**Course Name:** ETHICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

**Course Number:** CIS 3250

**Mode of delivery:** The course lectures and recitations will be delivered in a traditional, face-to-face manner.

**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Prerequisites / Corequisites:** NA

**Course Description:** This course introduces fundamental concepts and analytical methods in ethics, along with ethical, legal, and social issues and questions in computer science that call for ethical analysis. The course is primarily intended for CS majors but is open to all majors. This course satisfies the University's Upper-Division Writing requirements by having students go through the drafting, writing, editing, and revision process of two written documents of at least 3,000 words collectively (1,500 each).

**Ethics and Social Responsibility**

This course satisfies the FSU Liberal Studies Ethics course requirement and is also a required course for the bachelor’s degree program in Computer Science.

**Upper-Division Writing**

This course has been approved to meet FSU’s Liberal Studies Upper-Division Writing requirement and helps you become a flexible and proficient writer for professional purposes.

In this course, you will compose as a process, including drafts, revision, and editing. The writing cultivated by this process conforms to FSU’s definition of “college-level writing”, which is writing that:

1. presents a clearly defined central idea or thesis;

2. provides adequate support for that idea;

3. is organized clearly and logically;

4. is presented in a format appropriate to the purpose, occasion, and audience; and

5. utilizes the conventions of a standard language.

As such, this course requires the completion of two or more substantial writing assignments or the equivalent. Instructors will provide criteria for evaluating your performance on writing, feedback on your writing (including instructor response), and opportunities for revision.

**Course Objectives:** Students will be required to examine views of ethics, morality and socially responsible behavior by developing and applying historically and culturally sensitive knowledge and skills to real-world ethical problems with an emphasis in the areas of technology, AI, and computer science.

This course intends to introduce basic concepts in ethics, ethical issues and problems in the field of Computer Science and IT. The course will cover classic ethical theories, applicable laws, business standards, and analysis frameworks along with practice in developing a logical written ethical argument.

Students will examine views of morality and socially responsible behavior by developing and applying historically and culturally sensitive knowledge and skills to real-world ethical problems. In achieving this larger goal, students will demonstrate their ability to:

• Evaluate various ethical positions.

• Describe the ways in which historical, social, or cultural contexts shape ethical perspectives.

• Identify, comprehend, and resolve ethical problems and their ramifications in a thorough and responsible manner; and evaluate ethical positions in the areas of technological advances.

• Name and describe the historical and/or cultural contexts that shape ethical perspectives in computer science.

• Describe the fundamental theories of ethical analysis on technical issues.

• Name and describe the relevant ethical, social and legal issues in computer science and technology; apply ethical analysis methodologies to relevant issues, including representative case studies and hypothetical situations, law and industry

• Develop and articulate conclusions and courses of action based on reasoned application of law and industry standards, and ethical principles

• Present a written ethical argument from a list of current topics proposed by the instructor.

• Assigned paper(s) will typically contain one or more aspects of the following:

O An analysis of the local and global impact of computing on individuals, organizations, and society

O How professional codes of ethics are applied to issues; defend an argument from criticism

**Liberal Studies Ethics Requirement:** This course has been approved to meet FSU’s Liberal Studies Ethics requirement and helps you become an ethically engaged citizen and a logical thinker.

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Evaluate various ethical positions.

2. Describe the ways in which historical, social, or cultural contexts shape ethical perspectives.

**Upper-Division Writing:**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Use appropriate evidence from multiple sources to illustrate how a chosen topic is relevant to a particular field.

2. Convey ideas clearly, coherently, and effectively for a particular purpose, occasion, or audience representative as appropriate for the field.

**Textbook:**Title: Gift of Fire – Social, Legal and Ethical Issues for Computing and the Internet

Authors: Baase and Henry

ISBN 13: 978-0-13-461527-1

**Or**

Title: Ethics in Information Technology

Authors: Reynolds

ISBN: 9780357690932

Note: Current articles on event and issues concerning ethics will be provided by the instructor.

**Assignments and Examinations:**

Readings. You will be assigned readings in the textbook and on the web as required. For the textbook readings, you should try to answer the review questions and attempt as many as you can of the exercises at the end of each chapter, to help you find out whether you have understood the material you have read.

**Written Case Study Essays.** Students need to submit two written essays during the semester, on topics related to ethics assigned by the instructor. The students will have the chance to receive written feedback from the instructor after the submission of each essay and will have the chance to revise each of their essays once without penalty. The grade for each essay will be the grade obtained for the revised version of the essay.

The essays are designated to assess FSU’s Liberal Studies Upper Division Writing requirement. In order for a student to pass the class with a grade of C- or better, they must obtain an average of at least C- on the two essays.

Criteria for assessing the written essays:

• Depth of research: Student has performed in-depth research on the topic, evidenced by the discussion supported by referenced sources in the bibliography.

• Quality of argument, cohesion of the topic: The writing presents good, supported arguments, and in a cohesive manner.

• Clarity and fluency: Ideas are clearly presented and have a logical flow; correct grammar, spelling, syntax, punctuation, capitalization, and style are used; adequate professional terminology is used.

• Organization and formatting: Essay is well organized in sections; section titles are visible; fonts are easily readable; text is adequately spaced, etc.

• Essays contain at least 1,500 words each.

