IS 350 - Computer, Society & Ethics

Dates: September 2, 2025, to December 11, 2025

Room: Online

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 email me in Canvas or at jra49@njit.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

Office hours for the professor and the TA will be held using Zoom.

They will be on Tuesdays 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

The Zoom link is: https://njit-edu.zoom.us/j/95251003866?pwd=pk8i132a3xKh6n2H1M7kkNHY5BbESe.1

Passcode: 997995

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

The Zoom link is: https://njit-edu.zoom.us/j/95724016311

Course Format

Most of the work will be at an individual pace, although there will be strict deadlines for each assignment. There are videos you are responsible for viewing as well as weekly assignments and postings. You will engage in other activities online, both individually and in a team. All are mandatory. You will be responsible for reading the textbook and online materials, participating in online discussions and activities, and doing all assignments.

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 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 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: 9/2/25 - 9/5/25 Introduction and Ethical Analysis - Chapter 1, Quiz Plagiarism Due (9/12/25)

WEEK 2: 9/8/25 - 9/12/25 Ethics - Chapter 2

WEEK 3: 9/15/25 - 9/19/25 Ethics Continued, Freedom of Expression, Trust & More – Chapter 3

WEEK 4: 9/22/25 - 9/26/25 Professionalism and Codes of Conduct - Chapter 9, Ethical Analysis Report Due

WEEK 5: 9/29/25 - 10/3/25 Privacy and Civil Liberties - WELLNESS DAY NO CLASS – Chapter 5

WEEK 6: 10/6/25 - 10/10/25 Social Issues Caused by the Rise of Technology – Chapter 3, Quiz 1 Due (10/07/25)

WEEK 7: 10/13/25 - 10/17/25 Computers and Government - Chapter 6

WEEK 8: 10/20/25 - 10/24/25 Computer Reliability & Algorithmic Bias – Chapter 8

WEEK 9: 10/27/25 - 10/31/25 Work, Robotics and Green Computing – Chapter 10

WEEK 10: 11/03/25 - 11/07/25 History of Computing - Quiz 2 Due (11/04/25)

WEEK 11: 11/10/25 - 11/14/25 Debate

WEEK 12: 11/17/25 - 11/21/25 Debate

WEEK 13: 11/24/25 - 11/26/25 New and Innovative Topics - Thanksgiving NO CLASS

WEEK 14: 12/1/25 - 12/5/25 Professional and Legal Responsibilities –- Chapter 9, Chapter 4, Quiz 3 Due (12/02/25)

WEEK 15: 12/8/25 - 12/11/25 Conclusion & Synthesis

Code of Student Conduct and 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:
https://www.njit.edu/dos/sites/njit.edu.dos/files/NJIT%20Code%20of%20Student%20Conduct%202025.pdf

Please note that the academic integrity policy includes direct guidance on the responsible use of AI.

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

Use of Generative AI

NJIT has adopted the student guide, "AI-U" (updated for 2025), created by Elon University and the AAC&U. You can utilize generative AI for tasks such as brainstorming ideas, improving writing clarity, and creating study tools—all of which can elevate your learning experience when used responsibly. However, a commitment to originality, honesty, and fairness in your work is expected. Remember that these tools will provide the same or comparable content to you and others with similar requests. More importantly, there already exists technology that can detect AI-assisted/generated writings.

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. **Regular Discussions. 20%** We will hold substantial discussions of topics online via discussion postings in the forum. This is where we will begin by introducing ourselves, discussing course content, or current events related to ethics and technology. **For each discussion assignment, you must post one original post and reply to at least one classmate's posts with substantive posts in a timely manner. Timely means within the week associated with that discussion. Substantive posts add to the discussion. A simple post, such as "I agree" or "I disagree" is not substantive and will not receive credit.** Contribute new ideas and/or build upon the ideas of others.

The original post can be graded to a maximum of 3 points, while each of the two replies can be graded to a maximum of 2 points for a possible total of 7 points. Some weeks, there will be a specific topic(s) to discuss in the Forum. Other weeks, you will be asked to discuss one or more of the assigned content for that week. Be sure to read the Forum instructions. Integrate knowledge from course content to support your remarks/arguments

Introduce Yourself – The first Discussion Forum assignment, due at the end of the first week, is to post a brief introduction to yourself so we may all get to know one another.

1. **Ethical Case Analysis Assignment. 15%** 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.
2. **3 Quizzes. 45%** Timed and non-cumulative. Makeup exams will be administered only in emergency situations and in consultation with the Dean of Students Office. Note: Quiz Plagiarism will not be counted towards the final grade; nonetheless, you need to complete that quiz.
3. **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). This will be a recorded presentation.

 Grading criteria:

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

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Grading Policy: This is an absolute scale in which numerical scores will be converted to letter grades.

- **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.