PHIL 213: Societal and Ethical Implications of Technology (3 Credits)

Course Description

What is technology? What is society? What are ethics? What effect does technology have upon a particular society at a particular time in history? These are the questions which will help us formulate, understand and answer the main question in this course: How does a society, or a group within a society, make rationally sound, moral choices about the best use of existing and new technologies. We will review the history of technology and society, beginning with humans mastering the use of fire and ending with humans manipulating atoms and molecules at the nano-scale. The major focus of our work will be the social and moral implications of technology from the 16th century (CE) to the present time and beyond.

Prerequisite Courses
None

Textbooks and Software and Other Materials

Winston and Edelbach, Society, Ethics and Technology, 4th ed., Wadsworth 2009. ISBN: 978-0-495-50467-2.

Bennett-Woods, Nanotechnology, Ethics and Society, CRC 2008. ISBN: 978-1-4200-5352-4.

Contact Coleen at the NDSCS Bookstore for the most current textbook information (1-800-342-4325, ext. 2239 orcoleen.thoe@ndscs.nodak.edu). You may also visit the Bookstore web site at http://www.ndscsbooks.com/ and search for book information by class by clicking the "Textbook" tab.

Software: Microsoft Word is needed for all online classes. If additional software is needed for a particular course, it will be indicated in the online course schedule.

Technology Required

Email: Students taking online classes from NDSCS also need a working email account. Be sure email address is updated in student record in PeopleSoft system. Internet Access required. High speed Internet service is highly recommended. If students are unable to get high speed service, an alternate site may be needed to view some of the course components.

Course Objectives

- Purpose: Examine and discuss contemporary moral issues.
- Gain a basic understanding of moral theory.
- Appreciate the complex, confusing, and conflicting nature of moral decision making.
- Develop critical thinking and writing skills concerning moral viewpoints.
- Respectfully dialogue with others, including those who hold opposing views.
- Establish a well-reasoned and informed viewpoint on contemporary moral issues.
- Grow in confidence at intelligently discussing controversial moral issues.

Grading

The grade for this course will be based on the following:

1. Unit discussion question postings
2. Unit journal entries
3. Chapter quizzes
4. Position paper
5. Personal philosophy statement
6. GS Quiz
7. Self-Assessment
8. Online research
9. Online introduction
10. Vocabulary exercises Your assignments will be graded and grades entered as soon as possible. Points will be awarded for assignments and a letter grade assigned at the end of the term. Total possible points and the grading scale appear in the syllabus section following Grading Criteria. To read instructor comments regarding your grade for a particular assignment, go to "Gradebook" and click on the score for that assignment.

Assignments

Please follow the order of units as listed. Each unit will be accessible according to the Course Schedule. All unit assignments are due by midnight on the "Course Schedule" due date except initial discussion question postings, which are due by midnight on Wednesday. You are responsible to watch your gradebook and notify the instructor if an assignment has not been scored, or if you think the score is incorrect. Be prepared to spend nine (9) or more hours per week in order to complete all assignments in timely fashion. Submit assignments as directed. You are strongly encouraged to make hard copies of your assignments to avoid losing data in the case of technical issues. At the first sign of problems, contact your Internet Service Provider (ISP) immediately. Assignments are expected to be submitted by the due date. Past due assignments will be accepted for up to ten (10) days after the due date, with a 10% per day penalty deducted. Exceptions may be made in case of emergencies. Missing five or more discussion question deadlines is grounds for the final grade to be dropped one letter.

Discussion Questions

The discussions are intended to be an ongoing conversation about the topic for the unit. Dr. Mark will provide an initial question or comment to get the discussion rolling. You are responsible to make your own views known as well as to raise questions related to the topic and respond to the questions and comments made by others. You are expected to process what you read and incorporate ideas into your discussion responses.

Reading and Quizzes

The "Assignment" page of each unit will specify the text pages to be read. Vocabulary exercises, when used, are designed to reinforce important terms. The quizzes on the chapter reading are open book. The purpose is to reinforce what you have read, so you are expected to take your time and find the correct answer.

Journal Entries

After you have completed all other unit assignments, you will make a journal entry. Only you and the instructor will be able to view your journal entries. Journal entries **are**:
1. Personal reflection
2. Personal Evaluation Journal entries **are not**:
- A diary of your personal life
- A forum to complain about assignments
- A re-hash of your discussion postings

Personal Philosophy Statement

This will be a statement which describes your personal philosophy in life - the values and convictions by which you live. Further details are available in Unit 8.

