

Liberal Studies Degree Program
Course Syllabus LSHV-450-01

Cyberethics

Fall Semester, 2014, Thursdays, 6:30-9:30 PM
August 28, 2014-December 4, 2014 (No class on October 9, 2014 or
Thanksgiving, November 27, 2014)
Classroom Location: TBD

Faculty: Gladys B. White, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor of Liberal Studies
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Course Description

The wide range of human activities that occurs in cyberspace raises a host of classic as well as novel ethical and legal issues. Social media such as Facebook and My Space, political uses of Twitter and many issues related to the active presence of the internet in general, have outstripped the bounds of any moral consensus or U.S. case law related to property, privacy and confidentiality. In addition, there is a growing body of information about harms and abuses that take place in cyberspace. Cybercrime and the possibility of cyber attack have galvanized both governments and citizens of the world. This course approaches these issues as areas of inquiry within philosophical ethics. It begins with some basic information about ethical reasoning and then proceeds to an examination of the various cyber modalities, one by one. There will be a careful analysis of the relevant ethical issues in order to determine how we should respond to the opportunities and challenges presented in cyberspace. In addition, legal cases that do exist will be considered. The course will have a strong values component, a global orientation and also provide a lot of opportunity for creative thought and active participation on the part of students.

Learning Goals and Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and describe the ways in which activities in cyberspace enhance or challenge what it means to be human and a member of the human community;
2. Analyze the ways in which ethical principles and theories offer normative direction for activities in cyberspace;
3. Create strategies for the maintenance of civility in cyberspace;
4. Compare and contrast the impact of social networking for various age groups at different developmental stages with emphasis on both freedom of speech and privacy;
5. Specify the ways in which the internet and online activities can promote justice and respect for human rights with an adequate consideration of what it means for some groups to be essentially disenfranchised due to lack of internet access;
6. Identify common types of cybercrime and describe the implications of internet use for statecraft and global policy development.

Course Outline

August 28, 2014 Introduction, Chapter 1 “The Internet and Ethical Values,” Spinello, 2011 pp. 1-26, the Reader pp. 1-106.

September 4, 2014 Chapter 2 “Regulating and Governing the Internet,” Spinello, 2011 pp. 27-54, the Reader pp. 107-213.

September 11, 2014 Chapter 3 “Free Speech and Content Controls in Cyberspace,” Spinello, 2011 pp. 57-98.

September 18, 2014 Case studies **Paper 1 is due.**

September 25, 2014 Chapter 4 “Intellectual Property in Cyberspace,” Spinello, 2011 pp. 99-148, the Reader pp. 247-396.

October 2, 2014 Case studies

October 16, 2014 Chapter 5 “Regulating Internet Privacy,” Spinello, 2011 pp. 149-190, The Reader pp. 397-500.

October 23, 2014 Case studies

October 30, 2014 Chapter 6 “Securing the Electronic Frontier,” Spinello 2011 pp. 191-221, The Reader pp. 501-600.

November 6, 2014 Guest speaker, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (invited)

November 20, 2014 Case studies

December 4, 2014 Cyber Attack, Cyber Warfare, Clarke, Richard and Knake, Robert K. *Cyber War, The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It* (see optional texts) **Paper 2 is due.**
Course Wrap-up.

Required Texts

Spinello, Richard A. Cyberethics: Morality and Law in Cyberspace, fifth edition, Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2011. ISBN: 978-1449-6608-19. (Please note that the fourth edition of this text will also suffice for our course: ISBN: 978-0-7637-9511-5.)

Spinello, Richard A., Tavani, Herman T. (eds.) Readings in Cyberethics, second edition, Boston: Jones and Bartlett, 2004. ISBN 0-7637-2410-6 (pb)

Additional handouts and audiovisual opportunities will be provided by the professor.

Optional Texts

Clarke, Richard A., Knake, Robert K. Cyber War, The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It, New York: Harper Collins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-06-196224-0

Kirkpatrick, David The Facebook Effect, The Inside Story of the Company that Is Connecting the World, New York: Simon and Shuster, 2010. ISBN 978-1-4391-0211-4

Lanier, Jaron You are not a gadget: a manifesto, New York: Vintage Books, 2010. ISBN 978-0-307-38997-8

Powers, William Hamlet's Blackberry, A Practical Philosophy for Building A Good Life in the Digital Age, New York: Harper Collins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-06-168716-7

Course Requirements

Students will be required to submit two short papers of approximately 8-10 pages each. The focus of these papers will be a proposed innovation in law and ethics intended to protect the public from harm, ensure civility in cyberspace and safeguard personal privacy. The student may select to focus on the Internet in general or on specific modalities such as Facebook, My Space or Twitter, for example. Papers are to be submitted in hard copy only. In addition, each student is expected to present and analyze one case study from the assigned readings during classes designated for this purpose. Students should attend each class and actively participate in class discussions. Each paper will equal 30% of the grade (60% total) and class participation including the case presentation will equal 40% of the grade. Points will be deducted for work turned in after due dates.

Citation System

Students may use APA style, MLA style or Turabian for documenting the sources and quotations used in their written work as long as the chosen style is used consistently throughout a particular paper.

Student Attendance

Student attendance is expected at all meetings of the course. If a student misses more than one class session, he or she will be dropped from the course. Students are expected and encouraged to arrive to class on time.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades are not allowed in this course except in circumstances of extreme personal emergency. If an incomplete grade is granted, due dates and arrangements for completion of course work will be established by the professor in consultation with the student.

Classroom Behavior

During class, students are expected to refrain from the use of laptops and cell phones that is not related to course material. Violation of this rule will lead to the student being instructed to leave class, resulting in a recorded absence.

Recording class sessions without the instructor's permission is not permitted. The Code of Students Conduct governs acceptable classroom behavior.

Academic Integrity

Without regard to motive, student conduct that is academically dishonest, evidences lack of academic integrity or trustworthiness, or unfairly impinges on the intellectual rights and privileges of others is prohibited. A non-exhaustive list of prohibited conduct includes: cheating on exams and other assignments, committing plagiarism, using false citations, submitting work for multiple purposes, submitting false data, falsifying academic documentation, abuse of library privileges, and abuse of shared electronic media. The Honor System includes detailed provisions for investigating and adjudicating allegations of academic misconduct. Further information is available at <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/>.

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor system and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Disability Notice

Please note: If you believe that you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.