

**ICT 690**  
**Information Communication Technology Ethics**  
**Online**

**Instructor:** Dr. Nicholas Proferes  
**Office Address:** 333 Lucille Little Library  
**Email:** [nproferes@uky.edu](mailto:nproferes@uky.edu) (I typically respond to e-mail within 48 hours)  
**Office Phone:** 859-218-3417  
**Office hours:** Tuesday and Wednesday, 2 to 4 PM

### **Course Description**

This course familiarizes students with the application of moral philosophy to a host of pressing questions about ICTs and society. Students survey a number of different philosophical traditions, including utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, theories of justice, and ethics of care. Drawing on case studies of ethical dilemmas, students will explore how many of the challenges faced in today's information society may be enduring in nature. These include questions about workplace ethics, bias in computational systems, the ethics of representation in digital systems, artificial intelligence, human augmentation, programming ethical decision making, just-war, and values in design. The course will discuss the ethical responsibilities of ICT professionals and promote the critical examination and responsible use of ICT.

### **Prerequisites**

None

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students completing the course will be able to:

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 information society.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To review major ethical theories as they pertain to information and communication technologies.
2. To explore current issues in ICT's and society, and the ethical dilemmas that arise in light of them.
3. To investigate students' ethical responsibilities as members of our information society.
4. To discuss the ethical aspects of ICT policy and law in global civil society.

### **Required Materials**

All class readings will be made available online on Canvas or through UK Libraries Course Reserve.

### **Course Assignments**

- Weekly class participation - 30%
- Reading Assignments (4 @ 7.5% each) - 30%
- Final Paper - 40%

## Summary Description of Course Assignments

### Class Participation

A weekly discussion board can be found under “Discussions” on Canvas. I will provide discussion questions based on the readings and activities for the week.

Each week, you will post an original post responding to one or more discussion questions (about 150-200 words) by Sunday night (11:59pm). You may post multiple responses, but at least one of your posts needs to be a minimum of 150 words (the others can be shorter if you wish). Draw on the course readings, outside resources, and personal experiences to frame your arguments/comments. Cite references accordingly: e.g. “Quote” (Nissenbaum, 2010, p. 57) and add a brief citation list to the end of your post following APA citation style (as explained here: <http://www2.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citapa.htm>). The citation list does not count towards your word count for that post. During the course of the semester, you should demonstrate that you have participated in both the suggested activities and the readings.

Each week, you will also post at least one **substantive** reply to other students’ posts and comments by Sunday night (11:59pm) (about 75-150 words for each response). Please be respectful and professional when you reply to each other.

Your Discussion Board participation will be graded based on the insightfulness of your original post(s), your careful consideration and response to other students’ posts, the timeliness of your posts, and your ability to draw on the readings and external resources to justify and support your claims.

It is strongly recommended that you draft your posts in a word or text document before you post it to Canvas in order to check for spelling errors and ensure you have met the word count requirement.

Your discussion participation (your original posts and responses) will be graded four times throughout the semester. It will occur in the following “clusters:”

- Discussion Grade 1 (Weeks 1 – 4): 7.5 points
- Discussion Grade 2 (Weeks 5 – 8): 7.5 points
- Discussion Grade 3 (Weeks 9 – 12): 7.5 points
- Discussion Grade 4 (Weeks 13 – 15): 7.5 points

Discussion posts in each cluster will be evaluated using the following rubric:

- Original post engages the prompt thoughtfully: 1.25 pts
- Original post backs conclusions with evidence: 1.25 pts
- Original post introduces own ideas: 1.25 pts
- Response posts engages thoughtfully and with substance to others: 1.25 pts
- Both weekly posts use correct grammar, punctuation, and citation style: 1.25 pts
- Both weekly posts are written in clear, concise sentences: 1.25 pts
- Total: 7.5 pts

### Reading Assignments

Students will submit four (4) short brief assignments during the semester. Assignment weeks are marked with “**Assignment X**” on the course schedule. Assignments will be made available Monday morning and students must submit their assignments on Canvas by **Sunday at 11:59 p.m** on the weeks indicated. These prompts will be extended analysis of contemporary ICT ethics issues.

### Final Paper

Detailed instructions for the final paper will be discussed after Week 4 of the course. However, students will be expected to write a 12 – 15 page paper addressing a contemporary issue of ICT ethics using at least one of the philosophical lenses discussed in the course.

### **Written Assignments**

Written assignments are to be written in Word or Open Office format. Papers are to be **double-spaced** using a 12-point kerned font such as Times New Roman with 1 to 1.25 inch margins. You may not resubmit work that has already been used in fulfillment of the requirement of this or any other course. Rules of academic conduct require that you not use the work of others without clearly indicating it as such. Academic misconduct may result in a lowered grade, no credit for a given assignment, or removal from the course.

