

# JOMC 141.2 – Professional Problems and Ethics: The Spring 2014 Edition

**Classroom:** Gardner 08

**Time:** MW 1-2:15 pm

**Instructor:** Lois Boynton

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**Office hours:** MW 3-5 pm; T 10:30-noon and 2-4; Thursday 10:30-noon; and by appointment



## **Shelving hard decisions is the least-ethical course.**

*— Adrian Cadbury, British business executive*

**Course Overview:** Here's what the university's catalog says: "Intensive study of professional and ethical issues and problems facing the mass media and their employees in relation to modern society." Let me add to that: We're going to look at the relationships of ethics, ethical dilemmas, and ethical practices within a variety of mass communication professions – print, broadcast, and online media; photojournalism; graphic design; public relations; and advertising. This class is designed to permit all students the opportunity to explore – both in class discussions and in written assignments – what constitutes ethical practices, what interferes with ethical practices, and what emerging ethical issues may challenge you as the newest generation of professional communicators.

**Course Objectives:** The purpose of this class is to help you make ethical decisions on the job in an organized way. To that end, here are a few objectives. By semester's end, 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.

**Professional values and competencies:** The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is an accredited program that requires students learn key values and competencies (see the full list here:

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>)

The ones that are most applicable to J141 are:

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

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

**Required Text:** *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins. The textbook will be supplemented by **articles** or other readings, which you may access via Sakai (<http://sakai.unc.edu>) in the Resources Folder. 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. That's what will make this class fun!

**News Content:** This is a real-world class in which we're going to examine the challenges and dilemmas of today's mass communication professions. Please keep up with what's going on in the world and in your profession. Take some time each week to check out the news in papers, magazines, TV and/or online. Find out what ethical issues face professionals in your field by taking a look at the trade journals available in the Park Library (second floor of Carroll Hall). See something interesting? Bring it to class or post it on Sakai! The more the merrier!

**Honor Code:** You are expected to conduct yourself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class.

**Diversity:** The University's policy statements on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination are outlined in the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Bulletin, <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.

**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 as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Learning Center website at <http://learningcenter.unc.edu/ldadhd-services/> or call 919-962-3782.

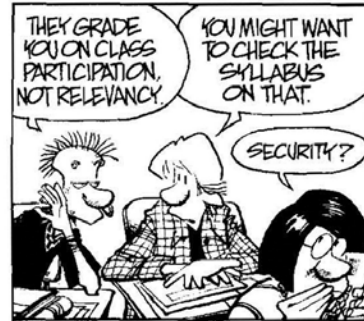
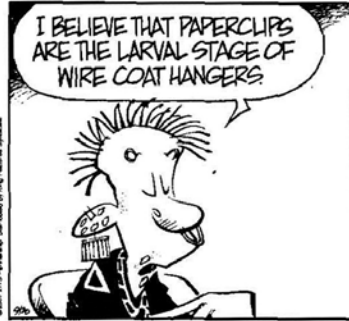
**Attendance and Participation:** Please be here! You'll find it to be handy. Please *sign yourself in* each class period you attend – a list is on the classroom wall. The success of this class depends in large part on the quality of class discussion. You can't contribute to class discussion if you're not in class.

Therefore, the following **attendance policy** will be in effect this semester: You may be absent from class **three times** before it begins to affect your course grade. It is your responsibility to sign in each class period. 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 average is a B- (81) and you have four absences, your final grade will be altered to a C+ (78).

**Please note:** Chances are EXCELLENT that you will need all of your absences for sick days or other types of emergencies. I strongly suggest that you save your absences for these purposes. DO NOT waste your absences on "the weather's too nice to come to class" and then ask for an exception to the attendance policy when you actually come down with the flu.

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**Additionally**, 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. Join the fun! Here are criteria I follow for determining the participation portion of grade (10%). I’ll also ask you to assess yourself via these criteria.

- **A** students participate in most of the class discussions during nearly 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 too often. They may have no absences or perhaps they have more than they should. They may be tardy on occasion, without any comment. (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)

**Assignments and Deadlines:** All outside assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class period (aka, 1 p.m.). Late papers (1:01 p.m. and later) will receive a reduced grade unless you and I agree before the assignment is due that it can be late. No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in more than 24 hours after its deadline – a grade of F will be recorded. 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.

