IRLS520-001 Ethics for Library and Information Professionals

Updated Mon, 08/24/2009 - 19:00

COURSE NAME, NUMBER AND PREREQUISITES:

Ethics for Library and Information Professionals

IRLS520 Section 001

Instructor: Kay Mathiesen
This is a core course for the SIRLS Masters degree. There are no prerequisites.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

"Study of the basics of ethical theory and its application to problems in information management. Application and development of ethical codes in case studies."

Content of the Course

Information professionals play an extremely important role in society. And it is critical that they carry out their mission in an ethical manner. Toward this end, many organizations of information professionals have adopted codes of professional ethics. See, for example, ALA's Code of Ethics and ASIST's Professional Guidelines.

Such codes of professional ethics provide information professionals with guiding principles. However, there are a number of reasons why information professionals need to understand the ethical reasoning that justifies acting in accordance with these principles. First, it is no simple matter to apply these principles to particular concrete situations. An understanding of the underlying ethical reasoning can help us to apply these principles to such situations. Second, these principles often come into conflict with other obligations that we have. (They can even come into conflict with each other.) An understanding of the underlying ethical reasoning can help us to resolve such conflicts. Third, our ethical duties can be supported by or come into conflict with various organizational rules, public policy, and laws. An understanding of the relationship between law and ethics and the basic principles of public policy and legal theory will help us act within the law and advocate for change when that is appropriate.

In this course, we will study the various ethical theories that have been proposed by philosophers. We will then apply these theories to the ethical dilemmas that most commonly confront information professionals. We will also look more in depth at public policy, economic, and legal issues surrounding the provision of information and library services. In particular, we will focus on issues such as intellectual freedom, equitable access to information, privacy, and intellectual property. In addition, we will look at how advances in information technology have created new ethical dilemmas.

Students will be encouraged to develop their own views on the issues. These views will be developed and defended, however, in relation to understanding of ethical theory and key aspects of information policy and law.

Teaching/Learning Methods
This course will be delivered live on campus in Tucson. The course will include such assignments and activities as listening to lectures, engaging in class and small-group discussions, writing short summary pieces and longer papers, and presenting research via an in-class presentation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course you should:

- Know how to explain and apply the main ethical theories.
- Be able to analyze and provide reasoned responses to ethical dilemmas.
- Know the basics of professional ethics.
- Know, be able to apply and analyze the ALA Code of Ethics and Library Bill of Rights.
- Understand privacy concerns.
- Know the basics of intellectual property policy.
- Be able to defend principles of Intellectual freedom
- Be aware of possible conflicts between various values and how to resolve these conflicts.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

Readings:

The readings for this course will be from various sources, book chapters, journal articles, and on-line lectures and guides. All readings will be available through our d2l course site.

Textbook:

There is no required text for this course. However, the following book on information ethics is highly recommended:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Individual Project/Presentation: Students will pursue an individual project on a topic chosen in consultation with the professor. They will present the results of this project to the class.

Midterm: The midterm will be open book and open notes. The midterm will cover the basic ethical theories and ask students to explain and analyze these theories as well as apply them to various cases.

Short Assignments: Short writing assignments will ask students to do such things as dissect the readings, apply theories to cases, and analyze information issues in the news.

Participation: The participation grade will include participation in class discussion. Students will be evaluated on the basis of both the frequency and the quality of their participation.

COURSE, SCHOOL, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Academic Code of Integrity

Students are expected to abide by The University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity. *The guiding principle of academic integrity is that a student's submitted work must be the student's own.* If you have any questions regarding what is acceptable practice under this Code, please ask an Instructor.

Accommodating Disabilities

The University has a Disability Resource Center. If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me, the Instructor, official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact...
Assignment Policies

How to submit your assignments: Students should submit their assignments via the D2L drop box. They should also bring hard copies of their short assignments to class in order to foster in-class discussion.