It is expected students will both consult and appropriately cite the academic and primary source literature where needed. It is imperative that students employ a variety of scholarly and primary sources on which to build their arguments. As such, you should search bibliographies in the material we are reading, use library databases, and conduct library searches to identify material on their chosen topic. Please rely on a commonly used style manual for your submissions (e.g. APA, MLA or Chicago). These are available in the Library or may be purchased through online book vendors. If you are uncertain about how to cite electronic sources, consult one of the many electronic guides to citing electronic sources available on the net. Minimal reference content includes: author (if known), date (if given), title, URL, and date accessed.

### **Course Grading**

Grading scale for graduate students:

- 90-100% = A
- 80 – 89% = B
- 70 – 79% = C
- Below 70%= E

**Course Schedule (readings may be subject to change)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Course Introduction: Ethics and Digital Life	None	
<b>Week 2</b>	Introduction to Information Technology Ethics	Tavani, Ch. 1 (1-28)  Jasanoff, S. (2016). Ch. 1 from "The Ethics of Invention" - The Power of Technology.	
<b>Week 3</b>	Ethical Theories & Principles: Deontology, Utilitarianism & Virtue Ethics	Tavani, Ch. 2 (33 - 70)  Ess, C. (2013). <i>Digital media ethics</i> . Ch. 6 (pp. 167-183; 207-214)  Vallor, S. (2017) - Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting. (p. 17 - 34)	
<b>Week 4</b>	Ethical Theories & Principles: Theories of Justice, Ethics of Care	Allingham (2013). Distributive Justice. <a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/dist-jus/">http://www.iep.utm.edu/dist-jus/</a>  Hoffmann, A. L. (2017). Beyond distributions and primary goods: Assessing applications of Rawls in information science and technology literature since 1990. <i>Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology</i> , 68(7), 1601-1618.  Sander-Staudt (2014). Ethics of care. <a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/care-eth/">http://www.iep.utm.edu/care-eth/</a>	<b>Reading Assignment 1</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	Ethics and ICT Design	Tavani, Ch. 4 (101-126)  Manders-Huits, N., & Zimmer, M. (2009). Values and pragmatic action: The challenges of introducing ethical intelligence in technical design communities. <i>International Review of Information Ethics</i> , 10(2), 37-45.  Flanagan, M., Howe, D. C., & Nissenbaum, H. (2008). Embodying values in technology: Theory and practice. <i>Information technology and moral philosophy</i> , 322.	

<b>Week 6</b>	Algorithmic Bias	<p>Friedman, B., &amp; Nissenbaum, H. (1996). Bias in computer systems. <i>ACM Transactions on Information Systems (TOIS)</i>, 14(3), 330-347.</p> <p>Noble, S. (2012). Missed Connections: What Search Engines Say About Women.</p> <p>Eubanks, V. (2018). Automating Bias. <i>Scientific American</i>, 319(5), 68-71.</p>	
<b>Week 7</b>	Ethics of Privacy and Surveillance	<p>Ess, C. (2013). <i>Digital media ethics</i>. Ch. 3 (30 - 62).</p> <p>Tavani, Ch. 5 (131-168)</p> <p>Vallor, S. (2017) - Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting. (p. 188 - 207)</p>	<b>Reading Assignment 2</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	Intellectual Property: Ethical Principles & Open Access.	<p>Aufderheide, P., Jaszi, P., &amp; Sieling, N. (2008). Recut, Reframe, Recycle.</p> <p>Suber, P. (2007). Open access overview.</p> <p>Tavani, Ch. 8 (230-242, 245-249)</p>	
<b>Week 9</b>	Intellectual Property: Ethics of Enforcement	<p>Sims, N. (2011). Library licensing and criminal law: The Aaron Swartz case. <i>College &amp; Research Libraries News</i>, 72(9), 534-537.</p> <p>Grodzinsky, F. S., &amp; Tavani, H. T. (2008). Online file sharing: resolving the tensions between privacy and property interests. <i>ACM SIGCAS Computers and Society</i>, 38(4), 28-39.</p> <p>Additional reading to be assigned.</p>	
<b>Week 10</b>		<b>Spring Break</b>	
<b>Week 11</b>	Gaming and Digital Violence	<p>Tavani Ch. 11 (337-348)</p> <p>Ess, C. (2013). <i>Digital media ethics</i>. Ch. 5</p> <p>Schulzke, M. (2010). Defending the morality of violent video games. <i>Ethics and Information Technology</i>, 12(2), 127-138.</p>	<b>Reading Assignment 3</b>

