

Course CSI 2911
Professional Practice in Computer Science
Winter 2012

Instructor: Dr. Stan Matwin,
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Class: Wed 4:00-6:50, SITE J0106

Website: www.eecs.uottawa.ca/~stan/csi2911

Office hours: TBA

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Textbook: Baase, The Gift of Fire, 3rd ed., Pearson ISBN 0-13-600848-8. Available in the Agora bookstore. We will not be following the textbook closely, but you will be responsible for most of the material in it. Additional reading material will be given for most classes. Students are expected to read this material BEFORE the class.

This course covers topics that every computer professional MUST know about, but that are not covered in the technical courses in a standard, certified Computer Science undergraduate curriculum. Some of these issues are:

- the impact of computing on everyday life, including privacy and the change in social relations brought about by the web, social networks, and the “always on-line” connectivity;
- how to analyze computer mishaps from an ethical standpoint?
- privacy on the web: basic legal framework for data privacy in Canada; technical material related to data security and privacy; the Google architecture, Google business model, cookies, etc.
- professional ethics, responsibility and liability, particularly in the Canadian context
- modern technologies and dissemination of intellectual property; the Google books controversy; the open source movement,
- social ramifications of the internet: politics of search engines, the web as a vehicle for political activism, esp. in non-democratic contexts; the digital divide, the mobile phone technology

- a peek into the future: robot ethics, potential dangers in unchecked technology development, etc.

An important feature of this class is the on-line discussion forum. Students are expected to participate in these discussions of class related topics that I will initiate.

Grading: assignments (3+) 45%, midterm 20%, final 30%, discussion participation in the on-line forum 5%

The exact number, weight, and timing of assignments to be announced. There will be three assignments, their weight and timing to be announced. Assignments will be in the form of essays, and the grade will be given for the contents **as well as** the form – style, grammar, spelling etc.

Midterm: in-class, Mar. 2

Midterm: in-class, Feb. 29.

Please check course schedule on the course website regularly for specific reading assignments **BEFORE** the class, and for additional class details. Also, all .ppt material used in class will be posted on the website, most of the time before the class, in .pdf format.