has several policies that accommodate students who must temporarily lay aside their educational pursuits when called to active duty in the military (see <http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm>), including provisions for refunds, readmission, grading, and other situations.
- Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantial cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or some limited amount of other term work. An incomplete is not given unless the student proves to the instructor that s/he was prevented from completing course requirements for just cause as indicated above  
[http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin\\_policies/S31.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf)).

- Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment). UWM and SOIS are committed to building and maintaining a campus environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person, fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect, and encourages the members of its community to strive to reach their full potential. The UWM policy statement ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin\\_policies/S47.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf)) summarizes and defines situations that constitute discriminatory conduct. If you have questions, please contact an appropriate SOIS administrator.
- Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams and plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, ranging from a failing grade for a course or assignment to expulsion from the University. See the following document (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html>) or contact the SOIS Investigating Officer (currently the Associate Dean) for more information.
- Complaints. Students may direct complaints to the SOIS Dean or Associate Dean. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.
- Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow SOIS appeals procedures or, in the case of a graduate student, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin\\_policies/S28.htm](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm)).
- Examinations, Finals. The Secretary of the University is authorized to prepare the final examination schedule. The time of the final examination for an individual or a class may be changed only with the prior approval of the dean or director of the respective college/school. The change will involve a postponement to a later date. For individuals with exam conflicts, a separate week at the very end of the exam week will be reserved to take one of the conflicting exams ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad+admin\\_policies/S22.htm](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad+admin_policies/S22.htm)).