**JOMC 141: Professional Problems & Ethics**

Spring 2014: Tuesday/Thursday 2-3:15 p.m. 33 Carroll Hall

Instructor:

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10 - 11 a.m. and Thursday 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. and by appointment

“Th’ newspaper does ivrything f’r us. It runs th’ polis foorce an’ th’ banks, commands th’ milishy, controls th’ligislachure, baptizes th’ young, marries th’ foolish, comforts th’ afflicted, afflicts th’ comfortable, buries th’ dead an’ roasts thim aftherward.” – “Mr. Dooley,” fictional Irish journalist, ca. 1900

“The job of the news media is to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.” – Nicholas Kristof, 2008

**Course objectives.** 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.

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

* -  Thoughtfully critique media productions from a professional and  consumer point of view
* -  Understand the sources of difference between ethical values in  communications fields and socio-cultural situations
* -  Develop your own ethical guidelines for your professional aspirations

**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](mailto: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](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/>.

**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.

**Participation.** I distinguish between attendance and participation. In addition to warming a chair twice a week, 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. Yes, it’s a large class, but we can make the community interactive and ethical decision-making more effective through dialogue. Here are criteria I follow for determining the participation portion of grade (15%).

* **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 at least twice weekly. 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 at least once or twice weekly, 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 semester 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)

**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.

**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 10 - 11 a.m. and Thursday 3:30 -4:30 p.m. in Carroll 382. 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.

**Your final grade** will be based upon:

\* Homework, in-class assignments 15%

\* Participation (in-class/Sakai and attendance) 15%

\* Midterm exam 25%

\* Group project 15%

\* Final exam 25%

\* Research participation requirement 5%

**Grade scale.** The alpha/numeric conversion for course grades is as follows:

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72\*

D+ = 67-69

D = 60-66

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 in-class exams, a midterm 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.

**Research Participation Requirement**. Students in JOMC 141 are required to complete two hours of research over the course of the semester. There are two ways you may fulfill this requirement.  The first way is to participate in two academic research studies in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.  Participating in studies is a valuable way for you to receive first-hand experience with mass communication research.  You will be able to sign up online to participate in these studies – and, double-dipping is allowed if you are taking another class that requires research participation!  The second way to fulfill your research participation requirement is to write two two-page summaries/critiques of academic research articles.  Each review counts for one hour of research participation, so you may combine participation in the studies with article reviews to fulfill the research requirement.  You may summarize any article published in the past two years in the following journals:  *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Mass Media Ethics, Mass Communication and Society, Journal of Public Relations Research*, and *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. Your summaries are due no later than **Thursday, April 24 at 2 p.m.** Early paper submissions are encouraged.

**Week by Week – JOMC 141 Spring 2014**

Please note: this schedule is subject to change.

