

MLIS 7650

Information and Ethics  
Fall 2006

Wallace Koehler  
[wkoehler@valdosta.edu](mailto:wkoehler@valdosta.edu)  
phone: 229 333 5860  
fax: 229 259 5055

## **Texts:**

I have assigned no text books for the course. I have a working manuscript we shall use for readings. This you may find at:  
<http://books.valdosta.edu/mlis/ethics2006/>

There are extensive readings suggested as part of each chapter bibliography. As graduate students, make use of the resources of the library and acquire some of the suggested documents.

Remember that the text you find there is copyrighted to me. Please do not copy, distribute, or otherwise use that material – except in the context of this course.

## **Course hypotheses:**

(1) Information ethics and library practice have evolved over time. We begin with an examination of that practice to decipher for us “unwritten” ethical precepts. It is not until very late in the history of librarianship that formal ethical statements arrive.

Why?

(2) There are often interesting if not serious conflicts between ethical precepts. These include but are not limited to matters of stewardship and access or library neutrality and intellectual freedom.

How are these resolved? How should they be resolved?

# Assignments:

## (1) Book précis

\*\*\* for a brief definition of “précis” see <http://www.answers.com/topic/pr-cis>.  
For advice on writing and writing a précis, see  
<http://www.mdx.ac.uk/www/study/Essays0.htm> \*\*\*

Prepare a book or article précis on a work addressing information ethics or library practice every other week. There are to be a total of six. Coordinate with me by sending your selections for approval in advance of beginning the assignment. The précis are to be posted to the WebCT site to be shared by all. Be sure to include a complete citation to the work.

Make an explicit link between the works you choose and information ethics. Draw on the works of major library theoreticians and practitioners over time – to include but not limited to: Sir Thomas Bodley, Gabriel Naudé, Sir Anthony Panizzi, Edward Edwards, Melvil Dewey, John Cotton Dana, Paul Otlet, S.R. Ranganathan, Jesse Shera, Sanford Berman, Robert Hauptman, Thomas Froehlich, Martha Smith, and so on. Select normative, descriptive, and analytical texts.

Select from the “old” and newer literature. For example, Sir Thomas Bodley’s letters on library management make interesting reading. Toni Samek has a book forthcoming, perhaps in time for this course. And I would recommend that someone take a look at her *Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in American Librarianship, 1967-1974* (McFarland 2001). Many of the classic works are available in translation and reprint. The bibliography at the end of each chapter of readings can suggest possible candidates.

Specifically:

Précis 1: Work predating 1700 – Due Sept 1

Précis 2: Work published between 1701 and 1800 – Due Sept 15

Précis 3: Work published between 1801 and 1900 – Due Sept 29

Précis 4: Work published between 1901 and 1930 – Due Oct 13

Précis 5: Work published between 1931 and 1960 – Due Oct 27

Précis 6: Work published between 1961 and the present – Due Nov 10

***Place your précis when due in the appropriate WebCT folder***

## (2) Term Paper

A term paper is required at the end of the semester. It is to address one or both of the course hypotheses described above.

The paper is to be a well developed argument, hopefully an interesting proto-manuscript to be sculpted for publication. It is to be fully documented and in an appropriate citation style. I would suggest you consider examining a journal of choice that might be an appropriate venue for your article. Use the writing and citation style required by that journal.

There is no specific length. Your paper needs to be as long as it needs to be to make your argument. A guideline might be twenty or more double spaced pages.

Some journals you might consider

*History of Ideas*  
*Information Ethics*  
*Libraries & Culture*  
*Library History*

## Discussion & Face to Face Seminar

Saturday, November 18 – 10 am to 4 pm – at a place to be determined<sup>1</sup>.  
Participation is **not** mandatory, but strongly suggested.

Discussion sections are established in WebCT. You may discuss the readings I provide, your précis and other readings, and other related matters of interest.

## University Calendar

The University calendar can be found at  
<http://www.valdosta.edu/calendars/academic.html>

Classes begin August 14 and end December 4. December 5-8. Graduation is scheduled for December 9. All term papers are due no later than end of the day December 5.

Holidays are designated on the Calendar.

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<sup>1</sup> Probably Valdosta or Macon. Site will depend on enrollment demographics.

## **Grades**

Final Paper – 35%  
Précis – 36% (each one, 6%)  
Discussion – 29%

A= 91-100  
B=81-90  
C=71-80  
D=61-70  
F= 0-60

## **Student Ethics**

The MLIS Program and Valdosta State University take a dim view of plagiarism.

For a definition, see

[http://www.valdosta.edu/~cbarnbau/personal/teaching\\_MISC/plagiarism.htm](http://www.valdosta.edu/~cbarnbau/personal/teaching_MISC/plagiarism.htm)

and

<http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/9900/grad/cgp/dishonesty.html> and

<http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/0102/grad/grad235-238.pdf>