

# Ethical issues in information organizations

## Summer 2022

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### Overview

**Course Description:** Designed to be applicable to all types of libraries and information organizations, this course provides a deep look at relevant ethical issues. We discuss how the core values of the information professions can serve as a guide when faced with ethically challenging situations.

**Contact Information:** I am most accessible through email: [shannon.oltmann@uky.edu](mailto:shannon.oltmann@uky.edu) or Canvas messaging. As a general rule, I will respond to course-related email correspondence within 24 business hours (responses may be slower during the weekends and holidays). Please include the course number in brackets [xxx] in the subject line for all messages. I am happy to meet virtually with students, but you should set up the appointment in advance via email.

*Please note that class communication is done via your official UK email address and Canvas messaging. You **must** check both of these frequently.*

**Course Objectives:** At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Articulate the basics of several ethical frameworks.
- Apply ethical framework(s) to practical, professional situations.
- Discuss the implications of information-related ethical dilemmas.
- Share ethical information and positions with others.

**Textbook:** There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be available through Canvas and/or online.

**Academic Policy Statements:** According to rules at the University of Kentucky, these academic policies apply to all students: <https://www.uky.edu/universitysenate/acadpolicy>. Please review these and contact the instructor with any questions.

**Rules regarding Academic Offenses:** According to the University of Kentucky, these rules apply to all students: <https://www.uky.edu/universitysenate/ao>. Please review this carefully, especially the section on plagiarism.

**Resources Available to Students:** The University of Kentucky has many resources available to students (including online students). These can help address many issues:

<https://www.uky.edu/universitysenate/student-resources>. In addition, always feel free to contact the instructor with any issues.

**Assignments:**

Participation	20% of final grade
Sharing Core Values	20% of final grade
Case Study	20% of final grade
Group Presentation	30% of final grade
Response to Presentation	10% of final grade

**Participation on Discussion Boards:** In this course, participation is measured by your contributions to the online discussions each week. **Each class member must contribute regularly (i.e., at least 2 postings) to each weekly set of Discussion Board questions—the equivalent of a "B" grade for participation.** (Note: this means at least two posts per module, not two posts for each question in each module.) Less participation will lower the grade; frequent, informed participation will raise it. In addition, consistently thoughtful contributions that advance discussion will receive more credit. Participation is worth 20% of your final grade. Due weekly.

**Sharing Core Values:** In this assignment, you will create a media component through which you can communicate some of your profession’s core values to your broader community. Options include creating an infographic, a video, or a mini-podcast. The format must be other than print/text. If you have another idea, please contact the instructor to get advance approval. This is worth 20% of your final grade and is due at the end of Week Three. More details are available in Canvas.

**Case Study:** In this assignment, you will select one of the provided case studies to analyze. You will utilize professional and academic literature to determine the best course of action. This will be a 1200-1500 word essay response. This is worth 20% of your final grade and is due at the end of Week Six. More details are available in Canvas.

**Group Presentation:** For this project, you will be placed in a group of 3-5 people (based on your interests). The group will create a 15-minute presentation on a topic related (broadly) to intellectual freedom; see below for some examples. You will get to select your own group topic. This assignment will be worth 30% of your final grade and is due during Week Eight. More details are available in Canvas.

**Response to Presentation:** You must watch at least one other group’s presentation and provide a written response of around 200 words. In your response, you must include at least one question for further discussion or exploration. This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade and is due at the end of the semester.

## Weekly Schedule and Readings

### **Week 1 (6/21-6/25): Ethical frameworks and social justice**

- Burgess, J. T. F. (2019). Principles and concepts in information ethics. In Burgess, J. T. F. & Knox, E. J. M. (Eds.), *Foundations of Information Ethics* (pp. 1-16). American Library Association.
- Mager, K. (2016). The ethical implications of the Daoist world view. *Asian Philosophy*, 26(3), 206-215.
- Held, V. (1990). Feminist transformations of moral theory. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 50(Supp), 321-344.
- Mill, J. E., Kociubuk, J., & Campana, K. (2021). Understanding social justice through practitioners' language: A grounded theory analysis of interviews with practitioners from libraries and their community partners. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion*, 5(2), 54-70.
- Gibson, A. (2019). Emerging issues. In Burgess, J. T. F. & Knox, E. J. M. (Eds.), *Foundations of Information Ethics* (pp. 127-135). American Library Association.

### **Week 2 (6/26-7/02): Professional ethics and values**

- Mathiesen, K. (2004). What is information ethics? *Computers and Society*, 34(1).
- Al Saggaf, Y., & Thompson, K. M. (2018). ICT women professionals' perceptions of workplace ethical problems: A quantitative survey. *Journal of Information Ethics*, 27(1), 59-73.
- Haussler, H. (2021). The underlying values of data ethics frameworks: A critical analysis of discourses and power structures. *Libri*, 71(4), 307-319.
- IEEE. (2020). Code of ethics. Available at: <https://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p7-8.html>
- American Library Association. (2017). Code of ethics. Available at: <https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>.
- ASIST. (1992). Professional guidelines. Available at: <https://www.asist.org/about/asist-professional-guidelines/>.
- IFLA. (2012). Code of ethics for librarians and other information workers. Available at: <https://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-code-of-ethics-for-librarians-and-other-information-workers-full-version/>.
- Data Science Association. (n.d.). Code of conduct. Available at: <https://www.datascienceassn.org/code-of-conduct.html>

### **Week 3 (7/03-7/09): Freedom of speech, intellectual freedom, and its limitations**

#### **Note: Sharing Core Values due on 7/09 by 11:59 pm eastern time**

- Oltmann, S.M. (2016). Intellectual freedom and freedom of speech: Three theoretical perspectives. *Library Quarterly*, 86(2), 153-171.
- Fallon, R. H. (2004). Freedom of speech. In *The dynamic constitution: An introduction to American constitutional law*. Cambridge University Press (pp. 31-56). Available as ebook through UK Libraries.

