



COM 428 Ethics and Information Society

Summer 2023

Course Credits: 4

Contact Hours: 55 hours

Instructor: TBA

Email: TBA

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides an examination of the ethical implications and societal impacts that result from the emergence of the Information Society and the extensive use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The topics covered include concerns surrounding access to information, copyright and intellectual property, privacy, and freedom of expression.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the ethical and social implications of the Information Society and the use of ICTs
2. Analyze the key issues related to access to information, copyright and intellectual property, privacy, and free speech
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of various strategies for addressing ethical and social issues in the Information Society
4. Synthesize the knowledge gained throughout the course to make informed decisions about the use of ICTs

PREREQUISITES

N/A

GRADING

Grades will be determined by accumulating points, with 100 points being the maximum, as follows:



ITEM	POINTS
Quizzes	20 Points
Research Paper	20 Points
Midterm	20 Points
Final Exam	40 Points
Total	100 Points

Late submissions will be graded at the end of the course. Grades will be assigned according to the following rule:

$A \geq 90 > B \geq 80 > C \geq 70 > D \geq 60 > F$.

We reserve the right to make adjustments to the overall grading policy.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts:

The Ethics of Information by Luciano Floridi (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Recommended (Optional) Texts or Other Materials:

None

COURSE TOPICS

MODULE	TASKS
Module 1	Topics: Topic 1: Introduction to the Information Society Topic 2: Historical Background and Key Developments Topic 3: The Social Consequences of the Information Society Topic 4: Digital Divides and Information Poverty Assessments: Quiz#1
Module 2	Topics: Topic 5: Strategies for Addressing access Issues Topic 6: Copyright and Intellectual Property Topic 7: Ethical and Legal Issues surrounding Digital Content Topic 8: Alternative Models of Content Ownership and Distribution Assessments:



	Quiz#2
Module 3	<p>Topics: Topic 9: Data Protection and Privacy Rights Topic 10: Surveillance and Monitoring Topic 11: The Ethical and Social Implications of Surveillance Technologies Topic 12: Balancing Privacy and Security</p> <p>Assessments: Midterm</p>
Module 4	<p>Topics: Topic 13: Free Speech Topic 14: Challenges of Regulating Speech in Online Platforms Topic 15: The Ethics of Censorship and Content Moderation Topic 16: Balancing Free Speech and Harmful Content</p> <p>Assessments: Research Paper</p>
Module 5	<p>Topics: Topic 17: Strategies for Addressing Ethical and Social Issues Topic 18: Corporate Social Responsibility Topic 19: Government Regulation Topic 20: Grassroots Movements and Social Change</p> <p>Assessments: Final Exam</p>

ATTENDANCE

1) Class attendance is required. Missing classes without permission will lead to decrease in overall grade.

Missing less than two classes: no penalty.

Missing more than two classes: 7% will be taken off from the overall grade.

If the instructor reports a student’s frequent missing of class to the Soochow University Academic Administration Office, the student might get a written warning and might be prohibited from attending final exam.

2) Participants in this course are expected to arrive in class promptly and adequately prepared. The primary objective of this course is to critically engage with the readings and the subject matter. Therefore, course participants are expected to have completed the reading prior to class and prepare thoughtful reflections/commentaries to share with fellow colleagues.



LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Late assignments are not acceptable and are subjected to grade deductions.
- 2) Assignments submitted in the wrong format will be counted as not submitted.
- 3) Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
- 4) Make-up for midterm and final exams only with valid excuses, as defined by the University.
- 5) In order to earn a Certificate of Completion, participants must thoughtfully complete all assignments by stated deadlines and earn an average quiz score of 50% or greater.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

The use of electronic devices in class is distracting, both for the user and for the rest of the class. Only non-programmable calculators can be used in the tests and exam. Any attempts to use cell phones and other electronic communication devices will be seemed as cheating. Laptops are discouraged, unless you use them for activities DIRECTLY related to the course (eg., note taking, reading course documents).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Soochow University highly values the academic integrity and aims to promote the academic fairness, honesty and responsibility. Any academic dishonesty behaviors and any attempts to cheats and plagiarism will be reported to the university administration office. A written warning and the relevant penalties will be imposed. The record might be shown on the official university transcript.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Soochow University is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at Soochow University. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome.

Note:

Please contact the University Administrative Office immediately if you have a



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learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material.