

Media Ethics

JRSM 4708/6708-001

Fall 2017

MWF 11:30 a.m. to 12:25 p.m.

Meeman 100

Thomas J. Hrach, Ph.D.

308 Meeman

Office Hours: 9:30 to noon Tuesdays; 1 to 3:30 p.m. Fridays

Phone: 678-4779

thrach@memphis.edu

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:

Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning, 10th edition. ISBN: 978-0205897742

Also, there will be other readings posted on the courseware site.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

Combination of lecture, discussion and student presentations

EXAMS:

This course has two regular exams and one final exam. The first exam is set for Sept. 29, the second for Nov. 3 and the final exam is set for Dec. 11. There are no makeup exams. A student must contact the instructor in advance to make arrangements if he or she is not able to make the exam dates.

GRADING:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Case study | 50 |
| Exam 1 | 100 |
| Exam 2 | 100 |
| Final Exam | 110 |
| Student Focus Paper | 100 |
| Attendance/participation | 40 |
| 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 | 70 to 76 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 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 sixth 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. The paper is to be 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. 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 deadline for the focus papers is Nov. 27. There is a 10 percent per day penalty for late papers.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students (registered for JRSM 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: | Readings | Monday | Wednesday | Friday |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Week 1 Aug. 28-30- Sept. 1 | Introduction and Chapter 1 - Ethical Foundations and Institutional Pressures | Introduction | Ethics v. Morals | Models of Ethics |
| Week 2 Sept. 4-6-8 | Chapter 2 – Truth-telling | No class Labor Day | Deontological ethics | The Truth; sign up for a case study |
| Week 3 Sept. 11- 13-15 | Chapter 3 – Reporters and Sources Chapter 4 – Social Justice | | Newsworthiness | Seeking the truth |
| Week 4 Sept. 18- 20-22 | Chapter 5 – Privacy Chapter 6 – The Commercialization of Everyday Life | Lying and deception | Making corrections | Codes of ethics; case study |
| Week 5 Sept. 25- 27-29 | Chapter 7 – Advertising in an image based culture | SPJ code of ethics; case study | Review for first exam | Exam No. 1 |
| Week 6 Oct. 2-4-6 | Chapter 8 – The Media are Commercial Chapter 9 – Advertising's Professional Culture | PRSSA code of ethics; case study | Advertising and its codes; case study | U of M code of ethics; case study |
| Week 7 Oct. 9-11- 13 | Chapter 10 – Public Communication Chapter 11- Telling the Truth in Organizational Settings | Loyalty; case study | Professionalism; case study | Privacy; case study |
| Week 8 Oct. 16-18- 20 | Chapter 12 – Conflicting Loyalties | No class – Fall Break | Photography and privacy; case study | Political communication; case study |
| Week 9 Oct. 23-25- 27 | Chapter 13 – Demands of Social Responsibility | Leadership; case study | Four theories of the press; case study | Media economics; case study |
| Week 10 Oct. 30- Nov. 1-3 | Chapter 14 - Violence | Transparency; case study | Review for second exam | Exam No. 2 |
| Week 11 Nov. 6-8-10 | Chapter 15 – Profits, Wealth and Public Trust | Accountability; Case study | Photo manipulation; case study | NPPA code of ethics; case study |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Week 13 Nov. 13-15-17 | Chapter 16 – Media Scope and Depth | New media; case study | Diversity; case study | Stereotyping; case study |
| Week 14 Nov. 20-22-24 | | Entertainment; case study | No class Thanksgiving | No class Thanksgiving |
| Week 15 Nov. 27-29-Dec. 1 | Chapter 17 - Censorship | Focus paper due; case study | | |
| Week 16 Dec. 4-6 | | Final thoughts | Review for final exam | No class – study day |
| Week 17 Dec. 11 | | Final Exam 10:30 a.m. | | |

FIVE PILLARS OF JRSM4708

- *Professionalism*: Student learn about what defines a profession, when is it ethical to tell a lie and to what degree a person shows loyalty to a person, a company and the public.
- *Writing*: Students are required to complete a focus on paper on a current issue that relates to media ethics. The students also will produce a presentation related to the current issue and lead a discussion with the class.
- *Multimedia*: Students learn about issues that digital media presents such as online corrections, blogging, social media and accuracy.
- *Critical Thinking*: Students are encouraged to seek answers to ethical dilemmas on their own instead of relying on laws or rules. The goal of the course is to show students the benefits of using an ethical process to make difficult decisions.
- *Media Literacy*: Students learn to assess issues in the media and discuss how decisions could have been made differently for better results. Students will read examples of work from news sources and discuss the framework from which the work is derived.

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JRSM4708:

- 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:

Awareness:

- Recognize through class discussion about ethical issues in media.

Understanding:

- 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.

Application:

- Students will be assessed for their contributions to the discussion of ethical dilemmas and their leadership in a classroom presentation of a case study.
- Student semester papers will be assessed for analysis professional ethical dilemmas and application of appropriate ethical principles to mass communication practices and issues.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

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.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. 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 because of 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 and Strategic Media 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.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

"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.

DEADLINES:

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don't know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

DISABILITY:

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

DIVERSITY:

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

WEATHER POLICY:

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.