

Professional Problems and Ethics
JOMC 141 – Syllabus
Summer Session I 2015
Monday-Friday, 1:15 - 2:45 pm
Carroll Hall 283

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

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Email:
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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday
before class (12:00-1:00) or by appt



COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to JOMC 141! We're here to critically engage with important issues facing every single one of us as both consumers and producers of mass media. Media professionals talk a lot about doing the right thing, but they're constantly criticized for ethical and moral shortcomings. In this class, we will discuss the ethical dilemmas that confront professionals in print and broadcast news, advertising, public relations, photojournalism, and more. We will examine codes of ethics for each of these professions and evaluate how these guidelines have and have not been applied in specific settings. In the end, this course is designed to familiarize you with the tools needed to make ethical decisions regarding the use of the mass media and to help you develop a personal yardstick by which to measure your own ethical decisions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES. At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Integrate ethical foundations and apply those ideas to professional situations;
- Critically analyze current mass communication professional practices through reading and discussing communication topics found in trade journals and other media;
- Compare ethical standards of mass communication professions and examine how similarities and differences help or hinder their professional relationships;
- Develop, defend and apply your own set of guidelines to tackle ethical situations.

You'll get out of this course what you put into it.

Your success will depend upon your willingness to keep up with the readings, participate in class, and keep an open mind when dealing with issues and others' opinions.

Professional values and competencies. The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>. No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. The values and competencies in bold are most relevant for this course:

- 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;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;

Prerequisites. None! This class is required for JOMC majors, and it meets a requirement for a minor in social and economic justice.

Required texts and readings. *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases, 8th edition*, by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins. The textbook will be supplemented by articles or other readings, which you may access via Sakai. **All assigned readings should be completed before the appropriate class sessions for which they are assigned to ensure that you're ready to discuss, ask questions, offer opinions, disagree, argue, share knowledge, etc. In addition, you should be following major news as it happens.** Current events and how they are covered by the media will be the source of many of our discussions. Whether you watch CNN or read Gawker, you should be thinking about what constitutes news and how stories unfold. You are also encouraged to bring in questions about media coverage of current events or post them on Sakai.

Honor Code. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we are all responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected, and it is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes a violation of the Honor Code. For more information about the Honor Code, visit <http://honor.unc.edu>.

Diversity. The University's policy statements on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination are outlined here: <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/intro.html>. In summary, UNC does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression or disabilities.

Courtesy. This is a course about ethics, meaning there are few black-and-white rules that we won't challenge and pick apart. This means your voice and opinion are very important. We will often be discussing difficult and controversial ethical issues. Please respect the opinions of your fellow students. We are here to challenge our assumptions and learn from each other.

Harassment. UNC does not tolerate harassment based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, disability, or for any other reason. It is also a violation of the Honor Code and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments. If you need assistance with a harassment issue or problem, bring it to my attention or The Office of the Dean of Students, dos@unc.edu or 919.966.4042.

Special Accommodations: If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know before the end of the second week of class. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu> or call 919.962.8300. If you need assistance or services from the Academic Success Program for Students with LD/ADHD please contact them at 919-962-7227 or <http://www.unc.edu/asp/>.

Laptops and cell phones. Laptops are permitted in class; however, I reserve the right to ask you to close your laptops during presentations or other class discussions. You are expected to be using your laptop only to take notes for class. Other use may result in my asking you to leave your laptop at home. Cell phones should be set on silent or turned off and left in your backpack, please. If I am repeatedly asking you to turn off your cell phone, it will be reflected in your participation grade.

Office hours. My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday 12-1 in Carroll 367. You are also welcome to make an appointment by email at least two days in advance. You may also email me with questions. I will try to answer questions by email within 24-48 hours of receipt. You should not plan on getting an email answer in less than 24 hours, so do not leave it until an hour before your assignment is due.

