

COURSE SYLLABUS

EDTC 5330.W2
TECHNOLOGY, ETHICS
AND SOCIETY

SEBASTIAN MAHFOOD
Fall 2002
792-6395

1. Course Description:

This course will engage social ethics in response to its impact on the developing technologies of global societies. We will explore the idea that traditional concepts of ethics insist that people in social relationships be treated as ends, in and of themselves, and never as means to the ends of others. Since all technologies evolve from our social relationships, no technology is value-free. Because of the value-laden nature of technological developments, new technologies are characteristically defined as both socially-determinative and socially derived. This is a three-credit course.

2. Learner Outcomes:

- Student will demonstrate an understanding of some of the ethical concerns raised through the history of technological progress in relation to textuality.
- Student will demonstrate an understanding of the traditional ethical issues concerning privacy, property, and civic responsibility.
- Student will demonstrate a basic understanding of social ethics in relation to emerging web-based technologies.
- Student will demonstrate a working knowledge of developing trends concerning the implementation of instructional technologies in educational environments.
- Student will demonstrate an understanding of how ethical concerns involving rapid advances in technology are depicted in popular media.
- Student will demonstrate an understanding of how culture shapes and is shaped by developing technologies.
- Student will demonstrate an ability to be a producer in addition to being a consumer of ethical inquiry.

3. Schedule

Entering the Conversation:

WEEK ONE: Introduction to the Course, overview of materials and virtual spaces used, Cyberethics, third part [Privacy in Cyberspace]

WEEK TWO: Orality and Literacy, first part

WEEK THREE: Reading Set One—Report # 1 on Literary Theory

WEEK FOUR: Cyberethics, fourth part [Property Ownership in Cyberspace]

WEEK FIVE: Watch a film from Movie Set One and Movie Set Two, Exam 1

Responding to the Conversation

WEEK SIX: Cyberethics, second part [Anonymity in Cyberspace]

WEEK SEVEN: Orality and Literacy, second part

WEEK EIGHT: Reading Set Two—Report # 2 on Race, Class and Gender

WEEK NINE: Cyberethics, fifth part [Communities, Citizenship, and Democracy]

WEEK TEN: Watch a film from Movie Set Three and Movie Set Four, Exam 2

Shaping the Conversation

WEEK ELEVEN: Orality and Literacy, third part

WEEK TWELVE: CyberEthics, first part [The Moral Landscape in Cyberspace]

WEEK THIRTEEN: Reading Set Three—Report # 3 on Trends

WEEK FOURTEEN: Watch a film from Movie Set Five and Movie Set Six, Exam 3

WEEK FIFTEEN: Peer-Oriented Project Evaluations

4. Resources:

- Ong, Walter J. (1982) *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen. (required).
- *Cyberethics: Social and Moral Issues in the Computer Age*. (1999) Ed. by Robert M. Baird, Reagan Mays Ramsower, Stuart E. Rosenbaum. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. (required).

in addition to selected weblinks, document postings and films on the relevant historical and cultural perspectives through which these issues have grown, in an effort to illustrate the impact of developing technologies on the relationships people have with one another.

5. Evaluation:

- a. Students will be responsible for preparing the relevant readings and reviewing the relevant films in time for the online discussions and submitting, over the course of the semester, three two-page reports on the ideas generated through the readings. 30%
- b. Each student will also be responsible for developing an online 40%

capstone project revolving around one particular aspect of any of the works studied in this class. As the project is being prepared, each student will present an ongoing rationale in an online forum devoted to his or her project and lead a continuing discussion concerning its nature. Students may use any forms of media (i.e. news clippings, video clips, slides, photographs) to complement their presentations.

- c. There will be an ongoing discussion forum in which every student will be expected to participate throughout the reading of each section followed by section exams, the format of which will consist of both an objective and subjective section, each worth 50% of the total exam grade. 30%

Grading Scale:		A	93-100	A-	90-92	
	B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
	C	70-79	NC	69 and below		

6. Supplements:
 Assignment rubrics (attached)
 Six sets of movies

Movie Set One: VIRTUAL REALITY

Matrix—virtual reality taking the place of reality
 War Games—machine reality controlling human reality
 Tron—humans physically entering virtual environments
 Total Recall—machines masking human error

Movie Set Two: MEDIATED EXISTENCES

The Truman Show—mediated existence
 The Net—identity theft

Movie Set Three: HUMANLIKE TECHNOLOGIES

Terminator—machines taking the place of humans
 Blade Runner—machines being hunted by humans
 AI—humanlike assembly
 Bicentennial Man—machines aiding society
 Alien—android violates ethical protocols
 Aliens—android sacrifices himself to ethical protocols
 2001: A Space Odyssey—human error corrupting machines

Movie Set Four: MACHINELIKE HUMANS

Star Wars—man turning into a machine to destroy himself
 Robocop—man turning into a machine to save himself

Movie Set Five: TECHNOLOGY CONTROLLING NATURE

The Sixth Day—cloning

Gattaca—genetic engineering
Jurassic Park—genetic manipulation

Movie Set Six: TECHNOLOGY CONTROLLING SOCIETY

Logan's Run—machines controlling society
A Clockwork Orange—technology being used to control humans
1984—technology being used to keep humans under control

Three sets of readings

Reading Set One: Literary Theory

“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”—Walter Benjamin
<http://www.student.math.uwaterloo.ca/~cs492/Benjamin.html>

A reading of Derrida's reading of “Plato's Pharmacy” by Tim Spurgin
<http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/english/courses/60A/handouts/pharmacy.html>
[<http://www.georgetown.edu/grad/CCT/505/platosel.html>] Phaedrus
[<http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/wyrick/debclass/pharma.htm>] Derrida on Phaedrus

“What is an Author?” excerpt—Michel Foucault
<http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.authorFunction.en.html>
[<http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/foucault.html>] Klages on Foucault

Reading Set Two: Gender, Race and Class

Romano, Susan. (1999) “On Becoming a Woman: Pedagogies of the Self.” *Passions, Pedagogies and 21st Century Technologies*. Ed. By Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press.

Tal, Kali. (1996) “The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: African American Critical Theory and Cyberculture.” <http://www.kalital.com/Text/Writing/Whitenes.html>
Gaiter, Leonce. (1997) “Is the Web too Cool for Blacks?”
<http://www.salon.com/june97/21st/cool970605.html>

Moran, Charles. (1999) “Access: The ‘A’ Word in Technology Studies.” *Passions, Pedagogies and 21st Century Technologies*. Ed. By Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press.

Reading Set Three: Developing Trends

Journal Subscription—students must subscribe to one (or all) of the following free journals. Subscriptions can be processed online at the following addresses:

1. The Journal (www.thejournal.com)
2. Converge (www.convergemag.com)
3. Syllabus (www.syllabus.com)

4. Technology & Learning (www.techlearning.com)
5. Matrix (www.matrix-magazine.com)

7. Other:

Because this class is being taught entirely in a technology-mediated forum, weekly class participation and fulfillment of the course schedule is mandatory. In a traditional classroom setting, students would be required to be in class 2.5 hours a week and prepare for class discussions 3.5 hours a week. Expect to devote at least 6 quality hours a week to this course. There will be a virtual environment within which students might meet during weekly open houses in the evening hours.

Students who do not complete the requirements of the course must meet with the instructor prior to the end of the course to complete an Incomplete Course Form; otherwise, an NC will be issued.

Assignments not submitted by the deadlines listed may be penalized.

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.