

MLIS 7650 Information and Ethics
Valdosta State University
MLIS Program

Fall 2004

MLIS 7650 is an online course. It is designed to familiarize library and information science students with basic concepts in professional ethics and the more general information ethics or ethics of information.

Discussion

Discussion is a required part of participation in this course. Because ours is an online course, discussion will take place using a listserv. Note, this course will not function through WebCT. I will advise you as to the listserv address.

Course Calendar

Classes begin August 16 and end December 6, 2004. The week of November 22-28, the University is closed for Thanksgiving.

Assignments are due by 5:00 pm on indicated dates.

Textbooks

Michael Gorman, *Our Enduring Values*, Chicago: American Library Association, 2000

Robert Hauptman, *Ethics and Librarianship*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002.

Tom Mendina and J. J. Britz, eds. *Information Ethics in the Electronic Age*
Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004

Other readings will be assigned for specific weeks. These are all available from libraries and Galileo. You should plan ahead and find these resources. It may be necessary to request some through interlibrary loan.

Course Project

This course has been “volunteered” to undertake specific research. This work is to be performed for the American Library Association’s Committee on Professional Ethics. We are to explore “how” information ethics is taught at North American schools of library and information science (NA-SLIS).

We will divide the 56 accredited NA-SLIS among ourselves.

Students are to:

- (1) Explore the websites of their assigned schools and report back to the class the number of schools offering a course or courses with an ethics specific orientation,
- (2) Contact the course instructor(s) and request a copy of a recent syllabus
- (3) Contact the department head or chair of the curriculum committee at target schools and request information on how information ethics and professional ethics are taught at that institution. Are there courses specifically dedicated to ethics? Are information and professional ethics taught as part of other courses and if so, which courses and what “percent of instruction?”
- (4) Prepare a brief discussion of findings and report findings to the class.

We may have an opportunity to publish these findings in a forthcoming issue of *American Libraries* and perhaps elsewhere. If we are to publish in *American Libraries*, very rapid turn around is required – the manuscript will be due in early October. I will write up the findings and submit them to *American Libraries*. We will list as authors all members of the class. The entire, finished exercise needs to be in my hands by **October 1**.

Assignment Due December 4, 2004: Once completed, we will pool all findings. Provide an analysis of the findings. As part of this graded assignment, you are to reflect on how information and professional ethics are taught in North America. What recommendation might you have for library education coming from these findings?

Course Calendar

Week beginning

August 16:

What are information rights?

Readings:

The *Bill of Rights*, the first ten Amendments to the US Constitution.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Hauptman, ch 1-2

Gorman, ch 1-2.

By Sunday, August 22, post a discussion of information rights you find defined in the Bill of Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

After reading Hauptman and Gorman, how to information rights and information ethics correspond to one another?

August 23:

What are the sources of information ethics?

Readings:

June Lester and Wallace Koehler, *Fundamentals of Information Studies*, NY: Neal-Schuman, 2003, ch. 11.

Hauptman, Ch 11-12

Gorman, Ch 11-12

Discuss the sources of ethics and more specifically information ethics. Do the Bill of Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provide sources for information ethics? How?

August 30 **Library as Place:**

Gorman, ch 3

Hauptman, ch 3-5

Martha Montague Smith, "Information Ethics." *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* 31 (1997).

September 7:

Gorman, ch 3

Hauptman, ch 6-9

September 13:

Gorman, ch 3

Hauptman, ch 10

September 20 **Values of Librarianship:**

Gorman, ch 4-6

Wallace Koehler and J. Michael Pemberton, "A Search for Core Values: Towards a Model Code of Ethics for Information Professionals," *Journal of Information Ethics* 9, 1 Spring 2000: 26-54.

Richard Rubin and Thomas Froehlich (1996). "Ethical Aspects of Library and Information Science." A. Kent and C. Halls, eds., *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*. NY: Marcel Dekker, 58, supplement 21: 33-52.

September 27:

Gorman, ch 7-9

October 4:

Gorman, ch 10

October 11 **Information Ethics Around the World:**

Koehler in Mendina and Britz, eds.

Rosa Maria Fernández de Zamora, "Codes of Ethics in Latin America" World Library and Information Congress, Berlin, 2003. Available: English: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla69/papers/o87e-Fernandez-de-Zamora.pdf>

October 18 to November 8:

In Africa:

Mendina and Britz, eds. Africa Section, Chapters 1-7.

Batambuze and Kawooya, Librarianship and Professional Ethics: The Case for Uganda. In Robert Vaagan, *The Ethics of Librarianship: An International Survey*. Munich: K.G. Saur, 2002.

Ramesh Jayaram, Librarian Ethics in South Africa, in Vaagan, ed.

In Europe:

Robert Vaagan, The Nordic Countries,
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla69/papers/o86e-Vaagan.pdf>

Paul Sturges, UK and Western Europe,
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla69/papers/o90e-Sturges.pdf>

Alexandra Horvat, Croatia and the Balkins.
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla69/papers/o89e-Horvat.pdf>

Global:

Wallace Koehler, Jitka Hurych, Wanda Dole, and Joanna Wall, "Ethical Values of Information and Library Professionals -- An Expanded

Analysis." *International Information & Library Review*, 32 (3/4) 2000: 485-506.

Other articles in Vaagan, ed.

November 15 – December 6 **Ethics and Changing Circumstances:**

Section 3 in Mendina and Britz.

There is a wide literature on the impact of technology on information ethics. Find three articles and write a brief synopsis of each to share with the class. Technological changes range from the introduction of moveable type in the 16th Century to the advent of the computer and later the Internet in the 20th.

Assignments

Each assignment represents 25% of the course grade.

Due September 14: Discuss library as place and as function. Based on assigned readings and from at least three other sources (you will find), write a paper not to exceed five pages on librarianship, place, function, and ethics.

Due October 10: Discuss the values Gorman reports for the library professional. Compare Gorman's findings with Koehler and Pemberton and Rubin and Froehlich. Write a paper not to exceed five pages.

Due December 6: Consider differences among countries as well as changing technology. Are there "absolute values"? Do values change according to needs? Provide examples of "universal" and "particular" values. Document changes in value systems. Can a generalized set of professional and information ethics be articulated. Write a paper not to exceed five pages.

Due December 4, 2004: Provide an analysis of the class ethics survey of courses findings. As part of this graded assignment, you are to reflect on how information and professional ethics are taught in North America. What recommendation might you have for library education coming from these findings? – **note: this repeats from above.**