

# CIS 4250 Ethics and Computer Science

## General Information

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## Course Description

This is a theory and skills course intended for students with a basic knowledge of computer science principles and programming languages. The 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 also presents basic theories and skills in oral argument presentation and extemporaneous debate, including argument structure and debate practice. These forensic skills are then used to support the explanation and argument of various ethical analyses of modern computer science problems.

"Extemporaneous speaking" refers to the impromptu, unpremeditated, "spur of the moment" performance of a presentation or argument. As a high-school and college debate format, it involves extensive preparation for the debate of randomly chosen modern issues, delivered with little or no notes or text. As a rule any extemporaneous speaking requires a large amount of previous research and preparation - a sort of body of "life knowledge" - with the skill coming in being able to succinctly bring to bear applicable knowledge at a moment's notice.

"Forensic" as an adjective describes something rhetorical, that pertains to public discussion or debate or is suited to the practice of argument. In the old "Quincy, M.E." television show the opening narrative mentions the fascinating world of "forensic medicine". In this or any other reference to "forensic science" or "forensic analysis", the word has nothing to do with the substance of the science. Instead, it describes anything done in preparation for use in a court of law or for discussion and debate.

This course satisfies the university "Oral Communication Competency" requirement of the University, and is a required course for the bachelor's degree program in Computer Science.

## Course Objectives

This course intends to introduce basic concepts in Ethics, ethical issues and problems in the field of Computer Science, and practical skills in oral argument and extemporaneous debate. The course will cover classic Ethical theories and analysis frameworks along with principles of oral argument and logical argument structure. In the process the course reinforces persuasive oral communication skills through constant exercise and full argument presentation and debate events.

At the conclusion of the course the successful student will be able to:

- Describe the fundamental theories of ethical analysis.
- Recognize and describe 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.
- Reach conclusions and courses of action based on reasoned application of ethical methodologies and analysis.
- Describe fundamental principles of argument logic and quality, including goal-oriented oral presentation
- Describe basic legal oral argument BARAC structure of bold assertion, rule, analysis, and conclusion.
- Describe basic extemporaneous speech structure, including use of attention-getting devices, question/answer road-mapping, and point analysis.
- Publicly present argument from all sides of issues with critical analysis, using proper argument organization.
- Present argument using audience-targeted speech, an engaging storyline, and collegial but persuasive tone.
- Present argument utilizing the skills outlined in the course Oral Argument Grading Rubric
- Publicly debate issues using logical argument structure and reasoned and effective responses to challenges.
- Extemporaneously respond to questions and challenges.
- Discuss professional codes of ethics.
- Apply professional codes of ethics to issues.

### Prerequisites

- A basic knowledge of computer science and programming concepts, such as would be acquired through an introductory course in computer programming, will be assumed.

### Textbooks and Materials

#### Required

- *Ethics for the Information Age*, Michael J. Quinn, Pearson Addison Wesley, 2005 (ISBN 0-321-19434-9).
- *Course lecture materials*, D. Chang.
- *Oral Argument Grading Rubric*, D. Chang.

#### Recommended

- *Extemporaneous speaking*, Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extemporaneous\\_speaking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extemporaneous_speaking).
- *Argument Structure*, Changing Minds.org, [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/making\\_argument/argument\\_elements.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/making_argument/argument_elements.htm)
- *Argument form*, Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument\\_structure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument_structure)
- *Preparing for writing: Formulating an argument*, The University of New South Wales, <http://writingworkshop.edtec.unsw.edu.au/argue.html>.
- *Writing: Considering Structure & Organization*, Dartmouth Writing Program, [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/ac\\_paper/write.shtml](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/ac_paper/write.shtml)
- *Legal Writing by Design: A Guide to Great Briefs and Memos*, Teresa J. Reid Rambo and Leanne J. Pflaum, Carolina Academic Press, 2001 (ISBN-10: 0-890-89910-X)

### Coursework

Students are responsible for all assigned textbook readings as well as all material presented in lecture. Exams will be based on both textbook and lecture material.

All examinations must be taken on time, and all assignments must be submitted on time. Any examination or assignment missed without an acceptable excuse will receive a grade of zero (0).

The only acceptable excuses for missing an examination or completing an assignment on time are documented illness of yourself or a dependent child, deaths in the immediate family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. If the conflict is one of which you have advance notice you are required to give advance notice to the instructor.

All excuses must be submitted in writing, must be signed by the excusing authority, must specify the dates covered, and must include complete contact information for the authority, including telephone numbers and address. Excuses for illness should be from a medical physician, and for University activities should be from a University official responsible for the activity.

A student who misses an examination for a valid excuse will, at the discretion of the instructor, either be assigned for that examination the student's average score on the remaining examinations, or be required to sit for a make-up examination. A make-up examination may have an entirely different format from the examination given in class, and may be an oral examination.

A student with an acceptable excuse that applies during the time an assignment is assigned will receive additional days to work on the assignment, only up to the number of days covered by the excuse. Assignments not submitted within the number of excused days past the assignment's original due date will receive a zero (0).

## Grading

The following table lists individual point values for examinations and assignments:

Scoring (out of 120)	
Exam 1	25 points
Exam 2	25 points
Assignment 1	10 points
Assignment 2	10 points
Oral Argument 1 *	25 points
Oral Argument 2 *	25 points
Total	120 points

\* These presentations comprise the "Oral Competency" component of the course. See the discussion below for the significance of this fact. See the "Oral Argument Grading Rubric" for specific information on scoring of oral argument, included in this document by reference.

Final scores will be calculated by comparing the total points accumulated by a student to a total of 120 points. Final grades will be assigned based on the table below, subject to the requirements for oral communication competency. No curve is applied.

90%	80%	70%	60%	< 60%
108 - 120	96 - 107.99	84 - 95.99	72 - 83.99	< 72
A	B	C	D	F

### **Oral Communication Competency**

In order to fulfill Florida State University's Oral Competency Requirement, the student must earn a "C-" or better in the course, and in order to receive a "C-" or better in the course, the student must earn at least a "C-" on the oral communication competency component of the course. If the student does not earn a "C-" or better on the oral communication competency component of the course, 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.

### **Attendance Policy**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the immediate family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Accommodations for these excused absences will be made and will do so in a way that does not penalize students who have a valid 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 students' 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://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

In particular, take note that the policy forbids plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized group work, fabrication/falsification/misrepresentation, multiple submission, abuse of academic materials, complicity, and attempts to perform any of the above (whether successful or not). When studying for this course collaboration among students is encouraged. However, all submitted assignments and examinations are expected to be the work product of the individual student alone, performed without unauthorized assistance. There is a line between helping fellow students learn and performing work for someone else and we all know where that line falls. If a student is at all uncertain about any act of collaboration discuss it with course staff before the act.

**DO NOT** work together on submitted assignments. The work you submit must be yours, and yours alone. Violations of this policy will result in expulsion from the course and a failing grade for all parties involved, as well as referral to further academic dishonesty proceedings as necessary.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
[sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu)  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

(This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.)

## **Syllabus Change Policy**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) system, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Such notice will be in the form of an announcement by e-mail to all students through the course Blackboard web site and by voice in course lecture.