- Hallberg, P., & Virkkunen, J. (2017). Excerpts from: *Freedom of speech and information in global perspective* (pp. 1-8, 109-117, 246-250). Palgrave MacMillan.

#### **Week 4 (7/10-7/16): Censorship**

- Steele, J. E. (2020). A history of censorship in the United States. *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy*, 5(1), 6-19.
- Kawerau, L., Weidmann, N. B., & Dainotti, A. (2022). Attack or block? Repertoires of digital censorship in autocracies. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 1-14.
- Ngoshi, H. T. (2021). Repression, literary dissent and the paradox of censorship in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 47(5), 799-815.
- Johnson, B. G. (2018). Tolerating and managing extreme speech on social media. *Internet Research*, 28(5), 1275-1291.
- Statements from the American Library Association:
  - Statement on book censorship: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/statement-regarding-censorship>
  - First Amendment and censorship: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship>
  - Statement on censorship of information addressing racial injustice, Black American history, and diversity education: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statement/opposition-censorship-racial-injustice-black-history-diversity-education>
  - The freedom to read statement: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

#### **Week 5 (7/17-7/23): Social media content moderation**

- Young, G. K. (2022). How much is too much: The difficulties of social media content moderation. *Information & Communications Technology Law*, 31(1), 1-16.
- Klonick, K. (2021). Content moderation modulation: Deliberating on how to regulate—or not regulate—online speech in the era of evolving social media. *Communications of the ACM*, 64(1), 29-31.
- Newton, C. (2019). Bodies in seats. *The Verge*. Available at: <https://www.theverge.com/2019/6/19/18681845/facebook-moderator-interviews-video-trauma-ptsd-cognizant-tampa>.
- Talbot, D., & Bourassa, N. (2017). How Facebook tries to regulate postings made by two billion people. Berkman Klein Center. Available at: <https://medium.com/berkman-klein-center/how-facebook-tries-to-regulate-postings-made-by-two-billion-people-bca9408b6b4b>.
- Cobbe, J. (2021). Algorithmic censorship by social platforms: Power and resistance. *Philosophy & Technology*, 34(4), 739-766.

#### **Week 6 (7/17-7/23): Data and algorithmic (in)justice**

**Note: Case Study due on 7/23 by 11:59 pm eastern time**

- Masiero, S., & Das, S. (2019). Datafying anti-poverty programmes: Implications for data justice. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(7), 916-933.
- Schwerzmann, K. (2021). Abolish! Against the use of risk assessment algorithms at sentencing in the US criminal justice system. *Philosophy & Technology*, 34(4), 1883-1904.
- Goldkind, L., Wolf, L., & LaMendola, W. (2021). Data justice: Social work and a more just future. *Journal of Community Practice*, 29(3), 237-256.

### **Week 7 (7/24-7/30): Intellectual property, copyright, and open access**

- Oltmann, S. M. (2019). Copyright issues. In *Practicing intellectual freedom in libraries* (pp. 163-176). Libraries Unlimited.
- Kasakowskij, T., Kasakowskij, R., & Fietkiewicz, K. J. (2021). Can I pin this? The legal position and its users: An analysis of Pinterest's data storage policies and users trust in the service. *First Monday*, 26(7). Available at: <https://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/11477/10173>
- Crews, K. D., & Buttler, D. K. (2008). Fair use checklist. Available at: <https://copyright.columbia.edu/basics/fair-use/fair-use-checklist.html>.
- Creative commons website: <https://www.creativecommons.org>. Read the following sections:
  - Use & remix (and links under “in this section” on the right).
  - What we do (and links under “in this section” on the right).
- Mallalieu, R. (2019). The elusive gold mine? The finer details of Creative Commons licenses—and why they really matter. *Insights: The UKSG Journal*, 32, 1-7.

### **Week 8 (7/31-8/06): Mis/disinformation**

**Note: Group Presentation due on 8/06 by 11:59 pm eastern time**

**Response to Presentation due on 8/10 by 11:59 eastern time**

- Mansky, J. (2018). The age-old problem of "fake news": It's been part of the conversation as far back as the birth of the free press. *Smithsonian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/age-old-problem-fake-news-180968945/>
- Ahmad, N., Milic, N., & Ibarine, M. (2021). Data and disinformation. *Computer*, 54(7), 105-110.
- Rubin, V. L. (2019). Disinformation and misinformation triangle: A conceptual model for 'fake news' epidemic, causal factors and interventions. *Journal of Documentation*, 75(5), 1013-1034.
- Bringula, R. P., Catacutan-Bangit, A. E., Garcia, M. B., Gonzales, J. P. S., & Calderama, A. M. C. (2022). Who is gullible to political disinformation? Predicting susceptibility of university students to fake news. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 19(2), 165-179.