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

* Homework, in-class assignments, quizzes	25%
* Participation (in class and/or on Sakai)	10%
* Two tests	20% (10% each)
* Midterm exam	20%
* Final exam	20%
* Research participation requirement	5%

<b>Grading Scale:</b>
A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = <60
(and +/- as appropriate)

**Sakai:** Valuable information and tools are available via Sakai. As a student registered in JOMC 141, you have automatic access to this site. Please use it regularly, especially under:

- **Forums:** Yes, participation in Sakai discussions counts as class participation. Join in! This will be a place to continue and/or spark class discussion. You may come up with some great ideas outside of class – please express them here, and share your views with your classmates. Post opinions, brainstorm, afterthoughts, new ideas, links to articles you've read, pose questions, make announcements, etc. All postings must adhere to University policies and standards. So, basically, please be respectful of all opinions, whether you agree or not.
- **Syllabus:** Surprise! The syllabus for this class is posted in this section.
- **Resources:** Any PowerPoints and supplemental readings are posted in this section. Many students find it advantageous to access PowerPoints prior to class so in-class participation is easier. Why write it all down by hand when it's online?? My PowerPoints are merely outlines for discussion – I do not provide all the detail – that's what note-taking is for. Every career you may go into requires you to take good notes to make sure you report accurately, represent your clients accurately, and even get the names accurate for photo cutlines.
- **Assignments:** The assignments for this class are posted in this section. Keep in mind that any homework assignments announced in class will be posted after that class period.
- **Announcements:** I will include reminders for assignments, FYIs, and other particulars under this section.

**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, May 1 at noon** (final exam day). Early papers are cheerfully accepted!

**A Few Words on Grades:** I follow the University's Grading Standards, as adopted by the Faculty Council:

"A" Mastery of course content at the highest level of attainment that can reasonably be expected of students at a given stage of development. The "A" grade states clearly that the student has shown such outstanding promise in the aspect of the discipline under study that he/she may be strongly encouraged to continue.

"B" Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The "B" grade states that the student has shown solid promise in the aspect of the discipline under study.

"C" A totally acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The "C" grade states that, while not yet showing any unusual promise, the student may continue to study in the discipline with reasonable hope of intellectual development.

"D" A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The "D" grade states that the student has given no evidence of prospective growth in the discipline; an accumulation of D grades should be taken to mean that the student would be well advised not to continue in the academic field.

"F" For whatever reasons, an unacceptable performance. The "F" grade indicates that the student's performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content. A grade of F should warrant an adviser's questioning whether the student may suitably register for further study in the discipline before remedial work is undertaken.

**The Boynton Corollaries:** Here are some tips from me to help with assignments:

**A:** Your work is “wow!” Your thinking is clear and original. Your assertions are logically supported with plenty of relevant evidence. Your writing is strong and grammatically correct.

**B:** Topics are carefully and thoughtfully covered. Superficial flaws in logic, evidence, or organization exist, but your case is clear and on-target. Writing is strong with very few errors. Your work is quite good.

**C:** One or two minor elements of the assignment or evidence are weak or missing. Organization is adequate. Writing contains several misspellings or grammatical errors. Your work is average.

**D:** Several elements of the assignment or evidence are missing. Organization is haphazard. Writing contains numerous mistakes and detracts from the message. Your work is below average.

**F:** You miss the point of the assignment, or you don’t complete the assignment. Most or all of the required elements are missing. Writing is poor and it’s difficult to discern the message. Your work is failing.

**Please note:** Although grades are not negotiable, I will give every consideration to any concerns you have about an assignment grade, as long as the concern is identified **promptly**. If you have questions about or dispute a particular grade, the issue needs to be taken care of within a week of receiving that particular grade. The only grades that will be discussed at the end of the semester are those assignments you complete at the end of the semester.

**Basic guidelines:**

- **Please be on time** – it’s a matter of professionalism, responsibility, and mutual respect (all huge themes of this course). Class starts promptly at 1 p.m. – be there!
- **Be respectful** – We need to hear what everyone has to say. Participation and discussion are keys to this course, and I hope we have some intense sessions. In other words, we don’t all have to agree! But I do request that you be respectful in your disagreement.
- **Respectful part 2** – if you must leave the room for a biology break, please limit the disruption; like, don’t let the door slam!
- **Turn off the ringers** – Please turn off the ringer or beeper to your phones before class starts. Yes, I have been known to answer the phone for students! Similarly, table the smart phones, etc., for the 75 minutes that we’re in class. You may use your laptops for taking notes only.
- **Keep the classroom neat and clean** – Please make sure you pick up after yourselves – manners are good!