Always check the syllabus on Sakai for the most up-to-date info

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment for this day** |
| Week 1  Thursday, Jan. 9 | Welcome!    Introduction to the course and syllabus. Why do we study ethics? |  |
| Week 2  Tuesday, Jan. 14 | Case discussion: What were they thinking?! | \* “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) |
| Thursday, Jan.16 | Philosophical Foundations:  the dead guys | \*Ch. 1  \* “Building Blocks” handout (Sakai)  \*“What Americans Think About Media Ethics” (Sakai) |
| Week 3  Tuesday, Jan. 21 | More dead guys | \* “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) |
| Thursday,  Jan. 23 | Advertising, public relations and persuasion | \* Ch. 3  \* “What the ad doesn’t tell you” (Sakai)  \* “Obsession’ DVD insert” (Sakai)  \* “Controversial film on Islam delivered nationwide” (Sakai)  \* “Readers obsessed with anti-Islam video” (Sakai)  **Due: Turn in Dead Guys exercise (Sakai, Assignments)** |
| Week 4  Tuesday, Jan. 28 | Going undercover: the (nearly) lost art of deceptive journalism. | \* “Their Men in Washington” (Sakai)  \* “I Just Wanted to Fly Solo: A Night at the Sugar Ray Festival” (Sakai) |
| Thursday,  Jan. 30 | Loyalties | \* Ch. 4  \* “One person’s tragedy, another person’s prize” (Sakai)  \* “The case of the phony teenager” (Sakai)  **Due: Email me by 5 p.m. at** [**msobel@live.unc.edu**](mailto:msobel@live.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.** |
| Week 5  Tuesday, Feb. 4 | Truth, honesty and their antecedents  Assign teams | \* Ch. 2  \* “Detroit News auto writer resigns after review changed” (Sakai)  \* “Fact-checkers force campaigns to keep messages on point” (Sakai)  \* “The Oregonian fires editor who provided false information” (Sakai) |
| Thursday,  Feb. 6 | What about money? The role of media economics. | \* Ch. 7 |
| Week 6  Tuesday, Feb. 11 | Decision-making techniques | \* 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) |
| Thursday, Feb. 13 | Professionalism and codes | \* “Friend of the Victim: The Case of the Murdered Student” (Sakai)  **Read the following codes of ethics:**  American Advertising Federation Ethics and Principles  <http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/adpr/upload/Advertising-Code-of-Ethics.pdf>  National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics <https://www.nppa.org/code_of_ethics>  Public Relations Society of America Member Code of Ethics  <http://www.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/Ethics/CodeEnglish/>  Radio Television Digital News Association Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct  <http://www.rtdna.org/article/rtdna_code_of_ethics>  Society for News Design  <http://www.snd.org/about/code-of-ethics/>  Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics  <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>  **Due: Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due ( Sakai, Assignments)** |
| Week 7  Tuesday, Feb. 18 | Using ethics codes and making decisions – case discussion | \*“Why I didn’t march” (Sakai)  \* “Photo manipulation-Toledo Blade” (Sakai)  \* “With Boston Manhunt, Media Is Part of a Story It Is Covering” (sakai)  **Due: Turn in a one-page proposal for your group project. If you are doing a TARES test, identify which ad you plan to discuss and why it’s important to scrutinize. If you are doing a case study of a news event, describe the event and what makes it an ethical issue.** |
| Thursday, Feb. 20 | Review |  |
| Week 8  Tuesday, Feb. 25 | Midterm Exam |  |
| Thursday,  Feb. 27 | Ethics in TV shows | Movie day! |
| Week 9  Tuesday, March 4 | Privacy | \* Ch. 5  \* “The Jolie Treatment”(Sakai)  \* “Saunders: The 24/7 news cycle should slow when justice is at stake” (Sakai) |
| Thursday,  March 6 | UNC Ombudsmen  Guest speaker: Wayne Blair |  |
| Week 10  Tuesday, March 11 | Spring break! | No class. |
| Thursday, March 13 | Spring break! | No class. |
| Week 11  Tuesday,  March 18 | More truth ‘n all that… | \* “Pulling a fast one at the polls” (Sakai)  \* “20 Questions A Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results” (Sakai) |
| Thursday, March 20 | Moral development | \* 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) |
| Week 12  Tuesday, March 25 | Objectivity, frames, subjectivity, manipulation | \* Ch. 9  \* “Seven principles of media objectivity” (Sakai)  **\* “**Going out of business sales not such a bargain” (Sakai)  \* “AP: ‘Illegal immigrant’ no more” (Sakai)  **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.** |
| Thursday, March 27 | Documentary: Is it journalism? What are the rules for truth? Guest speaker: Jesse Abdenour |  |
| Week 13  Tuesday, April 1 | Photo challenges | \* Ch. 8  \* “Deceptive Fast Food Advertisements .vs Reality” (Sakai) |
| Thursday, April 3 | Ethics in Research |  |
| Week 14  Tuesday, April 8 | Issues of diversity, sexism and stereotypes | \* “Intolerant of ‘racial tolerance’” by Barry Saunders (Sakai)  \* “10 Essential points about the Boston Marathon bombers, Islam, and America” (Sakai)  \* “Racist letters: To run or not to run” (Sakai)  \* “Racist letter in DTH” (Sakai)  **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.** |
| Thursday, April 10 | In-class work day | **Due: Turn in Diversity Game (Sakai, Assignments)** <http://www.mije.org/diversitygame> |
| Week 15  Tuesday, April 15 | Mass media in democracy | \* Ch. 6  \*“CSR Showdown” (Sakai)  \* “Social media free speech rights complicated for workers” (Sakai) |
| Thursday, April 17 | Group Project Presentations |  |
| Week 16  Tuesday, April 22 | Group Project Presentations |  |
| Thursday, April 24 | Group Project Presentations | **Due: Research participation summaries (Sakai, Syllabus)** |
| Final Exam  Monday, May 5th, 12 p.m. | Final Exam | Please note date and time! |