**Examinations.** There will be two exams in this course, one midterm and a final examination. The exams are designed to evaluate the student's knowledge and comprehension of material. Questions may include multiple choice, true false, matching and short answer. Scantron forms will be used. On exams, you will be responsible for all of the assigned readings and material covered both in and out of class. If you know in advance of a reason you will not be able to take a scheduled examination within the scheduled window of time, you are responsible for making arrangements and providing required documentation in advance with the instructor, at least two weeks prior to the exam time. If you make prior arrangements or have a documented last-minute emergency conflict -- such as a medical emergency or your employer requires you to make an out-of-town trip -- the instructor will attempt to accommodate you. Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to take an examination before the rest of the class. A make-up examination may have an entirely different format from the examination given in class and may be an oral examination. If a student misses one examination, the instructor may choose to compute the grade using another examination score or scores, in place of the missed examination score.

**Course Grade.** There are 100 total percentage points to be earned in the course, distributed as shown in Table 1 below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Item | Percentage |
| Exam 1 | 25% |
| Exam 2 (Final Exam ) | 25% |
| Rough Draft Paper 1 | 10% |
| Final Paper 1 | 15% |
| Rough Draft Paper 2 | 10% |
| Final Paper 2 | 15% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 93 – 100 | C | 73 – 76 |
| A- | 90 – 92 | C- | 70 – 72 |
| B+ | 87 – 89 | D+ | 67 – 69 |
| B | 83 – 86 | D | 63 – 66 |
| B- | 80 – 82 | D- | 60 – 62 |
| C+ | 77 – 79 | F | 0 – 59 |

**Final Grades and Outcome Assessment**

The points earned over the duration of the semester determine your final letter grade awarded in the course. No additional activities/extra credit will be provided for students who, at the end of the semester, realize that they have fallen short of their desired grade. This is university policy. Students in any course must have exactly the same opportunities to earn points towards a final grade. Grades will reflect on how well students read and follow course directions as well as meet course deadlines. Grades are final unless an error was made in grading or point calculations.

In order to fulfill FSU’s Upper-Division Writing requirement, the student must earn a “C–” or higher in the course and earn at least a “C–” average on the required writing assignments. If the student does not earn a “C–” average or better on the required writing assignments, the student will not earn an overall grade of “C–” or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

**Course Schedule**

This schedule is tentative and may change from instructor to instructor and over time.

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| **Week** | **Content/Topics** | **Papers Schedule** |
| 1 | Introduction to Ethics |  |
| 2 | Evaluating Ethical Scenarios | Assign Paper 1 |
| 3 | Ethics for IT Users |  |
| 4 | Cyberattacks and Cybersecurity | Paper 1 Due for Review |
| 5 | Privacy |  |
| 6 | Freedom of Expression |  |
| 7 | Exam 1 | Paper 1 Due, Assign Paper 2 |
| 8 | Intellectual Property |  |
| 9 | Ethical Decisions in Software |  |
| 10 | Impact of IT on Society | Paper 2 Due for Review |
| 11 | Social Media |  |
| 12 | Ethics of IT Orgs |  |
| 13 | Artificial Intelligence Ethics | Paper 2 Due |
| 14 | Data Privacy Ethics |  |
| 15 | Cyber Ethics |  |
| 16 | Exam 2 | Paper 2 Due |

**UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family, and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid written excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY:**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of student’s academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy)

**ACADEMIC SUCCESS:**

Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Department of Student Support and Transitions to learn more.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with the academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet the integral requirements of the course. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services; and (2) request a letter from the Office of Accessibility Services to be sent to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and (3) meet (in person, via phone, email, skype, zoom, etc...) with each instructor to whom a letter of accommodation was sent to review approved accommodations. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in an alternative format upon request. For the latest version of this statement and more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services

874 Traditions Way

108 Student Services Building

Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167

(850) 644-9566 (voice)

(850) 644-8504 (TDD)

oas@fsu.edu

https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas

**CONFIDENTIAL CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

Victim Advocate Program

University Center A, Rm. 4100

(850) 644-7161

Available 24/7/365

Office Hours: M-F 8-5

https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**

Florida State University’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) primary mission is to address psychological needs and personal concerns, which may interfere with students’ academic progress, social development, and emotional well-being. The following in-person and virtual (tele-mental health) services are available to all enrolled students residing in the state of Florida:

1. Individual therapy

2. Group therapy

3. Crisis Intervention

4. Psychoeducational and outreach programming

5. After hours crisis-hotline

6. Access to community providers for specialized treatment

Call 850-644-TALK (8255) for more information on how to initiate services.

Counseling and Psychological Services

250 Askew Student Life Center

942 Learning Way

(850) 644-TALK (8255)

Walk-in and Appointment Hours:

M-F 8 am – 4 pm

https://counseling.fsu.edu/

**Services at UHS are available to all enrolled students residing in Florida:**

The mission of University Health Services (UHS) is to promote and improve the overall health and well-being of FSU students. UHS provides a coordinated continuum of care through prevention, intervention, and treatment. Services include general medical care, priority care, gynecological services, physicals, allergy injection clinic, immunizations, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, and a medical response unit. The Center for Health Advocacy and Wellness (CHAW) assists students in their academic success through individual, group, and population-based health and wellness initiatives. Topics include wellness, alcohol and other drugs, hazing prevention, nutrition and body image, sexual health, and power based personal violence prevention. For more information, go to uhs.fsu.edu.

University Health Services

Health and Wellness Center

960 Learning Way

Tallahassee, FL 32306

Hours: M-F, 8 am – 4 pm

(850) 644-6230

https://uhs.fsu.edu/

**Syllabus Change Policy**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.