

Mass Media Ethics

Journalism 4708/6708-001

Fall 2013

Class meets 9:40-11:05 a.m., Tuesday and Thursday, in Meeman 100

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Classical approaches to ethics presented with their application to the day-to-day considerations journalism, public relations and advertising professionals must face in working with employers, local publics and the larger society, which depends on a free flow of accurate information.

PREREQUISITE:

None

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins, *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*, McGraw-Hill, 8th edition, 2014.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

Combination of lecture, discussion and student presentations

GRADING:

Case study	50
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Final Exam	120
Student Semester Paper	100
Attendance/participation	30
Total	500

A 93 to 100 percent

A – 90 to 92 percent

B + 87 to 89 percent

B 83 to 86 percent

B – 80 to 82 percent

C + 77 to 79 percent

C 73 to 76 percent

C – 70 to 72 percent

D + 67 to 69 percent

D 63 to 66 percent

D – 60 to 62 percent

F 0 to 59 percent

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Analyze a case and lead the discussion.**

Choose a case study listed in the the Patterson and Wilkins text and lead the class discussion of the case. You should choose a case that reflects your professional interests. You will sign up for case presentations during the fourth class period. Your instructor will provide some leadership models for cases during the first weeks of classes, but you are free to create your own models for leading the case. Preparation for the presentation includes a careful reading of the assigned readings related to the case, outside research on the particular case (if it is based on a genuine event and is not a hypothetical case study) and outside reading on the case's ethics topic (you might want to look for similar real-life ethics dilemmas and how they were handled), and designation of the different roles in leading the case discussion. Creative presentations earn style points. You will have approximately 15 minutes for the presentation.

- **Write a focus paper arising out of dilemma in the case the student leads.**

Each student will write an individual paper, a written analysis of the ethical issues presented by the case the student leads. Your paper should be a minimum 2,000 words, which equals about eight pages, double-spaced. The paper will discuss the major ethics issues raised in the case and indicate how you would resolve the questions if you were faced with the scenario. This is not a "How do I feel about the issue" paper, but a careful analysis in which you apply the philosophical principles and ethical models you learn in this class to the issues of the case and cite relevant statements from authorities in media practice and ethics. Most of the cases are real-life events. Your outside research might locate additional information about the event, and you can include it in your paper and presentation. You will want to find articles discussing the media ethics issues raised by the case such as invasion of privacy of grief victims, stereotypes in advertising, and deception in public relations information. I'm happy to discuss your ideas for the paper. You should read and cite in the text of the paper *at least* six sources (other than your textbooks and assigned articles), either magazine articles, journal articles, books or web information relevant to your case/topic. No more than three of the six sources should be online-only web citations/sources. The journalism department reading room and the University of Memphis library have a wealth of media trade publications (online as well as hard-copy) such as *Columbia Journalism Review* and *Advertising Age* as well as academic publications such as *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*. This paper's style must conform to the American Psychological Association reference style. Style guides are available in the bookstore and the library as well as online.

The Online Writing Lab

(OWL) at Purdue University offers an excellent presentation of the American Psychological Association reference style as well as a range of resources on the writing process. See the lefthand navigation menu for "Research and Citation," and then click "APA Style."
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> .

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students (registered for Mass Media Professional Ethics JOUR 6708) must write a research paper (15-page minimum). The paper will be a thorough review of the literature on a media ethics issue. This paper's style must conform to the footnote style of Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers* or American Psychological Association style. Style guides are available in the bookstore and the library. Submit a one-page proposal for this paper by Sept. 24. Papers are due Dec. 3.

CLASS/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule with notice in advance of assignments.