<b>Week 12</b>	Hacktivism and Vigilante Justice Online	<p>Bodle, R. (2013). The ethics of online anonymity or Zuckerberg vs. Moot. <i>ACM SIGCAS Computers and Society</i>, 43(1), 22-35.</p> <p>Serracino-Inglott, P. (2013). Is it OK to be an Anonymous?. <i>Ethics &amp; Global Politics</i>, 6(4), 22527..</p> <p>Selections from Marwick, A., &amp; Lewis, R. (2017). Media manipulation and disinformation online. <i>Data &amp; Society</i>.</p>	
<b>Week 13</b>	Whistleblowing	<p>Screening: <i>Frontline: The United States of Secrets</i>.</p> <p>Tavani, Ch. 7 (221-225), Ch. 11 (355-363)</p> <p>Delmas, C. (2015). The ethics of government whistleblowing. <i>Social Theory and Practice</i>, 77-105.</p>	
<b>Week 14</b>	Robot Ethics	<p>Bostrom, N., &amp; Yudkowsky, E. (2014). The ethics of artificial intelligence. <i>The Cambridge handbook of artificial intelligence</i>, 316-334.</p> <p>Goodall, N. J. (2016). Can you program ethics into a self-driving car?. <i>IEEE Spectrum</i>, 53(6), 28-58.</p> <p>Vallor, S. (2017) - Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting. (p. 208 - 239)</p>	<b>Reading Assignment 4</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	Human Augmentation	<p>Jasanoff, S. (2016). Ch. 5 from "The Ethics of Invention" – Tinkering with Humans.</p> <p>Vallor, S. (2017) - Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting. (p. 230 – 249)</p>	
<b>Week 16</b>	Responsibility and The Future of ICT Ethics	<p>Jasanoff, S. (2016). Ch. 2, Ch. 3, Ch.8 from "The Ethics of Invention" – Risk and Responsibility, The Ethical Anatomy of Disasters, Reclaiming the Future</p>	<b>Final Paper Due</b>

## **Submission of Assignments**

Assignments are to be submitted online on Canvas. If you submit a piece of coursework after the deadline but within 24 hours of the deadline, your grade will be reduced by 10 percentage points. **Assignments will not be accepted after 24 hours of the deadline.**

MAKE SURE YOUR COURSEWORK GETS SUBMITTED ON CANVAS – since the professor can't verify if you submitted your assignment and it didn't actually go through.

Students who have grade concerns must approach the professor during office hours, or through appointment. Once grades are posted online, you may visit the professor during office hours or by appointment to review any questions you might have. Please contact the professor if you do not find your grades posted.

Students who wish to discuss grades or scores earned have one week from the date grades are posted to do so. Grades will not be addressed after this time period has expired. Students need to contact the professor for an appointment to discuss the issue. Students must bring a written explanation of their dispute with them to this appointment. If the matter is still unresolved, students need to contact the director of School of Information Science. Students that do not fulfill these requirements will not be addressed and the original grades will be final.

## **Attendance Policy**

This class is a community whose success depends on everyone's participation. It is vital for you to participate every week in order to be successful. While online courses offer greater flexibility in terms of getting your work done, there is still an expectation that you follow the modules on a week by week basis. In the event that you have an emergency situation, you will be allowed to hand in or make up that week's work only if the absence is officially excused. You will be asked to provide official written documentation for excused absences in order for your absence to be excused.

If you know ahead of time that you will need an excused absence, please discuss this with your instructor and turn in any assignments ahead of time. Excuses for university-sponsored activities must be made prior to such absences. For any emergency situation that arises, email your instructor as soon as you know about the situation when possible. No make-up work is available unless approved in advance by your instructor. Students have one week to complete a missed assignment due to an excused absence upon their return without penalty.

## **Excused Absences**

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. *Senate Rules 5.2.4.2* defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, (e) interviews for graduate/professional school or full-time employment post-graduation, and (f) other circumstances found to fit "reasonable cause for nonattendance" by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class. Two weeks prior to the absence is reasonable, but should not be given any later. Information regarding major religious holidays may be

obtained through the Ombud (859-257-3737,  
[http://www.uky.edu/Ombud/ForStudents\\_ExcusedAbsences.php](http://www.uky.edu/Ombud/ForStudents_ExcusedAbsences.php).

In situations where a student's total EXCUSED absences exceed 1/5 (or 20%) of the class periods scheduled for the semester, students are strongly encouraged to withdraw (take a "W") from the class as per university policy. If a student has excused absences in excess of one-fifth of the class contact hours for that course, the student shall have the right to receive a 'W', or the Instructor of Record may award an 'I' for the course if the student declines to receive a 'W.'