Participation. I distinguish between attendance and participation. In addition to attending class, I expect everyone to be **active participants in the class and/or on Sakai – ask questions, offer your opinions, and challenge.** I think you'll find it makes learning easier and even more fun, especially given how quickly we must move through the material. Here are criteria I follow for determining the participation portion of grade (20%).

- **A** students participate in most of the class discussions in almost every class period (or try to participate by raising their hands often when questions are asked) and/or contribute online regularly. They contribute interesting and/or thought-provoking ideas and occasionally bring in outside material relevant to the class and to the readings. They don't talk simply to hear their own voices, and they do not take over the discussion, but let others have a turn. They've probably asked some interesting questions along the way. They arrive to class on time and do not miss classes. (9-10)
- **B** students participate in some of the class discussions each week and/or contribute online regularly, but either are not at quite the same level and/or comments are not always as insightful as the A students. However, they still have some interesting things to say or questions to ask whether in class or online. They may have no absences and they arrive to class on time. (7-8)
- **C** students may participate in class or online from time to time but mostly prefer to lurk. They may have had some pretty good things to say but just don't speak up/contribute online very often. They may have no absences or perhaps they have more than they should. They may be tardy on occasion (5-6)
- **D and F** students have barely said anything all session whether in class or online, or even if they have contributed occasionally, they might have too many absences. They are mostly lurkers even if they have fairly good attendance. They tend to respond only when called on. They may or may not have arrived to most classes on time. (≤ 4)

Evaluation. Your final grade will be based upon:

❖ Participation (in-class/Sakai/attendance)	20%
❖ Homework, in-class assignments	15%
❖ “Foundations” Exam	15%
❖ Group Projects	25%
❖ Final Exam	25%



Grading scale:	A = 90-100	(-,)
	B = 80-89	(+/-)
	C = 70-79*	(+/-)
	D = 60-69	(+/-)
	F = below 60	

*This course is required for students enrolled in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. **You must earn a C- to avoid repeating the course.**

Grades are not negotiable. However, I am happy to meet with you regarding a specific assignment or exam grade as long as you contact me within one week of receiving the grade.

Exams. We will have two take-home exams, a “foundations” exam and a final. The exams will cover material presented in class and in the readings and will be comprised of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions.

Group Project. You will be assigned groups of four to five students to do one of two types of group projects: either a case study of a current news ethics controversy, or a TARES test on an ad. I will attempt to assign you to groups based on which type of presentation you want to do. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your findings and presentation. All group members will receive the same grade, so it is your responsibility to bring any issues to my attention early on. Please do not wait until the night before your presentation to email me if you have questions or concerns.

Late Work. All homework assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class period. Late work will receive 10% off for the first day. No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in more than 24 hours after its deadline – a grade of F will be recorded. You’re responsible for turning in all projects on the dates they’re due, even if you’re absent that day. In-class assignments are just that – we’ll work on them in class and you will turn them in when class ends. Missing an in-class assignment constitutes a zero for that item and cannot be made up if you are absent.

Attendance. You are expected to attend class. Learning is a participatory process. Attendance will be taken every day by a sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to sign in each class period. **You are permitted three absences. You do not have to notify me of your reasons for your absences, nor do you have to provide a doctor’s note.** Use your absences wisely. If you know you need to be absent for university-related activities or other obligations, be sure to factor those into your absences. **For each class you miss after three, your FINAL GRADE will be lowered by three points.** For example, if your grade is a B- (81) and you have four absences, your final grade will be altered to a C+ (78). **No absence after your three allowed absences will be excused for any reason**, so you are strongly encouraged to save your permitted absences for when you really need them. Arriving on time is a courtesy to your fellow classmates. **Repeated tardiness (10 min or more) will affect your attendance and participation grade.**

Week by Week – JOMC 141 Summer I 2015

Please note: this schedule is subject to change.
Always check the syllabus on Sakai for the most up-to-date info

