

## Syllabus for Ethics in a Digital World

### Course Title and Number

ISTA 161: Ethics in a Digital World  
Spring 2023  
Prerequisites: None

### Locations and Times

Online

### Instructor Information

Instructor: Volodymyr Lysenko, Ph.D.  
Email [vlisenko@arizona.edu](mailto:vlisenko@arizona.edu)  
Office: online  
Office Hours: online by appointment. Email the instructor to schedule an appointment.

### Graduate Teaching Assistants Information

Graduate Teaching Assistants (TA):  
Rose Reza (email: [rreza@arizona.edu](mailto:rreza@arizona.edu)) and  
Emily Rocha (email: [erocha@arizona.edu](mailto:erocha@arizona.edu))  
Office: online  
Office Hours: online by appointment. Email the TA to schedule an appointment.

### Online Communication Policy

If you have any general questions (e.g., not about your specific personal situation) about the course syllabus, policies, logistics, due dates, etc., please post them to the **Questions about Course Logistics** discussion area in d2l. If you have any general questions about the definitions, concepts, facts, you encounter in the course readings, lectures, videos, quizzes, etc., please post them to the **Questions about Course Content** discussion area in d2l. Posts should be edited for spelling, grammar, and clarity. The Instructor typically responds within 24 hours on weekdays.

If you have a question related to your own specific situation—e.g., absence due to illness, need for an accommodation, request for an appointment—you may email the instructor. Typically response time is not more than 24 hours on weekdays. When emailing the instructor include your name, the course you are enrolled in, and a clear explanation of your question. Emails should be edited for spelling, grammar, and clarity.

**Important!** Before emailing a question or request to the instructor or TA please read, “Re: Your Recent Email to your Instructor” (available from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>) and follow its sound advice. Emails that do not follow this advice will annoy the instructor, who will then be less likely to do what you ask.

## Course Objectives

This course explores the social, legal, and cultural fallout from the exponential explosion in communication, storage, and increasing uses of data and data production. In this class, we emphasize the opposing potentials of information technologies to make knowledge widely available and to distort and restrict our perceptions. Topics include (but are not limited to): eavesdropping and secret communications, privacy, Internet censorship and filtering, cyberwarfare, computer ethics and ethical behavior, copyright protection and peer-to-peer networks, broadcast and telecommunications regulation, including net neutrality, data leakage, and the power and control of search engines.

## Expected Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain the major moral theories and principles as they apply to digital ethics.
2. Construct cogent, logical arguments to defend moral judgments.
3. Analyze and explain the importance of the concept of privacy; define intellectual property; describe the limits to free expression; articulate the philosophical notion of rights.
4. Recognize instances of plausible ethical concern in digital information collection, processing, and dissemination
5. Identify an instance of ethical concern as being a case involving privacy, intellectual property rights, free expression, professional obligation, and/or social consequences.
6. Know the specific challenges faced by creators and users of computers in digital age.
7. Describe the history of the development of new digital technologies and their impact on individuals and society.

## Topics

- Introduction
- Digital Distraction—Autonomy vs. Community?
  - The Evolution of Information Technology
  - Ethical Theories
  - Networked Communications
  - Intellectual Property
  - Information Privacy
  - Privacy and the Government
  - Computer and Network Security
  - Computer Reliability
  - Professional Ethics
  - Work and Wealth in the Digital Age

**This course addresses ISTA Student Competencies F1, DAISBS2.1, EV1 and EV2.**

## Course Format and Teaching Methods

This course will consist of weekly online asynchronous lectures posted to the d2l, with subsequent students' assignments submitted online. All course materials will be made available via d2l, and every week students will be asked to take an online quiz or exam, or

submit a short writing assignment to the d2l drop-box. Both quizzes and online exams will be taken via the d2l quiz tool using Respondus LockDown browser on your own computer.

## Required Texts

- Required Textbook: *Ethics for the Information Age*, Michael J. Quinn, Eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) Edition (2020). It is being delivered digitally via D2L through the Inclusive Access program.  
Please access the textbook through D2L on the first day of class to make sure that there are no issues with delivery so any problems can be addressed quickly. The cost of this digital textbook will appear on your Bursars account.  
Please refer to the Inclusive Access FAQs at <https://shop.arizona.edu/textbooks/Inclusive.asp> for additional information, or email them at [uabks-inclusiveaccess@email.arizona.edu](mailto:uabks-inclusiveaccess@email.arizona.edu).
- Other materials will be made available in the “Content” area of d2l for free.

## Grading Policy

All grades will be assigned as follows: (Note that final grades will not be rounded up, e.g. a 89.9 is a B.)

