



Florida State University

CIS 3250 0008

Ethics and Computer Science
2026 Fall

Course Information

Credit Hours: 3

Course Delivery Method: Online: Fully (100%)

Instructor Information

Brent Gann

Email: bgann@fsu.edu

Department/Office Location

Computer Science

Office Hours

By Appointment Only

Course Teaching Assistant(s)

Name: Tim Valentine

Email: tevalentine@fsu.edu

Name: Ellen Truchon

Email: etruchon@pc.fsu.edu

Course Description

This course presents ethical theories and analysis methods as they apply to ethical, social, and legal issues in computing and IT. Case studies and hypothetical scenarios are discussed for their social, ethical, and legal implications, as well as analyzed through various ethical-analysis methodologies. The course fosters the development of skills in logical and critical analysis of issues and viewpoints.

Course Objectives

This course introduces fundamental concepts in ethics, ethical issues, and problems in Computer Science and IT leadership. The course will cover classic ethical theories, applicable laws, business standards, analysis frameworks, and practice in developing a logical written argument.

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

- Evaluate various ethical positions
- Describe how historical, social, or cultural contexts shape ethical perspectives
- Identify, comprehend, and resolve ethical problems and their ramifications thoroughly and responsibly, and evaluate ethical positions in the areas of technological advances
- Recognize and evaluate the historical and cultural contexts that shape ethical perspectives in computer science
- Articulate views on the nature of social responsibility and its importance for those in information technology
- Describe the fundamental theories of ethical analysis on technical issues
- Apply ethical analysis methodologies to relevant issues, including representation of law, industry, and hypothetical situations
- Reach conclusions and courses of action based on the reasoned application of the law, industry standards, and ethics
- Present a written ethical argument from a list of current topics proposed by the instructor. The paper will contain one or more aspects of the

following:

- An analysis of the local and global impact of computing on individuals, organizations, and society
- How professional code of ethics are applied to issues

Required Textbooks and Readings

Ethics and Information Technology

ISBN: 9781337405874

Authors: George W. Reynolds

Publisher: Cengage

Publication Date: 2018

Edition: 6th

Topical Outline /Course Schedule

Due dates are available via the modules tab.

Module 1 - An Overview of Ethics

Module 2 - Ethics for IT Workers and IT Users

Module 3 - Cyberattacks and Cybersecurity

Module 4 - Privacy

Module 5 - Freedom of Expression

Exam 1

Module 6 - Intellectual Property

Module 7 - Ethical Decisions in Software Development

Module 8 - The Impact of Information Technology on Society

Module 9 - Social Media

Module 10 - Ethics of IT Organizations

Exam 2

Term Paper

Assignments and Evaluations

Tasks	Points
Weekly quizzes (10 chapters valued at 10 points each)	100
10 Discussion board/case study (valued at 15 points each)	150
Exam #1 (Chapters 1 - 5)	250
Exam #2 (Chapters 1 - 10)	250
Term Paper	250
Total	1000

Grading Scale and Grading Policies

Grading scale breakdown

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93% to 100%
A-	90% to <93%
B+	87% to <90%
B	83% to <87%
B-	80% to <83%
C+	77% to <80%
C	73% to <77%
C-	70% to <73%
D+	67% to <70%
D	63% to <67%
D-	60% to <63%
F	0% to <60%

The points earned over the semester determine the final letter grade awarded in the course. No additional activities/extra credit will be provided for students who realize they have fallen short of their desired grade at the end of the semester.

This is university policy. Students in any course must have the same opportunities to earn points towards a final grade. Grades reflect how well students read, follow course directions, and meet course deadlines. Grades are final unless an error was made in grading or point calculations.

No late assignments or exams will be accepted.

If an assignment has an open window beyond the due date, there will be an automatic 33% per day deduction (rounded up to the next whole day). This means an assignment 1 minute late will lose 33% immediately. More information

on the lateness policy is below.

We do not round grades.

An 89.99 is an 89.99. You must have 900 total points in this course to receive an A.

There is no extra credit for this course.

University Policies

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>)

Americans With Disabilities Act

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, 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>

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.

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/>

University Health Services

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 statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Free Tutoring from FSU

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. A comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options is available at **tutoring.fsu.edu** (<https://tutoring.fsu.edu>). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Proctored Examinations

This course requires you to take an exam in an approved, proctored

environment. Expect to pay the provider a fee for their proctoring services. You are responsible for scheduling your exam appointment(s) with the testing provider, paying applicable fees, and familiarizing yourself with their policies, including when to arrive, what to bring and not bring, allowed and prohibited activities, and instructions for missed appointments. **Below are the testing providers I allow you to use for this course, along with instructions on making an appointment and paying fees.**

Online Proctor

Course exams may be taken using the university's online proctoring service. You will be monitored and recorded during your exam. Expect to pay the provider a fee for testing. Review the [FSU Testing Center](#) website and follow instructions for using an online proctor.

Canvas Support Statement

Canvas works best with Chrome or Firefox browsers. If you use Safari and notice issues on either your mobile or desktop devices, please switch to Chrome or Firefox.

Need help with Canvas?

FSU Canvas Support

Office of Digital Learning and Academic Technology

Email: canvas@fsu.edu

Phone: (850) 644-8004

Website: support.canvas.fsu.edu

Hours: 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday

CoreFSU Graduation Requirement Designations

Ethics

This course has been approved to meet FSU's CoreFSU Ethics requirement and helps you become an ethically engaged citizen and a logical thinker.

In order to fulfill FSU's Ethics requirement, the student must earn a "C–" or higher

in the course.

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.