Per *Senate Rule 5.2.4.2*, students missing any graded work due to an excused absence are responsible: for informing the Instructor of Record about their excused absence within one week following the period of the excused absence (except where prior notification is required); and for making up the missed work. The professor must give the student an opportunity to make up the work and/or the exams missed due to an excused absence, and shall do so, if feasible, during the semester in which the absence occurred.

### **Verification of Absences**

Students may be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. *Senate Rule 5.2.4.2* states that faculty have the right to request "appropriate verification" when students claim an excused absence because of illness, or death in the family. Appropriate notification of absences due to University-related trips is required prior to the absence when feasible and in no case more than one week after the absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

Per University policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the University may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

*Senate Rules 6.3.1* (see <http://www.uky.edu/Faculty/Senate/> for the current set of *Senate Rules*) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording, or content from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism.



Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work (including, but not limited to a published article, a book, a website, computer code, or a paper from a friend) without clear attribution. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work, which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be. Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone.

When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources or information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she has employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content, and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas, which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain.

Please note: Any assignment you turn in may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

### **Accommodations Due to Disability**

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC coordinates campus disability services available to students with disabilities. It is located on the corner of Rose Street and Huguelet Drive in the Multidisciplinary Science Building, Suite 407. You can reach them via phone at (859) 257-2754 and via email at [drc@uky.edu](mailto:drc@uky.edu). Their web address is <http://www.uky.edu/DisabilityResourceCenter>.

### **Technology and Information Resources**

Distance Learning Students are expected to have a minimum level of technological acumen and the availability of technological resources. Students must have regular access a computer with a reliable Internet connection and audio capabilities. Internet Explorer 7 (IE) or Firefox 2.x are the recommended browsers for those using a Windows-based PC. Those using Firefox 3.x may encounter problems with assignment uploads. Those using an Apple computer with MAC OS X (10.5.x) may use Firefox 3.x or Safari 3.x.

Please be certain that your computer and/or browser allow you to view Adobe Reader documents (.pdf). Microsoft Office and other software products are free for students: <http://download.uky.edu/>.

As your instructor, I am your first go-to person for technology problems. If you need more immediate assistance, please contact UKIT.

### **Information Technology Customer Service Center (UKIT)**

<http://www.uky.edu/UKIT/>; 859-218-4357

### **Library Services & Distance Learning Services**

<http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/DLLS>

- Carla Cantagallo, DL Librarian

- Local phone number: (859) 257-0500, ext. 2171; long-distance phone #: (800) 828-0439 (option #6)
- Email: [dllservice@email.uky.edu](mailto:dllservice@email.uky.edu)
- DL Interlibrary Loan Service:  
[http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/libpage.php?lweb\\_id=253&llib\\_id=16](http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/libpage.php?lweb_id=253&llib_id=16)

For more resources about online classes and student resources, visit <http://www.uky.edu/ukonline/>

The School of Information Science has a page with a comprehensive list of technology resources here: <http://ci.uky.edu/sis/students/techtips>

### **Military Members and Veterans**

We recognize the complexities of being a member of the military community and also a student. If you are a member of the military or a military veteran or dependent, please inform your instructor if you are in need of special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, mandatory training exercises, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran related developments can complicate your academic life. If you are aware of a complication, we will work with you and put you in contact with university staff members who are trained to assist you. Please contact the Coordinator of the University of Kentucky Veterans Resource Center at (859) 257-1148 for additional assistance. Visit <http://www.uky.edu/veterans> for more available resources.

### **Classroom Behavior Policies**

This class is not about reading texts and regurgitating ideas; it's about developing a critical orientation toward and ethical sensitivity to the design of information technology. That will not happen by just listening to me lecture. You have to think, write, and talk about these issues in order to understand and internalize them. To that end, this class will involve a lot of discussion and participation. In addition to reading the assigned texts, asking thoughtful questions, offering your own arguments and analysis, and listening carefully, critically, and respectfully to me and your classmate's challenges.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement and Title IX Information (optional)**

The University of Kentucky faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University's non-discrimination policy.

Discrimination is prohibited at UK. If you experience an incident of discrimination we encourage you to report it to Institutional Equity & Equal Opportunity (IEEO) Office, 13 Main Building, (859) 257-8927.

### **Acts of Sex- and Gender-Based Discrimination or Interpersonal Violence**

If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination or interpersonal violence, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member or TA/RA/GA, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University these individuals MUST report any acts of violence (including verbal bullying and sexual harassment) to the University's Title IX

Coordinator in the IEEO Office. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) program (Frazee Hall – Lower Level; <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/VIPCenter/>), the Counseling Center (106 Frazee Hall, <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Counseling/>), and the University Health Services (<http://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/uhs/student-health/>) are confidential resources on campus.