

# Media Ethics

JRSM 4708/6708-001/350

Spring 2020

Class meeting: TR 11:20 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., MJ 100

## Prof. George Larrimore

**Office Hours:** By appointment on Tuesday or Thursday

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Classical approaches to ethics through the examination of documented cases 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. Course will be augmented with recognition and directed discussion of ethics issues currently being faced by professionals, including local issues.

### Prerequisites

None

### Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

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

Additionally; Viewing of and listening to certain television productions, films, podcasts will be required along with additional reading.

### Classroom format

Combination of lecture, discussion and student presentations

### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JRSM 4708 – 001/350 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

### Exams

There will be two regular exams (March 5 and April 2) and one final exam (May 5) during the semester. There are no makeup exams. Students must contact the instructor in advance to make arrangements if they are not able to make the exam dates.

## Grading

### *Grade Distribution:*

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Case study	50
Exam 1	75
Exam 2	75
Final Exam	100
Student Focus Paper	100
Attendance/participation	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

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 (Feb. 6). 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 note 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 analysis of the ethical issues presented by the case the student leads. Minimum 2,000 words, 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. Outside research might include additional information about the event that can also be used in your paper and presentation. The focus paper should reflect latest developments in the case you are writing about or cases raising similar issues. Consult with instructor 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. 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. Focus papers due week 13 (April 16) 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 Feb. 11. Papers are due April 9. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule with notice in advance of assignments.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### *Week 1, Jan. 21-23*

Tuesday: Course Overview, News overview, Case 1: Fox News

Thursday: Case 2: Access to the Internet. 3: Bankruptcy-Philadelphia Enquirer. Case 4: Paid Journalism

Readings: Introduction Ethical Foundations News, in 2020. Chapter 1, Institutional Pressures.

### *Week 2, Jan. 28-30*

Tuesday: Deontological Ethics. Case 5; Obesity Epidemic.

Case 6: Al Jazeera Thursday: Case 7: Unabomber Manifesto. Case 8: Muhammad Cartoon.

Readings: Chapter 2 Truth-telling

### *Week 3, Feb. 4-6*

Tuesday: Case 9: Wikileaks Website. Case 13: Watergate and Grand Jury Info.

Thursday: Case 15: Hidden America; Children of Mountains. Case 17: Ten Weeks at Wounded Knee (17). Case 18: Peace Journalism.

Readings: Chapter 3, Reporters and Sources. Chapter 4, Social Justice.

### *Week 4, Feb. 11-13*

Tuesday: Case 19: Facebook and Social Media Networks. Case 22: Dead Body Photo.

Graduate proposals due (6708)

Thursday: Persuasion In Advertising. Case 23: Pondering Guerilla Marketing. Case 24: DTC Advertising-Drugs. Case 26; 'Like' As Social Currency

Readings: Chapter 5, Privacy. Chapter 6, Commercialization of Everyday Life.

### *Week 5, Feb. 18-20*

Tuesday: Case 27: Altering Images: Attaining Unattainable. Case 28: Stereotyping Disability.

Thursday: Case 29: Spectacle for Social Change. Case 30: Anti-Obesity; Question of Images.

Readings: Chapter 7, Advertising in an Image-based Media Culture

*Week 6, Feb. 25-27*

Tuesday: Case 31: Media Gatekeepers. Case 32: Native Advertising. Case 34: Ad Blocking: A Perfect Storm.

Thursday: Case 35: Absence of Code of Ethics. Case 36: Branding: Making Same Thing Different. Case 37: Niche Markets/Media. Case 38: Ethical Vision: Serving Clients Well.

Readings: Chapter 8, The Media Are Commercial. Chapter 9, Advertising's Commercial Culture

*Week 7, March 3-5*

Tuesday: Case 40: Publicity and Justice. Case 42: Corporate Speech/State Law. Review for Exam 1

Thursday: Exam 1

Readings: Persuasion and PR Chapter 10: Public Communication

*Week 8, March 9 – 15: Spring Break*

*Week 9, March 17-19*

Tuesday: Case 44: Private Issue, Public Apology. Case 48: Posting #Truth @Twitter.

Thursday: Case 50: Representing Political Power. Case 51: Paying for Play, Case 53: Tragedy At The Mine.

Readings: Chapter 11 Telling Truth in an Organizational Setting Chapter 12, Conflicting Loyalties

*Week 10, March 24-26*

Tuesday: Case 55: Ice Bucket Challenge Funding. Case 56: Tackling Domestic Violence.

Thursday: Case 57: Brewing Racial Discourse. Heart of Matter in PR Ethics.

Readings: Chapter 13; Demands of Social Responsibility

*Week 11, March 31-April 2*

Tuesday: Case 58: Hear it, Feel It, Do It. Review for exam

Thursday: Exam 2

Readings: Entertainment Chapter 14; Violence

*Week 12, April 7-9*

Tuesday: Case 62: Copyright and Cultures Case 65: Duct Tape For TV.

Thursday: Case 67: Faux Doc, Twice Baked Sports: A Different Game. Graduate Student Papers Due

Readings: Chapter 15; Profits, Wealth and Public Trust

*Week 13, April 14-16*

Tuesday: Case 68: Reel History. Case 69: Paradise Hotel.

Thursday: Case 70: Tragedy Lite. Case 71: Training in Virtue. Focus Papers Due.

Readings: Chapter 16; Media Scope and Depth

*Week 14, April 21-23*

Tuesday: Case 72: Voice of America. Case 73: Frontal Assault. Self-Censorship.

Thursday: Case 75: Rescue Us. Case 76: Lyrics Not So Cool. The Heart of Entertainment.

Readings: Chapter 17: Censorship

Week 15, April 28

Review for final

Final Exam: May 5

## ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

### Five Pillars in JRSM 4708

- *Critical Thinking:* Students are encouraged to seek answers to ethical dilemmas on their own instead of relying entirely 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. Students will read examples of work from news sources and discuss the framework from which the work is derived.
- *Multimedia:* Students learn about issues that digital media presents such as online corrections, social media and accuracy.
- *Professionalism:* Student learns 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.

### Professional values and competencies for JRSM 4708

- 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
- 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.

### *Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)*

- 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 of professional ethical dilemmas and application of appropriate ethical principles to mass communication practices and issues.

## **JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA 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 graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they 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 lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

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 writing 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**

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

### **Electronic devices**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

### **Attendance**

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class 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). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

### **Course repetition**

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

### **Academic integrity**

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 students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media 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 rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

### **Online SETEs**

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the 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 must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

### **Disability and accommodations**

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

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. Media 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.

### **Student support**

Students who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.