100-90% = A

89-80% = B

79-70% = C

69-60% = D

59-0% = E

### A note about letter grades

It is often assumed that a "C" is a bad grade. This is not true. "C" means “satisfactory,” which means you met the expectations I set for the assignment. In other words, "C" means that you have completed the assignment correctly.

"B" is “good”—that means that you have done more than just completed the assignment correctly, you have done so to a high standard.

"A" is “excellent”—this means that your work is truly outstanding. It goes far beyond what was required by the assignment and all elements of the assignment are excellently executed.

So, you can translate letter grades as

follows.

A = Truly Outstanding

B = Exceeds Expectations

C = Meets Expectations

D = Needs Improvement

E = Fails to Meet Expectations

Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies which are available at <http://archive.catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm> .

## Graded Components/Assignments

*Note: The assigned readings and exam dates are listed in the course schedule, which are on this syllabus; any further weekly smorgasbord assignments will be available in the d2l. There may be no other indication that work is due. So, be sure to consult the course schedule and d2l frequently so that you don't miss an assignment.*

13 Smorgasbord Assignments = 130  
points total (10 points each)  
2 Semester Exams = 100 points each  
Final Exam = 150 points

Total Points Possible = 480 points

**Smorgasbord Assignments:** These assignments include quizzes in d2l and short (about 400 words each, typed in 12pt font size, with 1 inch margins, 2.0 line spacing, title page follows the APA Style student title page formatting outlined at <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/title-page> , citations/references follow the APA Format [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html) ) writing assignments. There will be 13 of these smorgasbord assignments (9 short writing assignments (SWA) plus 4 quizzes (Q)). In all cases these assignments are listed in the course schedule. Smorgasbord assignments may not be made up/retaken. SWA grading rubric is in the d2l Content section.

**Assignment File Format:** All of class assignments should be submitted through the d2l. Written assignments should be turned in as .docx, .rtf, or searchable .pdf files, since all of them will be checked for plagiarism.

**Exams:** Exams will be online and will include multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answer questions. Exams will be taken on your own computer using the d2l quiz tool. The computer must have a working version of the Respondus LockDown Browser. [Instructions for how to download the Respondus browser will be available in d2l.] Exams may not be taken early and can only be made up with evidence of an excused absence. Exams must be made up within one week of the original date. Exams may not be retaken.

As a rule graded exams will not be returned. If students wish to go over what they got wrong on the exam, they can make an appointment with the TA to do so.

Grades will be posted in d2l.

**Technical issues** - If you experience any technical difficulties either with d2l or other online tools used in this course, you should contact immediately the UA IT Support at <https://it.arizona.edu/service/247-it-support> which offers the 24/7 IT help. Instructor cannot help you with any technical issues.

**Extra Credit**—Students may earn up to 10 extra credit points added on to their final grade by attending (can be online) public lectures or talks on topics related to the course and writing up a 3 page discussion, following the SWA format. Alternatively, as an extra credit, you may submit short (up to 3 pages) essay(s) (following the SWA format) on any topic discussed in this course. Students may earn up to 5 points per event/essay and can earn no more than 10 points totally as extra credit in this class. The instructor may suggest events, but you may also get approval to attend other events. (Just check in with the instructor to be sure it is an appropriate event before you attend.) Note that the extra credit will be evaluated and students may earn less than 5 points per event/essay. All extra credit assignments must be submitted *before* the 16/Finals Week.

### **Grade Disputes**

Disputes about grades on any assignment must be filed within one week of receiving the grade. After that point the grade will not be changed for any reason. Contact the TA with any questions you have about your grade.

### **Honors Credit**

Students wishing to contract this course for Honors Credit should email the instructor to set up an appointment to discuss the terms of the contact and to sign the Honors Course Contract Form. The instructions are available at <https://www.honors.arizona.edu/honors-contracts>.

### **Late Work Policy**

Late work will only be accepted when the student has explicitly been given permission by the instructor to turn in the work late. As a rule, work will not be accepted late except in case of documented emergency or illness. You may petition the instructor in writing for an exception if you feel you have a compelling reason for turning work in late. Even when students are allowed to turn in work late it may be docked up to one-half letter grade per day.

### **Adding the Course Late**

Students who add the course late may turn in missed work within one week of adding. This work will count toward the smorgasbord assignments grade.

### **Attendance Policy**

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation and Administrative Drop is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>

The UA policy regarding absences on and accommodation of religious holidays is available at <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy> .

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean designee) will be honored. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>

Participating in course (watching all lectures and submitting all assignments) is vital to the learning process. Participation will be taken into account in the assignment of final grades as a “fudge factor” (i.e., if you are on the borderline between two grades, an excellent participation may push you into the higher grade).