Ethical Position Paper

You will write one paper on an ethical issue that is covered in this course or one that is closely related to your major. Further information is available in Unit 15.

Grading Policies

The grade for this course will be based on how well you think, write and evaluate. The specific assignments used to measure these three categories are:

1. Discussion questions
2. Journal entries
3. Quizzes
4. Papers
5. Self-assessments
6. Online interaction Your assignments will be graded and grades entered as soon as possible. Points will be awarded for assignments and a letter grade assigned at the end of the term. To read instructor comments regarding your grade for a particular assignment, go to "Gradebook" and click on the score for that assignment.

Discussion Questions

Your discussion question responses will be graded on two main items: how many and how well. How many – you are expected to post responses at least three different days each week, the first posting no later than Wednesday and the final posting no earlier than Thursday. How well – your responses will be evaluated according to standards laid out in the discussion question expectations presentation. The "Discussion Question Expectations" link will also contain these standards, as well as other grading details.

Journal Entries

Journal entries will be assigned on a regular basis, a vital part of your self-evaluation and personal growth in this class. The journal entry presentation lays out the expectations and grading parameters. The "Journal Entry Expectations" link summarizes this information.

Papers

The scoring details for the personal philosophy statement are found in the content item in Unit 8. The ethical position paper scoring details are found in the Unit 15 content item.

Quizzes and Vocabulary

Your score on the GS Quiz will indicate how familiar you are with the basic requirements of the course. A score of less than 80% is considered unacceptable, and you may be asked to retake the quiz. Each chapter in the textbook has an accompanying quiz. The quizzes are computer graded and the score automatically recorded in your Gradebook. You have the opportunity to request permission to retake the quiz. The retake score is the one that will count toward your final grade. Units 1-3 have a large number of items that may be unfamiliar to you. Vocabulary exercises are designed as a way to review and reinforce the meaning of these new terms. Some of the exercises are for regular credit and others for extra credit.

Self-Assessment

The initial ethical, worldview, and final ethical self-assessments a means for you to explore your viewpoints and identify how they have changed as a result of participating in the course. Scoring criteria are indicated on each of the assessments.

Online Interaction

Submitting a digital photo and brief bio information for insertion in the Class Photo Gallery is worth two extra credit points. Cyber Café participation is worth up to five points – three for introducing yourself to the class, and one point each for responses to two different students. Setting up your NDSCS email account as default for class use and completing the email test run is worth two extra credit points. Reading the online syllabus, course schedule, FAQ, LAD and Smarthinking information is worth up to five extra credit points. The Internet research assignment is worth up to ten points. Each working Webliography link which meets the research criteria will receive two points, and up to four additional points will be awarded based on the quality and relevance of the content. Completing the live audio discussion preparation is worth three points.

Grading Scale

350=Threaded Discussion
140=Papers
140=Quizzes
115=Journal Entries
60=Self Assessments
60=Other
35=Online Interaction

900=Total Possible Points

40=Extra Credit Points

Grading Scale

A=90%-100%- 810 points minimum
B=80-89.9%- 720 points minimum
C=70-79.9%- 630 points minimum
D=60-69.9%- 540 points minimum
F=Less than 60%- 549 points or less

Tie to Program Assessment Outcomes

Assessment of Student Outcomes

– Communication Formative: Students will have unit readings in relevant subject matter from textbooks and Internet articles. Students will write responses to weekly discussion questions or case studies related to the reading topic. Students will write responses to those posted by other students. Summative: Students will write unit quizzes based on the reading content as well as complete occasional vocabulary exercises to reinforce the meaning of new terms.

Assessment of Student Outcomes

– Critical Thinking Formative: Students will write responses to weekly discussion questions or case studies related to the reading topic. Students will write responses to those posted by other students. Summative: Students will search the Internet for information relevant to the subject matter being studied, select the most informative sites, and post links to them in the course room. Students will write mid-term and final papers on issues related to content covered up to that point, demonstrating the knowledge and skills gained.

Work Expectations

Students should estimate approximately three hours of course work per credit per week for NDSCS classes. For example, a three-credit class may require approximately nine hours of work time a week for the student. This amount may vary by class and by student.