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
<u>Week 1</u>		
May 13	Welcome! Introduction to the course and syllabus. Why do we study ethics?	
May 14	Case discussion: What were they thinking?!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “UW-Madison doctors photo to stress diversity” (Sakai) * “KTVU reports racist joke as names of Asiana 214 pilots” (Sakai) * “Trust me, an infamous serial liar says” (Sakai)
May 15	Philosophical Foundations: The dead guys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ch. 1 * “Building Blocks” handout (Sakai) * “What Americans Think About Media Ethics” (Sakai) * “Live-streamer reveals quandary of an OWS activist/journalist (Sakai) * “Concept: Pitching the baby, keeping the bathwater: The removal of moral absolutes” (Sakai) * “Ethical communication handout” (Sakai) * Optional – “Aristotle’s Golden Mean” (Sakai)
<u>Week 2</u>		
May 18	Decision-making techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * pp. 4-7 (Bok model), pp. 99-103 (Potter Box); * “Potter Box chart” (Sakai) * “Road rage - what do you show?” (Sakai) * “Boston blasts show two sides of social media” (Sakai) * “Facebook bows to campaign groups over ‘hate speech’”(Sakai) <p style="color: red; margin-top: 10px;">Due: Turn in Dead Guys exercise (Sakai, Assignments)</p>
May 19	Moral development, slippery slopes, introduction to the TARES test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ch. 11 * “Can AA be anonymous in the paper?” (Sakai) * “Mountain Dew’s lambasted ad” (Sakai) * “What it feels like to be photographed in a moment of grief” (Sakai) * “A tough call on a big story” (Sakai) <p style="color: red; margin-top: 10px;">Due: Email me by 5 p.m. at khedding@unc.edu with preference of final project topic (case study of current news controversy or TARES test on ad). If you do not have a preference, you do not have to email me. If I do not receive your email by 5 p.m., you will be randomly assigned.</p>
May 20	Guest Speaker: Justin Blankenship Truth, honesty and their antecedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ch. 2 * “Detroit News auto writer resigns after review changed” (Sakai) * “Fact-checkers force campaigns to keep messages on point” (Sakai) * “Re-thinking objectivity” (Sakai) <p style="color: red; margin-top: 10px;"><i>Group assignments will be posted on Sakai.</i></p>

June 3	Objectivity, frames, subjectivity, manipulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ch. 9 * “Seven principles of media objectivity” (Sakai) * “Going out of business sales not such a bargain” (Sakai) * “AP: ‘Illegal immigrant’ no more” (Sakai) <p>Due: Find an example of a news story or image in the media that you believe is lacking objectivity. Bring it to class (yes, this means print it out or rip it out or bring the whole newspaper/book/magazine/ad, etc.). This can be from any type of media. We’ll talk about them in class.</p>
June 4	Photo challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ch. 8 * “Deceptive Fast Food Advertisements .vs Reality” (Sakai)
June 5	Ethics in Science Communication	*Readings on Sakai
Week 5		
June 8	Issues of diversity, sexism and stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Intolerant of ‘racial tolerance’” by Barry Saunders (Sakai) * “10 Essential points about the Boston Marathon bombers, Islam, and America” (Sakai) * “Racist letter in DTH” (Sakai) <p>Due: Find an example of stereotyping in the media. There is no set guidelines for what constitutes stereotyping -- what do you think it is? Bring your example to class (yes, this means print it out or rip it out or bring the whole newspaper/book/magazine/ad, etc.). This can be from any type of media. We’ll talk about them in class.</p>
June 9	Group Project Presentations	Be prepared to present your group presentations (approximately 10-12 minutes each)
June 10	Guest Speaker: Brooks Fuller Mass media in democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ch. 6 *Readings on Sakai
June 11	Guest Speaker TBD	
June 12	No Class	Study for you Final Exam!
Final Exam June 15	Final Exam	Take home exam available on Sakai at 1:15, due at 2:45.