Assignment due dates: All assignments and exams are due in the D2L drop box by midnight on the due date. (Due dates will be listed on the course schedule.) No late work will be accepted without a pre-approved excuse. You must contact me in advance to get approval to turn in work late. Even with permission to turn in work late, work may be docked as much as a third of a grade for every day it is late.

Writing style: Student written work should be free of grammatical or spelling errors. All sources should be clearly documented. (Any documentation style is fine as long as it is used consistently.)

GRADING:

Graded Assignments

Individual Project 30%
Midterm 25%
Short Assignments 25%
Participation 20%

All assignments (except for individual short assignments) will be graded by the instructor out of 100 points on a standard scale. Individual short assignments will be checked off. If the assignment is complete it will get a check (full-credit). If the assignment is incomplete it will receive a check-minus (half credit). Excellent assignments will be referred to the instructor who will evaluate it for a possible check-plus (extra credit). The overall grade for the short assignments will be on a 100 point scale (someone who gets a check for all short assignments will have a 100 for the short assignments).

The final grades will be given as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>89-80</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>79-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
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INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT ADDRESSES:

E-mail: kmathies at email dot arizona dot edu
Office hours: Tuesday 3:30-5:00 and by appointment.
Office: SIRLS Room 6
Phone Number: 520-621-5219
Courses

- Syllabi
  - Fall 11
  - Summer 2011
  - Spring 11
  - Fall 10
  - Summer 10
  - Winter 10-11
  - Spring 10
  - Winter 09 10
  - Fall 09
  - Summer 09
- Spring 09
  - IRLS506 Section 010
  - IRLS506 Section 011
  - IRLS515-001 Organization of Information
  - IRLS515-010/011 Organization of Information (Spring 2009 Virtual)
  - IRLS520-001 Ethics for Library and Information Professionals
  - IRLS520-010 Ethics for Library and Information Professionals
  - IRLS524 Information Resources and Services
  - IRLS525 010 Children in Public Libraries
  - IRLS530-010 Cataloging and Metadata Management
  - IRLS532-010 Online Searching
  - IRLS551 Equity of Access for Diverse Populations
  - IRLS554-001 Diverse Cultures, Communities & Libraries
  - IRLS562-010 Public Libraries Practice & Administration
  - IRLS571 Introduction to Information Technology Atkinson
  - IRLS571-010 Introduction to Information Technology (Smith)
  - IRLS585 Information Literacy Instruction
  - IRLS588-010 Group Information Rights
  - IRLS588-011 Issues in Information Resources: Small and Rural Library Administration and Practice
  - IRLS608 Planning and Evaluation of Libraries and Information Centers
  - IRLS696b-001 Seminar on "Misinformation and Disinformation"
- Winter 08 09
- Fall 08
- Archive of Old Syllabi

- Schedules
- Core Courses
- Course Delivery Options
- Course Descriptions
- Distributed Electives
- Individual Studies: Internships, Independent Studies & Practica
- Registration
- Required first course: IRLS504
- Suggested Courses by Specialization
- Suggested Out of Department Courses
- Workload
Guided exploration

Click a term to initiate a search.

Audience
- for Students (92)
- for Faculty (28)
- for Alums (24)
- for Staff (17)
- for Prospective Students (7)
  more...

Course
- IRLS417 (2)
- IRLS418 (1)
- IRLS432 (1)
- IRLS470 (2)
- IRLS488 (6)
  more...

People
- Adjunct Faculty (152)
- Faculty (150)
- Staff (17)
- Friends (6)

Semester
- Fall 11 (29)
- Summer 11 (27)
- Spring 11 (30)
- Winter 10 11 (1)
- Fall 10 (20)
  more...

Task
- Choosing Courses (27)
- Advising (5)
- Applying (5)
- Registering (2)
- Submitting Final Paperwork (2)
  more...

Topic
- Index (33)
- Masters (33)
- Research (20)
- Knowledge River (16)
- News (14)
  more...

Related categories

Course: IRLS520
People: Faculty » Mathiesen
Semester: Spring 09

Guided keyword