Policies and Procedures

NDSCS online students should be aware of various policies and procedures such as those shown below.

Attendance (Logging into online classes is considered "attendance") - Regular attendance and completion of all assignments, on time and as scheduled, is important to your success in this course. As your instructor, if I am unexpectedly unavailable and may be delayed in reviewing or correcting assignments, I will notify the class of this as a sign of courtesy and respect. An online student who does not log into an online course for ten (10) consecutive calendar days, or does not complete any assignments during that time period, may be dropped from the course. Efforts to contact inactive students are attempted as soon as each semester begins; however, if there is no response from the student and inactivity continues, a drop will be enacted. The following action may be taken regarding irregular attendance:

  • Dropped from a course or program
  • Course grade may be lowered
  • Termination of financial aid assistance

- Cancellation of registration
- Restriction from extra-curricular activities
- Any other judgments deemed necessary

Computer Access - Online students must maintain computer access to the online course at all times. Lack of computer access as an excuse for late work or missed exam/quiz will NOT be accepted. Review the Access Policy to learn how you can take a proactive approach to your online success. It is the student's responsibility to access the class on another computer in the event of hardware or software problems. If your problems are not cleared up with 12 hours, contact the instructor by telephone to make other arrangements. If you suspect your computer has a virus, the Access Policy contains contact information for the NDSCS Help Desk. They may be able to diagnose and help you correct the problem. For other technical problems, like not being able to view a page, slowness issues, problems viewing video or hearing audio, things not working as they should, the Access Policy also contains contact information for the 24/7 eCollege helpdesk. Remember, neither Help Desk will answer homework questions; send those to the instructor.

Refund Policy/Withdrawal Refund Schedule

Academic Calendar - Online classes follow the same calendar as regular on-campus classes. They begin with the semester begins and students do not need to log in at specific days/times but instructors do set due dates for assignments and exams to be submitted so there is structure to the classes. Online classes are not self-paced but do provide flexibility in that they are accessible 24/7 to allow students to work around other commitments when doing their course work.

Online Student Participation and Conduct Guidelines

The practices of courtesy and respect that apply in the traditional classroom also apply online. However, the expectations and practice differ in the online classroom to greater extent. Review the Online Student Participation and Conduct Guidelines for future reference.

Academic Integrity

Integrity is an NDSCS core value and there is an expectation that all students, as members of the college community, adhere to the highest levels of academic integrity. Dishonesty in class, laboratory, shop work or tests is regarded as a serious offense and is subject to disciplinary action by the instructor and dean of the respective division. For more information, refer to the NDSCS Student Planner or College Catalog under College Policies and Basic Regulations of Conduct.

Types of Misconduct

Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Fabrication: Intentionally and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating academic dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

Disabilities and Special Needs

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Support Services Office, 225 Mildred Johnson Library (phone 701-671-2623, 800-342-4325, ext. 32623) as early as possible in the term. Other College Policies can be found in the Catalog.

Student-Instructor Communications

While an online class is available 24 hours a day and offers greater flexibility for the student and instructor, keep in mind that your instructor will not be available 24 hours a day. I will check my email and voicemail messages on a regular basis, but there may be times when I am unavailable due to other commitments and job responsibilities. I will respond to messages as time allows. As a general rule, you can expect your direct question to be answered within 24 hours during week days. When sending an email, please include your full name. Often, email addresses do not indicate who is sending the message. Or, if two people in class have the same first name, I may not know to whom I am responding in the case of a voicemail.

Exams

Exams are done online. Instructors may require a proctor be present for online exams. When the semester begins, check your course information for the proctor form and proctor criteria.

Schedule

Online classes follow the same academic calendar for start and end dates as regular on-campus classes. While there is no set time for students to be logged into a class each day, instructors do set due dates for assignments and exams. Students should lot into classes frequently to keep up with announcements and to keep up with course work. Online classes are not self-paced. You may want to print the for NDSCS Academic Calendar reference during the year. It includes semester start and end dates, final days to add/drop classes for each semester, vacation dates, etc.

Tuition/Fees

See tuition and fee information, Refund Policy and Withdrawal Schedule information in the NDSCS Online site under Financial Information. Tuition and fee costs do not include books, software, supplies and other program or course fees which may vary by program.

Instructor Information

Dr. Mark Ahlsten 701-672-0311 or email