Syllabus

IRLS 520: Ethics for Library and Information Professionals

Instructor:

Kay Mathiesen

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Office hours: Friday 12:30-2:30 and by appointment.

Office: SIRLS Room 14

Course Prerequisites:

None.

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."

Information professionals play an 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 virtually through d2l. The course will include such assignments and activities as reading or listening to on-line lectures, engaging in on-line discussions, taking quizzes and exams, writing short summary pieces and longer papers, and presenting research via virtual presentations.

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:

Textbook

Required Text: Preer, Jean. 2008. Library Ethics. Libraries Unlimited: Westport, Connecticut. ISBN 978-1-59158-636-4.

Recommended text (not required): Spinello, Richard A. 1995. Ethical Aspects of Information Technology. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Additional Materials

In addition to the textbook, there are readings for this course from various sources--book chapters, journal articles, and on-line lectures and guides. The readings are available via d2l.

Course Requirements:

The Course Outline has more information about the due dates for specific assignments and is available in d2l.

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.

Quizzes: There will be a number of short timed quizzes over the material covered in the course readings and lectures.

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

Technical Prerequisites:

Students taking this course will need to satisfy the standard SIRLS technical requirements. 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 the instructor if you have questions about these prerequisites.

Course Grading:

Graded Assignments

Individual Project 30%
Midterm 25%
Short Assignments 15%
Quizzes 10%
Participation 20%

All assignments (except for individual short assignments and quizzes) will be graded out of 100 points on a standard scale. Individual short assignments and quizzes will be graded on a 10-point scale.

The final grades will be given as follows:

A 100-90
B 89-80
C 79-70
D 69-60

Grades will not be rounded up.

Course Policies:

How to submit your assignments: Students should submit their assignments via the D2L drop box.

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 the professor in advance to get approval to turn in work late. [Exceptions will only be made when required by University Policy.] 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.)

Course Discussion: The course discussions are a place for reasoned discourse. Students are expected to show the courtesy and respect towards each other and the professor in their posts. Any student who fails to follow this policy may be removed from the discussion boards and lose all participation points.

Course Policies:

Academic Code of Integrity:

Students are expected to abide by the University of Arizona's Code of Academic Integrity. See:
http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity

The guiding principle of academic integrity is that a student's submitted work must be the student's own. Do not copy another student's work, pull text from online sources, or turn in the same work for this class that you have used in another class. All work turned in must be original and specific to this course. Students who violate the UA Code of Academic Integrity are subject to disciplinary penalties (e.g., failing grade or removal from the University). Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work must be the product of independent effort, unless otherwise instructed (as in the case of the Group Presentation). If you have any questions regarding what is acceptable practice under the UA Code of Academic Integrity, please ask me (the instructor).

Accommodating Disabilities:

Arrangements can be made if you have a physical challenge or condition that could impair your participation and/or performance in this course. 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. See: http://drc.arizona.edu/

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. The need for accommodations must be documented by the DRC.

Incomplete Policy:

The grade of I may be awarded only at the end of a semester, when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. The grade of I is not to be awarded when the student is expected to repeat the course; in such a case the grade of E must be assigned. Students should make arrangements with me (the instructor) to receive an incomplete grade before the end of the semester. If the incomplete is not removed within one year, the I grade will revert to a failing grade. See http://registrar.arizona.edu/gradepolicy/incomplete.htm

Additional Policies:

The Arizona Board of Regents' Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one's self. See: http://policy.web.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students.

All student records will be managed and held confidentially. See: http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm

Information contained in this course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Course Schedule

All the assignments for the course are listed here. You are expected to consult this schedule and know when things are due.

Important: All assignments are to be submitted in the d2l drop box. (Note they are due the week in which they are listed.) The quizzes are timed and will be posted on Friday morning at 8 a.m. and must be completed by midnight.

DATE/ TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
	READINGS SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THURSDAY	UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY THE FRIDAY OF THE ASSIGNED WEEK IN THE DESIGNATED DISCUSSION AREA. ALL QUIZZES OPEN AT 8 AM AND CLOSE AT 11:59 PM ON FRIDAY.
Week 1 Aug. 25-31		1. Writing Assignment (Due Friday): Describe an ethical dilemma that has arisen or could arise in the context of a library or other information service (1-2 paragraphs).
Week 2 Professional Ethics Sept. 1-7	Preer: Chapters 1 and 2 Ortega y Gasset Mathiesen and Fallis Codes of Ethics (skim)	1. Writing Assignment: PRE for Ortega y Gasset (the PRE assignment is available in the content area of d2l) (Due Friday)
Week 3 Professionalism and Ethical Issues in Library Specializations Sept. 8-14	Preer Chs 6 and 7 Ferris (Cataloging) Morissey (Collection Development) Danielson (Archives)	1. Quiz in d2l

Week 4 Ethical Theory and Library and Information Science Sept. 15-21	Spinello	1. Writing Assignment: Analyze ethical dilemma (see assignment in d2l).
Week 5 Alternative Ethical Perspectives Sept. 22-28	Noddings Lenker Yazzie Becvar and Srinivisan	1.Writing Assignment: Analyze ethical dilemma 2 (see assignment in d2l).
Week 6 Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Sept. 29-Oct. 5	Preer Ch. 4, Mill Mathiesen Doyle	1. Midterm--Posted Friday at 5 p.m. Due Sunday by midnight.
Week 7 Controversial Materials: Labeling, Balance, and the Internet Oct. 6-12	Preer Ch. 5 Nesta/Blanke Zimmer and McCleer ALA v. USA Sheerin (Optional)	1. Quiz in d2l 2. Project Proposal Due
Week 8 Privacy and Confidentiality Oct. 13-19	· Preer Ch. 8 · Warren and Brandeis · Garoogian	1. Quiz in d2l
Week 9 Copyright Basics Oct. 20-26	· BYU's Copyright Tutorial	1. Cut and paste the title of the final slide telling you that you have completed the tutorial. Turn it in to in to the designated d2l drop box (this counts as a quiz grade). 2. Writing Assignment: See copyright assignment in d2l.
Week 10 Human Rights Oct. 27-Nov. 2	Preer Ch. 3 Mathiesen Sturges Raseroka	1. Writing Assignment: See human rights assignment in d2l. 2. Annotated Bibliography due
Week 11 Nov. 3-9	Presenters:	1.Student Presentations 2. Interview Questions due
Week 12	Presenters:	1. Student Presentations

Nov. 10-16		
Week 13 Nov. 17-23	Presenters:	1. Student Presentations
Week 14 Nov. 24-30		Thanksgiving
Week 15 Dec. 1-7	Presenters:	
Week 16 Dec. 8-14		1. Project Papers Due