Course Syllabus: Spring 2016
PHI6938: Digital Ethics
Wed 6:00-8:50pm, CB1 0220

UCF

Course Description and Objectives:

This is a course in digital ethics. In some ways "digital ethics" may be taken merely as a pop-cultural slogan of ethical concerns in the 21st century, intended to identify and take selfish ownership of something – any thing – novel in an age of reproduction. In other ways, it might mean to mark out the peculiar ways in which information – along with its exchange and growth – has ethical implications in the social context. And there might be numerous other things the term "digital ethics" might connote. This course will critically examine the nature and scope of the digital, with special attention to its ethical implications for not only social structures and institutions but also for human and nonhuman nature.

Participants in this course, yourself included, will:
1. build familiarity with a range of theoretical and analytical perspectives,
2. exhibit understanding of appropriate theoretical perspectives,
3. demonstrate complexity of rigor of intellectual engagement,
4. present ideas clearly and coherently to your peers, and
5. effectively situate your ideas in the professional intellectual context of existing discourse.

Office Hours:
I will guarantee to be available for in-person during official office hours from 1:30-4:30pm on Wednesdays and will work with you to find a mutually agreeable time to meet in other formats (online by Skype or Hangout or by email) and at other times as needed.

Instructor Contact:
Dr. Jonathan Beever (jonathan.beever@ucf.edu)
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Texts & Technology Program, UCF
Office location: PSY238

Course Grading:
This course will be graded on the following scale, in line with UCF academic regulations.

Letter Grade	GPA	Percent Score	Letter Grade	GPA	Percent Score
A	4.00	92-100	C	2.00	70-75
A-	3.75	90-91	C-	1.75	68-69
B+	3.25	87-89	D+	1.25	66-68
B	3.00	82-86	D	1.00	62-65
B-	2.75	80-81	D-	0.75	60-61
C+	2.25	76-79	F	0.00	<59

Academic Integrity:
This is an ethics class, so it seems unnecessary to say that plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course and/or the placement of a "Z" designator with your grade. See the UCF policy at http://z.ucf.edu. Academic dishonesty will subject you to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule handbook for further information.

Course Accessibility Statement:
It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

Teach Act Statement:
The materials for this course are only for the fair use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated. The instructor receives no royalty payments for any materials used in this course.

Syllabus Subject to Change:
I anticipate that we will make adjustments to the readings and schedule based on what decisions we make together in class. All changes will be clearly announced in person and online. Remaining in the course after reading this syllabus will signal that you accept the possibility of changes and take responsibility for being aware of them.

Course Evaluation:
1. Participation & Attendance (5%)
Participation and attendance is required. I will work with you to address conflicts and emergencies on a case-by-case basis, but expect you to attend class. Participation hinges on engaging thoughtfully with the readings and your colleagues' analysis of them.

2. Critical Annotations (10%)
Critical annotations will push you to develop understanding of theories, concepts, and figures related to digital ethics. These weekly short analytic exercises will scaffold toward your final project. These assignments will ask you to annotate the week's readings and to draw connections to other works or figures, reminding yourself of comments, questions, or concerns you'd like to bring up in class. Write with the intention of developing a conference-length paper from one or more of them later on.

3. Annotated Bibliography (10%)
This list of at least 10 references and summaries will be related to the topic of your presentation. The majority of references should be to academic sources. Citation format should be discipline-specific.

Annotations should do at least two things. They should foremost tell us why you included it as an entry - why is it important for your presentation? Second, they should tell us something about the content - main thesis, approach, important premises, etc. I don't expect that should take you more than 2 short paragraphs. See the Purdue OWL for more information and for help with formatting.

The complete annotated bibliography is due no later than 24 hours before your scheduled presentation.

4. Presentation (20%)

Choose a topic related to the class content and your own interests on which to do an in-class presentation followed by a Q&A period. Presentations can be in any format, but must include at least some visual content and must centrally address at least one ethical issue related to the topic. Your presentation should seek to give the rest of the class (and us) access to the way your disciplinary background views and engages with relevant ethical issues. This could be a topical/conceptual analysis or a specific case study that brings up relevant ethical issues. Your presentation will be scored with a presentation rubric that values presentation skills, clear communication, organization, and creativity.

5. Evaluations of peer presentations (10%)

a. Offer evaluations of your peers' presentations. These should: a) evaluate content delivery, b) assess engagement with ethical issues, c) and pose comments and/or questions for the presenter. You will use the same presentation rubric that I do and include a numeric score along with brief written remarks. Return these comments to me no later than Friday 11:59pm after each presentation. I will anonymize and collect these comments to share with the presenter.

6. Digital Ethics Project (25%)

Your final project should have two components: an analytic/critical project and a public engagement strategy.

First, it should work to carefully and critically engage with the theoretical frameworks and figures we've discussed during the term. This might result in either a traditional academic paper or a digital project for journal publication.

Second, your project should identify an ethical concern directly related to your own field of research and propose a way engage your disciplinary or professional colleagues. A letter of support or evaluation should be sent to the course instructors after the project is complete. Working with me, your disciplinary faculty, and/or relevant peer specialists, complete this outreach project no later than the end of study week.

Your digital ethics project will be graded using a critical thinking rubric I will provide in advance. You will receive substantial, line-level feedback on this work.

7. Final Critical Analysis (20%)

You final critical analysis should be a short multimedia presentation answering the question: what is digital ethics? Your response to this question should draw on your work and our

discussions over the course of the term. With your permission, we will work together to frame and submit these as a publication to the Public Philosophy Journal.

Required Texts & Materials:
1. Floridi Luciano. 2013. The Ethics of Information. Oxford University Press.
2. Heider, Don and Jon Thomas. 2014. A Practical Guide to Digital Journalism Ethics. Kindle epublication.
3. Other readings as shared on our webcourses site.

Outline of Course Content (topics):

Part I: Ethics and the Digital
1. Approaches to ethics
2. Agents and Patients
Digital Ethics and Information
1. Pluralistic Analysis for Ethical Decision-Making
1. Professional Standards
Determinism and technology
Simulation and Reality

Part II: Digital Virtues
Meaningfulness: Representation and Meaning
Agency
Transparency
Security, Terrorism, and Violence
Ownership
Freedom, Autonomy, and Digital Identity
Privacy/Surveillance
Responsibility
Sustainability and Digital Environments