## **Online Class Behavior**

College is preparation for your professional career. As such, professional behavior is required in all course related communications, whether with the instructor, TA, or with your fellow students. Treat the instructor and each other with respect and civility. In your professional life, you will be required to hold to standards of appropriate behavior, which includes avoiding harassment “of any student, TA or instructor on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or other unlawful reason.”

Sexual harassment of the instructor, TA, or fellow students will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment “includes a wide range of behaviors from the actual coercion of sexual relations, to requests for sexual favors, unwelcome sexual advances, offensive comments, jokes, innuendoes, and other sexually oriented statements and unwelcome emphasizing of sexual identity, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance at work or in the classroom, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment in which to work, live or study. Sexual harassment may be indirect and even unintentional.”

Students observed engaging in disruptive activity will be banned by the instructor. Students who continue to disrupt the class may be reported to the Dean of Students.

Students who have been banned must make an appointment to discuss the issue with the instructor before returning to class. Any work missed due to being banned cannot be made up. Continued violation of the course policy may result on the student’s behavior being reported to the Dean of Students.

The Arizona Board of Regents’ Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one’s self.

Threatening Behavior by Students Policy: <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy: <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

Students are expected to treat the online space as a classroom. Thus, students are expected to refrain from any behavior not acceptable in a classroom, such as disruptive or irrelevant comments, inappropriate language, or sexual harassment. Students who do not abide by this policy will be removed from the online course and will lose any credit associated with the online activity.

## **Notification of Objectionable Materials**

As issues arise in the news, we may have some content that may be deemed offensive by some students, but that are deemed important for the learning process.

Students are not excused from interacting with such materials, but they are certainly encouraged to express well-formed opinions that express those objections and their reasons for them.

### **Accessibility and Accommodations**

At the University of Arizona we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to explore reasonable accommodation. For additional information on Disability Resources and reasonable accommodations, please visit <http://drc.arizona.edu/>.

### **Student Code of Academic Integrity**

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity>. Students who violate this policy will receive a 0 points for the assignment and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at: <http://new.library.arizona.edu/research/citing/plagiarism>.

*Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent.* Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student email addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

### **Additional Resources for Students**

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/aaindex.html>  
Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance>

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

See <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/confidentiality-privacy>

### **Subject to Change Statement**

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**Course Schedule:** Chapter and section numbers refer to the Quinn text unless otherwise stated. All respective lectures and readings should be completed before doing assignments. Please familiarize yourself with the course schedule as the instructor may not always remind you of what is due when.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Chapters, Sections</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Week 1 (Jan. 11-15)	N/A (New Yorker Outloud Podcast, Rothman Article, Turkle Video, Rice University Research) This "Course Material" is available in d2l Content Area under "Week 1". Also read the syllabus.	Introduction to Course and Discussion of Digital Distraction.	SWA 1
Week 2 (Jan. 16-22)	Ch. 1	Catalysts for Change (The co-Evolution of Information Technology and Society)	SWA 2
Week 3 (Jan. 23-29)	Ch. 2, Sections 1-6	Introduction to Ethics: Cases, Subjectivism and Relativism Ethics, Divine Command Theory, Ethical Egoism, Kantianism	Q 1 Make sure your computer has Respondus LockDown browser installed.
Week 4 (Jan. 30-Feb. 5)	Ch. 2, Sections 7-12	Introduction to Ethics: Act Utilitarianism, Rule Utilitarianism, Social Contract Theory, Virtue Ethics, and Morality of Breaking the Law	Q 2



Week 5 (Feb. 6-12)	Review Ch. 1-2	Preparation for Exam #1	Exam #1 (covers Ch. 1-2)
Week 6 (Feb. 13-19)	Ch. 3	Networked Communications	SWA 3
Week 7 (Feb. 20-26)	Ch. 4, Sections 1-6	Intellectual Property (beginning)	SWA 4
Week 8 (Feb. 27-Mar. 3)	Ch. 4, Sections 7-10	Intellectual Property (continued)	Q 3 (covers whole Ch. 4)
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
Week 9 (Mar. 13-19)	Ch. 5	Information Privacy	SWA 5
Week 10 (Mar. 20-26)	Ch. 6	Privacy and the Government	Q 4
Week 11 (Mar. 27-Apr. 2)	Review Ch. 3-6	Preparation for Exam #2	Exam #2 (covers Ch. 3-6)
Week 12 (Apr. 3-9)	Ch. 7	Computer and Network Security	SWA 6
Week 13 (Apr. 10-16)	Ch. 8	Computer Reliability	SWA 7
Week 14 (Apr. 17-23)	Ch. 9	Professional Ethics	SWA 8
Week 15 (Apr. 24-30)	Ch. 10	Work and Wealth	SWA 9
Week 16/ Finals (May 1-7)	Review whole textbook (Ch. 1-10)	Preparation for Final Exam	Final Exam (covers whole textbook (Ch. 1-10))