

# IS 350 - Computer, Society & Ethics

## Course Format

We meet for discussion, lectures and other activities usually twice a week for day classes and once a week, (3 hours) for evening classes. You will engage in some other activities separately with team members. All are mandatory. You will be responsible for preparing for class, attending and participating in all classes, reading the textbook and all online materials, doing all assignments, and posting assignments on Moodle. Most weeks we will not have time to go over all the readings and videos in class. However, you are responsible for all the assigned material. If you must miss a class, email me in advance. You will be responsible for finding out what you missed.

## Instructor

Professor Linda Plotnick, PhD  
Office: N/A

E-mail: [linda.plotnick@njit.edu](mailto:linda.plotnick@njit.edu)  
(include "IS350-" in the email subject)

Office Hours:

- After Class
- By appointment

## General Course Information

### 1. Prerequisites:

As prerequisites, IS 350 requires an introductory course in computing, an introductory course in the social sciences, and HUM 101. This course is an upper-level course designed for juniors and seniors.

### 2. Course Goals:

Upon the completion of this course you should be able to:

- a. Explain beneficial and detrimental ways in which computing affects people, including the primary and secondary effects, and intended and unintended consequences.
- b. Utilize theories of ethical decision-making and professional codes of ethics to analyze difficult situations with computing aspects.
- c. Find and critically evaluate relevant literature pertaining to a situation of concern.
- d. Communicate about difficult issues in the computing sciences.

*This is an ambitious set of goals, which meets several of the requirements for an ABET accredited degree in the Computing Sciences.*

3. **Time Required** – This course requires a significant amount of work to help you achieve these goals. **On average, you need to set aside up to 9 hours a week, double during the Summer, for this course,** including discussion, lecture, other classroom and online activities, reading, studying the materials, homework and team activities. (This is even more compressed during the summer sections.)

4. **Readings & Online Materials** –Readings and other online materials supplement the lecture slides and the textbook.
5. **Moodle** – Course materials and other information are on Moodle ([moodle.njit.edu](http://moodle.njit.edu)).
6. **Assignments /Course Work**
  - a. **Library Analysis** – How to use the library and to find good sources. (NOT DURING Summer)
  - b. **Assignment One** – A short ethical analysis.
  - c. **Weekly Short Quiz** – We’ll hold substantial discussion of the week’s topics in class. To ensure you are prepared and have read the material, there is a quiz before the class meeting of the week on the week’s readings.
  - d. **Midterm Report** – Utilizing your approved current events topic you will demonstrate your understanding of beneficial aspects, detrimental aspects, intended and unintended consequences, and societal and ethical issues of your topic.
  - e. **Debate** – As part of a team you will persuasively argue about an ethical dilemma concerning technology in a debate format.
  - f. **Current Events Presentation** – This is an individual assignment that focuses on an interesting and timely topic showing the impact of technology on society. Each person will present the topic in class during the term. The topic must have been approved by the instructor.
  - g. **Turkle Assignment.** This assignment is based on viewing the Turkle video and writing a report. See Turkle Assignment instructions for content and format.
  - h. **Final Report** – Demonstrate your ability to perform an ethical analysis on your current events topic, utilizing a prescribed format. The topic must have been approved by the instructor.
7. **Community Service Internship** (*optional – NOT During Summer*) – NJIT Career Services can provide you the opportunity to work with a Newark-area non-profit organization using your skills to help that organization achieve its goals. This is a great experience, great service, can open doors for you, and looks great on your resume!

## **Required Textbook, Readings & Materials**

Textbook (various options)

Michael J. Quinn, Ethics for the Information Age, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (2017).

- printed, rental and online versions are available through the NJIT bookstore

Alternative online version through VitalSource (\$48);

- ([see link on Moodle](#))

(If you have a hard copy of the sixth edition, it may be “mostly good enough”, but your weekly quizzes will mostly come from the 7<sup>th</sup> edition and it has some new material.)

Readings & Materials

All required journal articles will either be in the Moodle or available through the NJIT digital library.

Note: From time to time I may assign additional readings and other materials.

### Words of Wisdom

*Do not get behind in reading the text and articles! You will regret it!*

## **Suggestions, Questions, Problems and Falling Behind**

If you have any problems or feel like you are falling behind, please contact me as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to recognize problems as early as possible, so we can work together to keep you progressing. Feel free to email me or make an appointment to visit during office hours if your comment is more private.

I welcome suggestions and questions. I encourage you to post these in the Moodle “Questions and Interesting Links” forum, so we can all share in the discussion.

## **Grading and other Requirements:**

“A” breakers – You must do 3 things to be *eligible* for an A.

1. Post all assignments **on time**. Late assignments will not be accepted unless the instructor gives an exemption based upon an unusual circumstance.
2. Participate in classroom and online discussions.
3. Attend all sessions.
  - a. Attendance will be taken
  - b. If you have four (4) unexcused absences, you will lose one Letter Grade
  - c. If you have six (6) unexcused absences, you will be given an “F” for the course

The percentages for all course work are as follows. These are subject to adjustment.

Note that the instructor may decide to grade on a curve.

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Assignment: Assignment One	5%
Assignment: Library Analysis	5%
Assignment: Debate (group)	15%
Assignment: Current Events Presentation	15%
Assignment: Current Events Slides	5%
Turtle Assignment	5%
Weekly Quizzes	10%
Midterm Report	20%
Final Report	20%

<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>
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**Grading Policy**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 90 and up</li> <li>• B+ 85 to 89</li> <li>• B 80 to 84</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C+ 75 to 79</li> <li>• C 70 to 74</li> <li>• D 65 to 69</li> <li>• F less than 65</li> </ul>
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**What if I Don't Agree with my Grade?**

If you do not agree with your grade, you have ONE (1) week to dispute it after it is posted. Follow the instructions on Moodle.

**But What If Moodle Crashes and I Cannot Submit Homework or Complete my Midterm or Final?**

What if...? It's simply too bad. Would your boss accept such an excuse? Do **NOT** wait till the last minute to do your homework or take your exam. There are many computers on campus available for your use, hence, no excuse.

**Academic Honesty, Integrity and Cheating**

NJIT and Rutgers students are expected to follow published guidelines on academic honesty and integrity. You must acquaint yourself with these policies before submitting any assignments.

[njit.edu/academics/integrity.php](http://njit.edu/academics/integrity.php)

Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students at both institutions and may result in failure in the course and probation, or failure in the course and expulsion. I pursue Honor Code violations immediately and aggressively.