

COMP/CSED 317/417: Social & Ethical Issues in Computing (Section 001)  
Spring 2006 Course Information & Syllabus

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**Lectures:** Thursday 4:15–6:45pm in 25EP-602.

Sometimes lecture notes or a summary may be available on the web. Other than that, if you have to miss a class, get notes from another student; mine are typically pieced together from more than one place with a lot of metacommments, which makes it hard for anybody but me to follow them. Also get copies of any missed handouts (available on the web site). The handouts are numbered sequentially, starting with handout 0. On handout 0, you need to fill in some information and return it to me promptly so you can be on the email list and get access to the web site for the course.

**Office Hours:** In LT-512E: Mon./Wed./Thurs. 2:30–3:30pm.

These are the guaranteed times to find me except as announced in advance. You should also feel free to look for me at other times or make appointments.

**Course Objectives:** This course will focus on some key areas related to computing technologies in which legal and ethical issues commonly arise, e.g., privacy, encryption, freedom of speech, intellectual property, computer crime, computer/software reliability and safety. Forays into broader areas of business law and professional ethics are also likely. The discussion of these subjects will include both some philosophical perspectives such as utilitarianism versus deontological ethics, and, also, concrete analysis of provisions of existing and proposed law.

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Textbook:** Required: Sara Baase. *A Gift of Fire: Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues for Computers and the Internet*. Prentice-Hall, second edition, 2003.

Recommended: Robert W. Emerson. *Business Law (Barron's Business Review Series)*. Barron's Educational Series, 4th edition, 2004.

**Course Requirements:** The course grade will be based on the following contributions: term paper 30% midterm exam 20%, final exam 30%, other assignments (including class participation) 20%

**Homework:** Only homework turned in by the due date is guaranteed to be graded. Any special circumstances that cause difficulty in meeting the deadlines should be brought to the attention of the instructor in advance. Homework must be handed in at the beginning of class, since solutions may be handed out in the same class on occasion. Homework turned in to my mailbox will generally not be graded, since I do not check the box continually and cannot generally verify that homework was turned in before solutions were distributed or discussed in class. If you cannot turn in homework in person, you should put it under the door of my office.

**Exams:** The midterm exam, scheduled for week 7 is 90 minutes long. The final exam is scheduled for 4:15–6:15 on Thursday, May 11.

**Collaboration:** *No* collaboration is permitted on exams. Other work is to be completed individually or in small groups as specified. On written assignments, plagiarism, including unintentionally failing to cite sources properly is a serious violation. See <http://www.cs.luc.edu/~rig/courses/plagiarism.html>.

**Tentative Course Outline and Approximate Schedule:**

Recommended readings from the text are shown on a weekly basis. (When selected sections or subsections are listed, it is assumed that you will include the introduction of the corresponding chapter or section.)

Pointers to Emerson (optional text) as well as Baase are included here. Some lectures also incorporate material from other sources, and most lectures include discussion of items in the news.

1. (1/19) Administrivia. Introduction. Baase Chapter 1.
2. (1/26) Ethical frameworks. Origin and Nature of Law. Emerson Chapter 1.
3. (2/2) Privacy and personal information. Baase Chapter 2. Sources of U.S. law. Emerson Chapter 2.
4. (2/9) Encryption and interception of communications. Baase Chapter 3. U.S. court system and legal process. Emerson Chapter 3.
5. (2/16) Can we trust computers. Baase Chapter 4.
6. (2/23) Freedom of speech in cyberspace. Baase Chapter 5.
7. (3/2) Exam I (midterm).
8. (3/16) Intellectual property. Baase Chapter 6.
9. (3/23) Computer crime. Baase Chapter 7.
10. (3/30) Computers and work. Baase Chapter 8.
11. (4/6) Broader issues on the impact and control of computers. Baase Chapter 9.
12. (4/20) Professional ethics and responsibilities. Baase Chapter 10.
13. (4/27) Term paper presentations.
14. (5/4) Term paper presentations.