COURSE NAME, NUMBER AND PREREQUISITES:

IRLS 520 Section 001

This course is a core course for the SIRLS Masters degree. [Prerequisite: IRLS 504 or consent of the instructor.]

Instructor: Laura Lenhart

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." 3 credit hours

Library and 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 library and information professionals with guiding principles. However, there are a number of reasons why such 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.

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 library and information professionals. 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.

Note: Libraries and librarians face certain unique ethical challenges. However, they also share many ethical challenges with the growing number of businesses and government agencies that handle and disseminate information. As a result, many of the readings for this course will look at information ethics in this broader context.

Technical Prerequisites

Students taking this course will need to satisfy the standard SIRLS technical requirements. In addition, several assignments in this course require students to create web pages. Furthermore, at least one assignment requires students to create a web page and post it on the web. Tips for doing this will be posted in D2L. Please contact me if you have questions about these prerequisites.
I also plan to post several podcasts in addition to the written lectures. In order to listen to them, you will need software that plays and manages .mp3 or .m4a files. This software is available freely on the web, if you do not already have it on your computer. I recommend either iTunes or Songbird.

Course Format

This course will be taught virtually using a D2L course on the Web. Enrolled students will be given accounts by the start of the semester.

(Information about using D2L is available at http://sirls.arizona.edu/resources/computing#d2l. If you have trouble with D2L, you can contact the D2L Support Staff: d2l@email.arizona.edu)

I plan to post one lecture and/or podcast per week. (There will always be a written lecture, but some weeks there will also be a podcast.) These will be posted on Monday afternoon or evening. You’ll find them in the "Content" area of the D2L course by the following morning.

There will be a discussion forum for each lecture. Online discussions of the content of the course will take place in these forums. The participation requirement for this course requires active participation in these discussions. Lectures will typically conclude with a few possible discussion questions. In order to stay up-to-date on discussions and announcements, you should check into D2L every day or so. (More information on participation can be found under “Course Requirements”)

I have a couple of small requests with regard to the discussion forums. These forums will be our main mode of communication in this course. In order to keep this communication more or less organized, I will set up different forums for different purposes. For example, in addition to a forum for each lecture, I will also set up a "Greetings" forum for you to describe who you are and why you are taking this particular course. Please try to direct your comments to the appropriate forum. In addition, please use D2L email, instead of the forums, for any personal correspondence.

If I need to communicate with you directly, I will typically send you a D2L email message. So, in addition to regularly checking the discussion forums, you need to regularly check your D2L email account (or you need to have your D2L email forwarded to your regular email account).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Successful completion of this course will help students achieve the C1,C2 and C3 competencies outlined at http://sirls.arizona.edu/about/studentCompetencies.

More specifically, by the end of the semester, students will...

...know how to explain and apply the main ethical theories.

...be able to analyze and provide reasoned responses to ethical dilemmas that arise in information management.

...know how to explain and apply the ALA's Code of Ethics and Library Bill of Rights.

...be able to defend principles of intellectual freedom.

...understand privacy concerns in information management.

...know the basics of intellectual property policy.

...be aware of possible conflicts between various ethical values and how to resolve these conflicts.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

There is no required text to buy. However, the following book on information ethics is highly recommended:
The required readings for this course will all be available electronically. Some readings are on the web. Other readings will be available as PDFs within D2L. Still other readings are in journals that can be accessed online through UA Library. You will need a CatCard number to access these readings.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

There are four components that go into the final course grade:

<table>
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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Ethics</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Writing Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Active Participation** will be required in the class. “Active” discussion requires students to post at least 2 or 3 substantive comments per forum, completed during the appropriate week. There will be one forum per week. By substantive, I mean that students should post comments that say more than “I (don’t) agree.” On average, a substantive post is around 100 words. Comments include original threads and replies to other posts.

The **Midterm** will consist of a few essay questions (and probably a few short answer questions) that cover the lectures, readings, and discussions. It will be posted on a Monday in the middle of the session in lieu of a lecture. The midterm will be due the following Sunday, before midnight.

The **Code of Ethics** requires you to create an online code of ethics for a particular type of library and information professional. More information, and an example, will be posted in D2L at the beginning of the session.

Throughout the session, students will be required to write weekly **Short Writing Assignments** on the readings and lectures/podcasts. These papers will be 1-2 pages in length. Short writing assignments will be assigned Mondays, and due the following Sunday, before midnight. A sample will be posted to D2L for guidance, and students will receive weekly feedback as well. There will be no short writing assignment due the week of the midterm, or the final full week of class.

Further details about these assignments (including due dates) will be provided in D2L at the start of the summer session.

***All assignments must be submitted as HTML or PDF files***

**COURSE, SCHOOL, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

**Academic Code of Integrity**

Students are expected to abide by The University of Arizona [Code of Academic Integrity](http://tech.sbs.arizona.edu/node/1634). *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](http://tech.sbs.arizona.edu/node/1634). 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
your ability to fully participate.

**Assignment Policies**

**Submitting Assignments**

All assignments will be due to the appropriate dropbox in D2L, by the due date. All assignments must be in .html or .pdf
format. Information will be provided at the start of the session regarding how to create documents in these formats.

**Late Assignments**

Students are encouraged to turn in all assignments. I do accept late assignments, but in the absence of illness, emergency,
or other extenuating circumstances, I deduct 10% per day late, up to 5 days late. Past 5 days, late assignments will receive
half credit. Given that this is a virtual course, it sometimes happens that there are technological glitches. If you find
yourself unable to submit an assignment due to some technological issue, please email me. I am reasonably flexible when
it comes to this sort of thing.

In addition, it is always better to email in advance, if you know that you will be unable to submit an assignment on time.

**Incompletes**

The current Catalog reads

> The grade of I may be awarded only at the end of a term, when all but a minor portion of the course work has
> been satisfactorily completed. The grade of I is not to be awarded in place of a failing grade or when the
> student is expected to repeat the course; in such a case, a grade other than I must be assigned. Students
> should make arrangements with the instructor to receive an incomplete grade before the end of the term ...

If the incomplete is not removed by the instructor within one year the I grade will revert to a failing grade.

**GRADING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Overall Percentage Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each assignment will be graded on a point system. For example, you might receive 27 out of a possible 30 points on your
Code of Ethics. At the end of the course, the points received on each of the four components will be aggregated (using the
percentages given above under Course Requirements) to yield an overall percentage score. Students with scores of 90%
and above will receive an A, those with scores between 80% and 89% will receive a B, those with scores between 70%
and 79% will receive a C, etc. Further details about the grading of assignments will be posted in D2L.

**INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT ADDRESSES:**

**Instructor Name:** Laura Lenhart

**Contact Information**

D2L email: lenhartl@d2l.arizona.edu
Regular email: lenhartl@email.arizona.edu
Skype name: lauralenhart

Office Hours: TBD, via D2L chat and Skype, a free VOIP and video chat service.
If you have questions for me about the course, post a message to the D2L administrative discussion forum or send a message to my D2L email account. Please use my D2L email for questions about the course.

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