

Mass Media Ethics

Journalism 4708/6708-001

Fall 2015

11:30 a.m. to 12:25 p.m., MWF, Meeman 100

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOG/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. 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. 25, the second for Oct. 30 and the final exam is set for Dec. 7. 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	120
Student Focus 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 70 to 76 percent
D + 67 to 69 percent
D 63 to 66 percent
D – 60 to 62 percent
F 0 to 59 percent

REQUIRED WORK

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

Choose a case study listed in 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 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. 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. 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. 23. There is a 10 percent per day penalty for late papers.

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:	Readings	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Aug. 24-26-28	Chapter 1 - An Introduction to Ethical Decision Making	Introduction	Ethics v. Morals	Models of Ethics
Aug. 31-Sept. 2-4	Chapter 12 – Becoming a Moral Adult	Utilitarianism	Deontological ethics	The Truth; sign up for a case study
Sept. 7-9-11	Chapter 2 – Information Ethics: A Profession Seeks the Truth	No class due to Labor Day	Newsworthiness	Seeking the truth
Sept. 14-16-18	Chapter 3 – Advertising Ethics: From the Buyer Beware to Empowerment	Lying and deception	Making corrections	Codes of ethics; case study
Sept. 21-23-25	Chapter 7 – The Mass Media in a Democratic Society; Keeping a Promise	SPJ code of ethics; case study	Review for first exam	Exam No. 1
Sept. 28-30-Oct. 2	Chapter 5 – Public Relations: Advocate or Adversary?	PRSSA code of ethics; case study	Advertising and its codes; case study	U of M code of ethics; case study
Oct. 5-7-9	Chapter 4 – Loyalty: Choosing Between Competing Alliances	Loyalty; case study	Professionalism; case study	Privacy; case study
Oct. 12-14-16	Chapter 6 – Privacy: Looking for Solitude in the Global village	No class – Fall Break	Photography and privacy; case study	Political communication; case study
Oct. 19-21-23	Chapter 8 – Media Economics: The Deadline Meets the Bottom Line	Leadership; case study	Four theories of the press; case study	Media economics; case study
Oct. 26-28-30		Transparency; case study	Review for second exam	Exam No. 2
Nov. 2-4-6	Chapter 9 – Picture This: The Ethics of Photo and Video Journalism	Accountability; Case study	Photo manipulation; case study	NPPA code of ethics; case study
Nov. 9-11-13	Chapter 10 – Ethics in Cyberspace: New Questions and New Roles	New media; case study	Diversity; case study	Stereotyping; case study

Nov. 16-18-20	Chapter 11 – The Ethical Dimensions of Art and Entertainment	Entertainment; case study	Media uses and gratifications; case study	Moral development; case study
Nov. 23-25-27		Focus paper due; case study	No class – Thanksgiving break	No class – Thanksgiving break
Nov. 30-Dec. 2-3		Final thoughts	Review for final exam	No class – study day
Dec. 7		Final Exam		

FIVE PILLARS FOR JOUR4708

- *Professionalism:* Lectures focus on issues faced by media professionals in news, public relations and advertising. Those issues include such things as 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:* Lectures and discussions focus on 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:* Class discussions will focus on how 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 JOUR4708

- 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:

- 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

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All Department of Journalism undergraduate students are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it during every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their concentrations.

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 <http://iam.memphis.edu> 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 to be used during class or to complete class assignments. Others do not allow them. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific 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. Students are permitted three total unexcused absences without penalty. After three absences, the student's final grade will be deducted one letter grade for each absence. After seven unexcused absences, the student will fail the course. Absences for illness and other catastrophic emergencies, such as a death in the family, must be documented (e.g. doctor's note or obituary) to be excused from the total absence count. Students with excessive unexcused absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

DEADLINES:

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will NOT be graded. Late work is not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Students are NOT permitted to make up assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. that occurred during an unexcused absence. Students who will miss class and/or a deadline because of an excused absence are expected to notify the instructor immediately upon knowing the absence will occur; exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances. Students who are absent during the final exam are not permitted to make up the exam and will earn a grade of 0, which might result in failure of the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

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, a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, and violations of copyright law as acts of academic dishonesty punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions or 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)

Intellectual property and copyright guidelines

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, but the way they are described can.
2. Anything set down in a tangible form, i.e., written, is by law copyrighted.
3. If, in a paraphrase, your work is “substantially similar” to a copyrighted work, you are guilty of copyright infringement.
4. A citation indicates where you got material. However, that portion you do not show as a direct quote must be “substantially original” to you. In other words, you can't just paste in something from another's work, put a citation at the bottom and call it your own. You need a full rewrite in your own words and syntax so the unquoted material is “substantially original” to you.

Plagiarism: From UM Student Handbook: The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

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 me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower 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:

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.

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.