

COMPUTER ETHICS

ECTS: 5

POLITECNICO DI MILANO, Sede di Milano, Campus Leonardo
Scuola di Ingegneria Industriale e dell'Informazione, Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Ingegneria Informatica

Instructor: Viola SCHIAFFONATI

Program

Aims and goals

This course deals with the application of ethical theories to problem created, aggravated or transformed by computer technology. It is intended to give students a chance to reflect on the ethical, social, and cultural impact of computer technology by focusing on the issues faced by and brought about by computing professionals. Students should acquire a broad perspective on the social and ethical impacts and implications of information technology; they should develop skills in clarifying and ethically analyzing realistic cases involving information technology, as well as they should exercise and improve their skills in critical writing.

The course includes lectures by the instructor and visiting scholars; class participation will be expected, and students should apply what they learn through reading and lectures by looking at current events through an ethical lens.

Program of lessons and seminars

The course will cover different topics both from a theoretical and a more practical point of view. We will start with a broad analysis of the concept of **responsibility**, in particular in an **engineering perspective**, and of **normative ethics** and its tools. We will introduce **codes of conduct** with a detailed discussion about the ACM and IEEE Codes. We will discuss **ethical questions** in the **design of technology** with a focus on **Design Ethics** and its **Social Ethics paradigm**. Then **ethics in IT-configured societies** will be discussed and **technology as the instrumentation of human action** will be presented. Within this context we will focus: on **information flow, privacy, and surveillance**, on **digital intellectual property** and on **digital order**. Finally the **ethical cycle** will be presented as a tool to analyze and solve ill-structured ethical problems.

Prerequisites

No prerequisite is required.

Bibliography

Required bibliography

Papers posted on the course webpage

Requirements

Grading will be on the following basis:
50% final project (written paper or oral presentation);
50% oral discussion on the course topics.

Course webpage

<http://home.dei.polimi.it/schiaffo/CE>