IS 350 - Computer, Society & Ethics

Dates: January 23, 2025 to May 1, 2025

Class Meets Mondays & Thursdays 2:30-3:50

Room FMH 413

Instructor: Dr. Julie Ancis

NJIT Office: GITC 5715

Office Hours:

Zane Xu, a PhD candidate in the Informatics Department, is working with me as the Teaching Assistant for the course. Zane's email is zx4@njit.edu.

You can also, please email me in Canvas or at jra49@njit.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

Office hours for the TA will be held in person.

They will be on Thursday 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm and by appointment, and the location is GITC 3420.

In addition, please feel free to request meetings with the TA that will be set up at a mutually convenient time.

Dr, Ancis office hours: Monday 10:00 am-11:00 am and by appointment.

Course Description

This course examines the historical evolution of computer and information systems and explores their ethical implications in the home, business, government, medicine and education. The following topics on computing ethics will be the subject of our discussions, assignments, and projects in this course:

1. Introduction to the Subject of Ethics
2. Ethics--Ethical Thinking, Ethical Theories, and Ethical Analysis
3. More Ethics--Intended Consequences, Unintended Consequences, and Tertiary Effects of an Action
4. Professionalism and Codes of Conduct
5. Social issues, Equity, Gender, and Web 2.0
6. Privacy and Civil Liberties
7. Computers and Government
8. Work, Robotics, and Green Computing
9. Cybercrime and Cybersecurity
10. History of Computing and Perspectives
11. Professional and Legal Responsibilities

12. Digital Intellectual Property

Prerequisites

As prerequisites, IS 350 requires an introductory course in computing, an introductory course in the social sciences, and HUM 101. This course is an upper-level course designed for juniors and seniors.

Readings/Required Textbook:

Michael J. Quinn, Ethics for the Information Age, 9ᵗʰ edition (2024).

 VitalSource version: ([linkLinks to an external site.Links to an external site.](#)) (Links to an external site.)*It is about $95 for the online or downloadable PDF through VitalSource while the bound textbook lists for less.*https://www.vitalsource.com/products/ethics-for-the-information-age-michael-j-quinn-v9780135218006

Additional readings will be provided in CANVAS throughout the semester.

Reading assignments provide an important foundation for class discussion and must be completed prior to each class session. Lectures will be used to highlight key points from the readings and provide additional information to supplement the readings. Exercises and case studies will provide the opportunity to apply what you have learned to real world issues and scenarios. Participation in class discussions and activities is essential to your own learning as well as that of other class members.

Learning Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain beneficial and detrimental ways in which computing affects people, including the primary and secondary effects, and intended and unintended consequences.
2. Utilize theories of ethical decision-making and professional codes of ethics to analyze difficult situations with computing aspects.
3. Find and critically evaluate relevant literature pertaining to a situation of concern.
4. Communicate about difficult issues in the computing sciences.

Weekly Schedule: See Modules for Further Information

WEEK 1: Introduction and Ethical Analysis (Classes start 01/23/2025)

WEEK 2: Ethics (1/27/25 & 1/30/25)

WEEK 3: Ethics Continued, Freedom of Expression, Trust & More (2/3/25 & 2/6/25)

WEEK 4 : Professionalism and Codes of Conduct - Ethical Analysis Report Due (2/10/25 & 2/13/25)

WEEK 5 : Social Issues Caused by the Rise of Technology (2/17/25 & 2/20/25

WEEK 6: Privacy and Civil Liberties (2/24/25 & 2/27/25)

WEEK 7: Computers and Government (3/3/25 & 3/6/25)

WEEK 8: Computer Reliability & Algorithmic Bias (3/10/25 & 3/13/25)

Spring Break - 03/16 - 03/22

WEEK 9: Work, Robotics and Green Computing (3/24/25 & 3/27/25)

WEEK 10: Debates. (3/31/25). No classes 4/3/25-Wellness Day.

WEEK 11: Debates (4/7/25 & 4/10/25

WEEK 12: History of Computing (4/14/25 & 4/17/25)

WEEK 13: Professional and Legal Responsibilities (4/21/25 & 4/24/25)

WEEK 14: Debates (4/28/25 & 5/1/25)

Conclusion & Synthesis May 5 2025

Academic Integrity: Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf Links to an external site.Links to an external site.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu

Email: Please check your NJIT email regularly. Any announcements, reminders, or notifications are sent via Canvas directly to your NJIT email account.

Student Absences for Religious Observance: NJIT is committed to supporting students observing religious holidays. Students must notify their instructors in writing of any

conflicts between course requirements and religious observances, ideally by the end of the second week of classes and no later than two weeks before the anticipated absence.

Graded Assignments

1. **Attendance and participation. 15%** Students are expected to attend every class on time. It is an essential component for success. In the event you must miss a class, come late or leave early, prior notice with the instructor is required. Participation will involve active engagement in class through discussions, break-out exercises, and in class case study assignments. To contribute to class discussion, you must come to class having carefully prepared all readings and any assignments.
2. **Ethical Case Analysis Assignment. 20%** The only way to truly understand ethics is to apply ethical theories to real-world situations. Individuals will be responsible for reading and analyzing an ethical case scenario using the analysis protocol presented in class (week 2).
3. **3 Quizzes. 45%** Timed and non-cumulative. We will use Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor as the proctoring software. The plagiarism quiz will be graded as 7 extra credits, and the due date is Feb 2, 2025.
4. **Debate**. **20%** As part of a team you will persuasively argue about an ethical dilemma concerning technology in a debate format. You will be assigned to a team and assigned to a topic and position (pro or con).

 Grading criteria:

The in-class assignments, Ethical Case Analysis, and Debate will be graded based on the degree which each of the points outlined are addressed. Each point should evidence clarity, thoughtfulness, critical thinking, and extension of concepts covered in class.

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Grading Policy

- **A = 90 and up**
- **B+ = 85 to 89**
- **B = 80 to 84**
- **C+ = 75 to 79**
- **C = 70 to 74**
- **D = 65 to 69**
- **F = less than 65**

Helpful Links

Office of Academic Advising

The Office of Academic Advising (OAA) was established in 2013. We assist first-time, first-year undergraduate students in all 5 of the NJIT degree-bearing academic colleges,

and incoming undergraduate transfer students from certain majors/colleges before their start at NJIT.

[Accessibility Resources & Service Accommodations Links to an external site.](#)

The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services works in partnership with administrators, faculty and staff to provide reasonable accommodations and support services for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and visiting students with disabilities who have provided our office with medical documentation to receive services. We strive to promote an inclusive environment that encompasses advocacy and access to all campus resources.

The Writing Center

The NJIT Writing Center is here to help with your written assignments as well as class presentations. Our Writing Consultants, Graduate Consultants and Peer Consultants can work with you on your writing from beginning to end.