**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number:** PL182 Computer, Information, and Technology Ethics

**Home Department:** Philosophy

**Department Coordinator Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Sarah Jones, sajones@nmu.edu

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): Every winter

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate?

**YES, but updates have been submitted to CUP**

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

**A. Overview of the course content**

The goal of PL182 is to help students investigate ethical questions in the context of computing and technology. Ethics is the branch of philosophy that considers questions about good/bad, right/wrong, virtue/vice. Computers are electronic devices for processing data according to instructions; technology concerns applying scientific knowledge for practical purposes. The concern is to be able to articulate the reasons why individuals or groups of people think what they do about ethical issues in computers and technology with the aim of discovering what is actually *correct* about them.

By the end of the course, students should be able to (1) comprehend, question, and analyze philosophical texts about the ethics of computers and technology, (2) identify significant ethical issues in computers and technology, discuss differing perspectives on these issues, and explain the justifications given for the different perspectives, and (3) formulate and defend a philosophical thesis about an ethical issue in computers and technology.

**B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes**

**Critical Thinking Component:** To satisfy the *Evidence* outcome dimension, PL182 requires students to analyze the real-world examples, armchair intuitions, and theoretical assumptions relied on in the philosophical arguments concerning the ethics of computers and technology ethics contained in the assigned readings. To satisfy the *Integrate* outcome dimension, PL182 requires students to synthesize ideas contained in assigned readings and their own personal experience concerning the ethics of computers and technology in order to develop philosophical positions of their own. To satisfy the *Evaluate* outcome dimension, PL182 requires students to appraise the logical merits of philosophical arguments concerning the ethics of computers and technology presented in assigned readings.

**Perspectives on Society Component:** To satisfy the *Analysis of Society* outcome dimension, PL182 requires students to use the ideas and arguments discussed in the assigned readings or in class to analyze ethical issues relating to computers and technology. To satisfy the *Ethical Issues* outcome dimension, PL182 requires students to use classical and contemporary philosophical views regarding ethics and morality to identify the reasons why people hold the views they do regarding ethical issues concerning computers and technology. To satisfy the *Development and Context of Society* outcome dimension, PL182 requires students to use major ethical themes to understand the viewpoints of others who disagree with them about relevant ethical issues in computers and technology.

**C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)**

PL182 is an introductory-level philosophy course. It is intended to both give philosophy majors/minors an overview of the major themes of the ethics of computers and technology and also to introduce students with no prior background in philosophy to the topics and methods of philosophy. The class does not presuppose any background knowledge of philosophy or ethics.

**D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)**

PL182 is a recommended elective for the philosophy major and minors. It is not a requirement or elective for any other major or minor.

**E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC**

Changes to PL182 have been submitted to CUP.



**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | **Task Type**: Reading response papers. Completing these papers involves analyzing evidence, integrating ideas, *and* evaluating arguments.  **Frequency**: Weekly (7 per ½ semester)  **Overall Grading Weight**: 15% Expected Proficiency Rate: 75%.  **Rationale**: Philosophy requires students to reflect in an unusually sustained and careful fashion about very abstract issues. Most students find it challenging. Experience suggests approximately a quarter fail to achieve “proficient” status here. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with previous understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | **Task Type**: Reading response papers. Completing these papers involves analyzing evidence, integrating ideas, *and* evaluating arguments.  **Frequency**: Weekly (7 per ½ semester)  **Overall Grading Weight**: 15%  **Expected Proficiency Rate**: 75%.  **Rationale**: Philosophy requires students to reflect in an unusually sustained and careful fashion about very abstract issues. Most students find it challenging. Experience suggests approximately a quarter fail to achieve “proficient” status here. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | **Task Type**: Reading response papers. Completing these papers involves analyzing evidence, integrating ideas, *and* evaluating arguments.  **Frequency**: Weekly (7 per ½ semester)  **Overall Grading Weight**: 15%  **Expected Proficiency Rate**: 75%.  **Rationale**: Philosophy requires students to reflect in an unusually sustained and careful fashion about very abstract issues. Most students find it challenging. Experience suggests approximately a quarter fail to achieve “proficient” status here. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY**

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Analysis of society** | Analysis of social issues, structures and processes or events | **Task Type**: Argumentative paper. Completing this paper involves analyzing social issues, ethical issues, *and* exploring themes in the development of human society.  **Frequency**: Once  **Overall Grading Weight**: 25%  **Expected Proficiency Rate**: 75%.  **Rationale**: Philosophy requires students to reflect in an unusually sustained and careful fashion about very abstract issues. Most students find it challenging. Experience suggests approximately a quarter fail to achieve “proficient” status here. |
| **Ethical Issues** | Addressing ethical issues in society | **Task Type**: Argumentative paper. Completing this paper involves analyzing social issues, ethical issues, *and* exploring themes in the development of human society.  **Frequency**: Once  **Overall Grading Weight**: 25%  **Expected Proficiency Rate**: 75%.  **Rationale**: Philosophy requires students to reflect in an unusually sustained and careful fashion about very abstract issues. Most students find it challenging. Experience suggests approximately a quarter fail to achieve “proficient” status here. |
| **Development and context of society** | Explore themes in the development of human society | **Task Type**: Argumentative paper. Completing this paper involves analyzing social issues, ethical issues, *and* exploring themes in the development of human society.  **Frequency**: Once  **Overall Grading Weight**: 25%  **Expected Proficiency Rate**: 75%.  **Rationale**: Philosophy requires students to reflect in an unusually sustained and careful fashion about very abstract issues. Most students find it challenging. Experience suggests approximately a quarter fail to achieve “proficient” status here. |