IMT 550
Policy and Ethics: Information in Social Context
Winter 2015

Instructors
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Course Description
This course examines policy and ethical issues affecting information use, with an emphasis on the social and cultural aspects. We will discuss policy issues including privacy and intellectual property, ethical issues including freedom of expression and social justice, and explore ways in which they are relevant to information management professionals.

Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to understand and articulate:
• policy and legal implications of information use
• philosophical, social and cultural dimensions of ethical choices, including social justice
• legal and practical implications of information policy and regulation, including intellectual property and privacy.

Assignments and Grading
Grading will be based on the following criteria (for detailed description of each assignment go to the Assignments section of the website)
1. Class participation (attendance and engagement in discussions): 20 points
2. Group-led discussion and presentation: 20 points
3. First Short Paper: 10 points
4. Second paper: 15 points
5. Final Paper: 25 points
6. Peer review: 5 points
7. Debate: 5 points

Readings, Lectures, and Assignments
Week 1 – Introduction to the class

January 6
Introduction to Class -
Required Reading:
January 8
Information Cultures and Histories

Required Reading:

Week 2 - Ethics in the Information Age

January 13
Ethical Frameworks

Required Reading:

Optional:
• Watch: Johnson, Deborah. 2014. Corporate Excellence, Ethics, and the Role of IT. WGBH Forum. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef_Ba0q4gL

January 15
Professional Ethics

Required Reading:
• Look at the following Examples of Codes of Ethics:
  o ACM Code of Ethics
  o Software Engineering Code of Ethics
  o IEEE Code of Ethics
  o ALA Code of Ethics
Week 3 - Institutional and Cultural Practices of Speech and Privacy

January 20
Freedom of Speech

Required Reading:

Optional:
- Brief overview of Freedom of Speech in the United States

January 22
Cultural Institutional Contexts of Privacy and Surveillance

Required Reading:

Week 4 - Privacy Rights in the United States

January 27
Privacy and Surveillance Issues (Industry Perspective)

Required Reading:

Optional:

January 29
Privacy and Surveillance in the US (Legal Perspective)
Required Reading:

- Read: the fourth amendment http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/fourth_amendment

Optional:


Week 5 - Political Economy

February 3
Political Economy of Information I

Required Reading:


Optional:


February 5
Political Economy of Information II

Required Reading:


**Week 6 - Intellectual Property**

**February 10**

**Intellectual Property History | The IP and the Internet**

*Required Reading:*

• Watch: The Internet's Own Boy [Link](http://www.takepart.com/internets-own-boy#watch)
• Litwak, Mark. 2013. Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Public Domain (IFP.org)

*Optional:*


**February 12**

**Philosophical Foundations**

*Required Reading:*


**Week 7 - Legal and Governance Frameworks**

**February 17**

**The Right to Be Forgotten**

*Required Reading:*

• Rosen, Jeff. The Right to be Forgotten. Stanford Law Review.
• Ambrose, Meg and Jef Ausloos. The Right to be Forgotten Across the Pond. Journal of Information Policy.

*Optional Reading:*

• Costeja court case
  o [Official court documents](#)
  o [Advocate General press release](#)
  o [CJEU decision press release](#)
February 19

Legal Frameworks

Required Reading:

- United States v. Jones, 132 S. Ct. 945 (selections: read Scalia’s opinion & Sotomayor’s concurrence; skim Alito’s concurrence).

*And read 1 of the following 2 cases (your choice):*

- Trademark: Brookfield Communications, Inc. v. West Coast Entertainment Corporation 174 F.3d 1036 (9th Cir. 1999).

Week 8 - Internet Governance and Information Control

February 24

Internet Governance | Net Neutrality

Required Reading:

- Watch: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Net Neutrality.

Optional:


February 26

Information Access and Control

Required Reading:

Optional:

**Week 9 - Social Justice**

**March 3**  
**Role of Information and Communication in Social Change**  
*Required Reading:*  

**March 5**  
**Information and Collective Action**  
*Required Reading:*  

*Optional:*  
- Krikorian, Gaëlle. Access to Knowledge as a Field of Activism (pp.56-87). In Access to Knowledge. Cambridge, MA: Zone Books.

**Week 10 - Summary of Course and Debate**