Alexandria Tanner

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End of Course Reflection

This course required us students to examine and define moral principles related to information technology and computing through real life scenarios. Personally, it has allowed me to differentiate ethics and morals more clearly. I now know that ‘ethics’ is a code or external principle of how things should be conducted, while on the other hand ‘morals’ refers to an individual’s view regarding their belief of right or wrong. Often the two definitions are used interchangeable, but cybersecurity ethics is possessing the knowledge of right and wrong and the ability to recognize such ethical principle on the job. Topics in this course included: Privacy, Data Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Professional Ethics, Whistleblowing, Cyberconflict, and Information Warfare. Through these topics we were required to produce Case Analyses and use “tools for ethical reasoning” to justify or refute the actions of each topic. The Ethical tools we had to choose from were Consequentialism/Utilitarianism, Contractarianism, Deontology/Kantianism, Ethics of Care, Confucianism, Virtue Ethics, and Ubuntu.

I am a Cybercrime Major and a Cyber Security minor here at Old Dominion University so many of these topics are relevant to the specific jobs I have in mind for myself. Not only that, but piqued my interest and provided me with a deeper understanding of what sort of things cyber professionals deal with through many of the readings, videos, etc. It was also very interesting to see, engage, and respond to my peers’ points of view and feelings through our shared discussion boards throughout our semester in PHIL 335E. The discussion boards provided me with a lot of information to take away from this course because I was able to rationalize explanations that myself might have ever considered on my own. It has challenged me to take a step back from my natural reaction to scenarios and see them from a different perspective. It has really allowed me to gain a better understanding and respect for how others may justify or view situations. I think that out of all of classes and all the discussion boards I have ever had to do the ones for this course have been the most influential. My key takeaway from the DB’s was that these people will be the same peers I will have once I am fully in my career, and I think it has prepared me for the similar discussions to come and I cannot wait.

I would argue the case I most enjoyed would be the Whistleblowing one because it challenged the idea of cyber ethics the most in my eyes. I was unaware of the definition of whistleblowing prior to this assignment but had heard of it before. It very well could have been my favorite because it started off with a video rather than an article; however, posed the dilemma of whether we thought it was right or wrong to expose the US government in its confidential but blatant violations of privacy on American citizens. Obviously, the government was wrong for violating the privacy of its citizens without their consent/knowledge but was it right publicly publish the information exposing that when it was confidential? I made you really think. The line between “ethics” and “morals” were not blurred and required us to make the decision of which should be prioritized. If put in a similar situation, what would I put my personal morals first, so that I can sleep at night or my professional ethics so that I keep my job? My key takeaway from this was that in the event my morals are challenged whatever decision I make I will have to live with it and the consequences that follow so I should be content with that decision.

Lastly, the tools for Ethical Reasoning provided me with an insight on how situations can be viewed or approached. When attempting to choose which tool I should use for a Case Analysis there were times where more than one could apply. It opened my eyes to the fact that many things could be explained and/or justified in more ways than one, and it may not make the reasoning any more or less valid. It helped me gain a better understanding of many of the topics using the ethical tools considering we had to integrate them into the writings. Overall, I am thankful for this class because I will be able to take what I have learned, and integrate, and apply it into the field of Cybercrime/Cybersecurity.