

❧ ISSUES IN THE INFORMATION AGE ❧

---

**I.** **PROF. POLGER**

Department of Philosophy  
206A McMicken Hall  
Office Hours: open door, and by appointment

thomas.polger@uc.edu  
(voice) 556.6328

---

**II.** **LOCATION & TIME**

053 McMicken

TTH 2:00-3:15

---

**III.** **SYNOPSIS**

Information technologies have changed the ways in which we interact with one another and the world around us—sometimes subtly and sometimes dramatically. These changes prompt us to reconsider the moral and legal principles that give order to our society, not to mention the very notions of society, community, and self. This course is designed to raise each student's familiarity some issues surrounding information technology—conceptual, moral, legal, political, and practical.

---

**IV.** **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Three texts are available at local bookstores: (1) *Privacy in Context*, by Helen Nissenbaum; (2) *Natural-Born Cyborgs* by Andy Clark; and (3) *The Diamond Age*, by Neal Stephenson. All other readings are online, via Blackboard.

---

**V.** **BLACKBOARD**

Blackboard will be used to distribute announcements, including schedule changes, class cancellations (e.g., due to inclement weather), corrections, and some information about readings and assignments. Blackboard will also be the mechanism by which you will turn in assignments. Please be sure that your email address is up to date in Blackboard. You are responsible for information distributed via Blackboard and email.

---

**VI.** **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES**

There will be two or more quizzes, two paper assignments, and a group project that will have subparts throughout the semester. Your final grade in this course will be determined by the quizzes (15% total), papers (40% total), project presentations (25% total), and final project written assignment (20%).

Written work must be typed and formatted as though it would be printed on standard paper. Text should be double-spaced, in a standard 10-12 point font. Margins should be at least 1 inch on each side. Pages should be numbered. Work that does not satisfy these requirements will not be accepted. Further instructions on submitting assignments will be given with the assignments.

Missed quizzes can be made up with a 30% penalty, or no penalty if you provide evidence of a documented emergency involving you or an immediate family member. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 20% per 24 hour increment, starting the moment the due date passes, unless

you provide evidence of a documented emergency involving you or an immediate family member. (That is, a paper submitted at 2:00pm the next day is two days late and will be discounted 40%.)

---

**VII. PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

We understand that many students use portable electronic devices in class for note taking and for access to online course materials. Such use is permitted so long as it is not distracting to students or instructors, or otherwise disruptive to the classroom environment. Please turn off ringers on your cell phones, as well as the audio feedback or speakers on any other electronic devices. Use of headphones, earbuds, or similar in class is prohibited excepting documented medical need. Use of portable electronic devices is subject to the usual standards of classroom decorum and common courtesy.

---

**VIII. THE FINE PRINT**

You are responsible for knowing and following all University and College regulations, for example with respect to registration, drop or withdrawal, and grading status. It goes without saying, but we will nevertheless, that this course will be conducted according to the University's Student Code of Conduct. *Any student who is academically dishonest will at least fail the course; further actions may be taken.*

Please familiarize yourself with the University's guidelines on academic integrity, online at <<http://www.uc.edu/studentlife/conduct/guide.html>>. Pay special attention to the guidelines regarding plagiarism, which we take very seriously. In particular, note that academic dishonesty is a "strict liability" offense—you do not have to intend to cheat to be guilty of plagiarism, you must ensure that your work is your own and that no one else presents your work as theirs.

Any student who, because of a disabling condition, needs special arrangements to meet course requirements must contact us *immediately* so that the appropriate arrangements can be made. (All disabilities must be documented with the University and us.)

Any student who requires accommodation for religious observances must notify the instructor in advance.

All students are expected to have access to the equipment and knowledge to make use of and complete the Blackboard-based readings and assignments.

The readings and schedule are subject to change. You should expect to be treated with respect and fairness by the instructors and by your classmates. Among other things, you should expect that your work will be returned in a timely manner, that you understand how your work is graded, and that the instructors make themselves available to answer questions.

## Module I: Responsibility, Freedom, Ownership

1. Jan 8-10  
Introduction  
Daniel Dennett, Information, Technology, and the Virtues of Ignorance
2. Jan 15-17  
J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*  
Quiz #1, and discussion of the projects
3. Jan 22-24  
William Fisher, Theories of Intellectual Property  
Richard Stallman, Why Software Should Be Free
4. Jan 29-31  
Grockster and Limewire amicus briefs and decisions  
Neal Stephenson, *Diamond Age*  
Group project pitches

## Module II: Privacy

5. Feb 5-7  
Helen Nissenbaum, *Privacy in Context*, Chs. 1-3  
Evan Ratliff, Gone Forever  
Neal Stephenson, *Diamond Age*  
Paper #1 Due
6. Feb 12-14  
Helen Nissenbaum, *Privacy in Context*, Chs. 4-6
7. Feb 19-21  
Daniel Solove, selections from *The Future of Reputation*  
Group project discussion
8. Feb 26-28  
Interim Project presentations  
Group project discussion

### **Module III: Thinking Machines and Cognitive Prosthetics**

9. Mar 5-7

Alan Turing, Computing Machinery and Intelligence

John Searle, Minds, Brains, and Programs

Neal Stephenson, *Diamond Age*

10. Mar 12-14

Andy Clark, *Natural Born Cyborgs*, Introduction through Ch. 5

Quiz #2

11. Mar 19-21

Spring Break

12. Mar 26-28

Fred Adams and Ken Aizawa, The Bounds of Cognition

Rodney Brooks, from Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control

Paper #2 Due

### **Module IV: War, Crime, and Porn**

13. Apr 2-4

Brian Cantwell Smith, Limits of Correctness in Computers

Christian Caryl, Predators and Robots at War

ParisTech Review, Technology, Law and Responsibility: The Drone Paradox

Sarah Kreps and John Kaag, The Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Contemporary Conflict: A Legal and Ethical Analysis

14. Apr 9-11

Susan Breau, Marie Aronsson, Rachel Joyce, Drone Attacks, International Law, and the Recording of Civilian Casualties of Armed Conflict

Julian Dibbell, A Rape in Cyberspace

15. Apr 16-18

Mike Godwin, Virtual Community Standards

Marc Harrold, The Cyber-Community Jones's Can't Keep up With the Miller[s]

Final project presentations

Final project papers due during Exam Week