Date of class:	Topic	Reading: Media Ethics	Due in class
Aug. 27	Introduction; ethical decision making; ethics v. morals	Chapter 1 pages 1-4	
Aug. 29	Bok's Model; Aristotle's Golden Mean; Kant's Categorical Imperative	pages 5-10	
Sept. 3	Utilitarianism; pluralism; communitarianism; science of ethics	pages 10-16	Sign up for case presentation
Sept. 5	Changing views of truth; truth/objectivity; examination of truth	Chapter 2 pages 21-28	
Sept. 10	Constructing news; news as a product; deception; SPJ code of ethics	pages 28-34	Case study (2)
Sept. 12	Correcting errors; news values' plagiarism-fabrication; U of M student code	pages 32-35	Case study (2)
Sept. 17	New technologies; the audience; test of ethical persuasion; AAFA statement of principals	Chapter 3 pages 51-58	Case study (2)
Sept. 19	Vulnerable audiences; public relations; PRSA code of ethics; persuasion and responsibility	pages 59-64	Case study (2)
Sept. 24	Loyalty; Josiah Royce; journalism as a profession	Chapter 4 pages 81-84	Case study (2)
Sept. 26	No class this day		
Oct. 1	Conflicting loyalties; Potter's Box; review for Exam 1	pages 84-90	Case study (2)
Oct. 3			Exam No. 1
Oct. 8	Privacy; privacy as a legal right; conflicts over privacy; secrecy v. privacy	Chapter 5 pages 108-116	Case study (2)
Oct. 10	Discretion; the right to know; John Rawls	pages 116-121	Case study (2)
Oct. 15	No class this day		
Oct. 17	Political communication; getting elected; leadership	Chapter 6 pages 130-139	Case study (2)

Oct. 22	Watchdog media; terrorism/hate; social justice	pages 139- 143	Case study (2)
Oct. 24	Media economics; social responsibility; competitiveness; media consolidation	Chapter 7 pages 160- 167	Case study (2)
Oct. 29	Movies and music; newspaper finances; profit driven media	pages 167- 172	Case study (2)
Oct. 31	Photo/video ethics; citizen journalists; shooting photos; publishing photos	Chapter 8 pages 187- 192	Case study (2)
Nov. 5	Staging photos; manipulating photos; editing photos; National Press Photographers code of ethics; review for Exam 2	pages 193- 198	Case study (2)
Nov. 7			Exam No. 2
Nov. 12	New media; originality; fragmentation	Chapter 9 Pages 226- 230	Case study (2)
Nov. 14	New media-same issues; professionalism; new media professionalism	pages 231- 237	Case study (2)
Nov. 19	Ethics in entertainment; TV; truth in TV; RTDNA code of ethics	Chapter 10 pages 254- 261	Case study (2)
Nov. 21	Infotainment; reality TV; documentaries; aesthetics	pages 261- 268	Case study (2)
Nov. 26	Assumptions about morality; work of Piagett; work of Kohlberg	Chapter 11 pages 284- 289	Focus paper due
Nov. 28	No class for Thanksgiving		
Dec. 3	Ethics of care; ethical professionalism; review for final	pages 289- 293	
Dec. 5	No class study day		
Dec. 10			Final exam 10:30 to 12:30

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR4708 MASS MEDIA ETHICS

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

- Students will understand fundamental principles of moral philosophy and learn to apply those principles to professional decision-making;
- Students will analyze ethical dilemmas confronted by media professionals;
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity – gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation and develop respect for ethnic and gender diversity;
- Students will gain a sense of moral responsibility in their professional practice.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

- Students will participate in class discussions in which they apply appropriate ethical principles to specific media problems/issues.
- Students will analyze and present to the class a case study of an ethical dilemma;
- Students will apply appropriate ethical principles to specific media problems/issues
- Students will develop professional standards appropriate to the student's area media practice;
- Students will write a semester paper in which they analyze a media ethics case problem.
- Students will develop a personal code of ethics in which they articulate professional standards and practices appropriate to their chosen area of media practice.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR JOUR4708 MASS MEDIA ETHICS:

- Students will be assessed for their contributions to the discussion of ethical dilemmas and their leadership in a classroom presentation of a case study.
- Students will be assessed in their comprehension of appropriate ethical principles and their application to media ethical dilemmas in their writing of in-class, closed-book, essay exams.
- Student semester papers will be assessed for analysis professional ethical dilemmas and application of appropriate ethical principles to mass communication practices and issues.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

CELLPHONES:

You must turn them off during class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.