## Week by Week – JOMC 141 for Spring 2014

\*\*\* Please note: this schedule may change if speaker opportunities arise – I will advise\*\*\*

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
Jan. 8	Welcome! Why talk about ethics?	Whine about winter break being over... ☹
Jan. 13	Case discussion: What were they thinking?!	* “UW-Madison doctors photo to stress diversity” (Sakai) * ‘Company parts ways with PR exec after AIDS in Africa tweet’ (Sakai) * “Trust me, an infamous serial liar says” (Sakai)
Jan. 15	Getting our bearings	* ‘Can ethics trump law?’ (Sakai) * ‘Patchwriting’ is more common than plagiarism, just as dishonest’ (Sakai) * Online reading – “Paraphrase: Write it in your own words” <a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/</a> * Online reading – “Is it plagiarism yet?” <a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/</a> <b>***Turn in plagiarism exercise (see Sakai –Assignments)***</b>
<b>Jan. 20</b>	<b>No class – MLK Day</b>	
Jan. 22	Foundations – the dead guys	*Ch. 1 * Building Blocks” handout (Sakai)
Jan. 27	More dead guys	* ‘Concept: Pitching the baby, keeping the bathwater: The removal of moral absolutes’ (Sakai) * Ethical communication handout (Sakai) * Optional – ‘Aristotle’s Golden Mean’ (Sakai)
Jan. 29	Moral development – Kohlberg and Gilligan	Ch. 11 <b>*** Turn in Dead Guys exercise” (Sakai - Assignments)</b>
Feb. 3	More moral development	* ‘A tough call on a big story’ (Sakai) * ‘Safe? Are you sure? Vendors court colleges’ (Sakai) * ‘Fox News reporter faces jail for not revealing sources’ (Sakai)
Feb. 5	Slippery slopes and case discussions – Sitcom day!	*“Can AA be anonymous in the paper?” (Sakai) * ‘What it feels like to be photographed in a moment of grief’ (Sakai)
Feb. 10	<b>Test #1</b>	<b>Um... study??</b>
Feb. 12	Decision-making techniques	* pp. 4-7 (Bok model), pp. 99-103 (Potter Box); * Potter Box chart (Sakai) * Road rage - what do you show? (Sakai) * ‘At least 13 dead after mass shooting in DC Navy yard’ (Sakai) * ‘Facebook bows to campaign groups over ‘hate speech”’ (Sakai)
Feb. 17	More decision-making	* “Racist letters: To run or not to run” (Sakai) * Racist letter in DTH (Sakai)
Feb. 19	Professionalism and codes	* “Friend of the victim: The case of the murdered student” (Sakai) * ‘Wikipedia editors debate role of PR professionals’ (Sakai)
Feb. 24	Using ethics codes and makin’ decisions – case discussion	*“Why I didn’t march” (Sakai) * Photo manipulation-Toledo Blade (Sakai) * ‘Which journalists accepted free laptops from Google?’ (Sakai) * Gannett releases its social media policy (Sakai) <b>***Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due ** - Sakai, Assignments</b>
Feb. 26	Loyalties	Ch. 4 * “One person’s tragedy, another person’s prize” (Sakai)
March 3	More loyalties	* The case of the phony teenager (Sakai)
March 5	<b>Midterm – ewww!!!</b>	<b>That studying thing...</b>

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
	<b>Spring BREAK! 5 pm March 7</b>	<b>through Sunday, March 16. Enjoy! <i>Maybe</i> even be ethical...?</b>
March 17	Truth, honesty and their antecedents	Ch. 2 * Twethics (Sakai) * The Oregonian fires editor who provided false information (Sakai)
March 19	More truth 'n' all that...	Ch. 7 * Pulling a fast one at the polls (Sakai) * '20 Questions A Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results' (Sakai) * 'Another Obamacare story debunked' (Sakai) - <b>**Note: the purpose of this reading is to discuss the importance of getting all the facts, politics aside**</b>
March 24	Objectivity, frames, subjectivity, manipulation	Ch. 9 * 'NC Republican finds a way to get his message in the media' (Sakai) <b>**Note: ditto to the above note**</b> * 'UNC, MSU, 'celebrations,' 'riots,' and media framing' (Sakai) * 'Seven principles of media objectivity' (Sakai)
March 26	Ads, persuasion, etc.	Ch. 3 * "What the ad doesn't tell you" (Sakai) <b>**TARES Team Project Basics – who is on your team, and what persuasive message will you take on?***</b>
March 31	Persuade some more!	* 'Obsession' DVD insert (Sakai) * 'Controversial film on Islam delivered nationwide' (Sakai) * 'Readers obsessed with anti-Islam video' (Sakai)
April 2	Photo challenges	Ch. 8 * 'Deceptive fast food advertisements vs reality (Sakai)
April 7	<b>Test #2</b>	'Fraid that means studying again...
April 9	Privacy	Ch. 5
April 14	Complete privacy discussion.	* 'Government leaks, prosecutions and the news media' * 'Saunders: Seeing the victims of crime can send a powerful message' (Sakai) <b>***TARES TEAM PROJECT DUE***</b>
April 16	Issues of diversity	* "Intolerant of 'racial tolerance'" by Barry Saunders (Sakai) * 'A nation divided: Should the US boycott the 2014 Olympics in Russia?' (Sakai) * NABJ statement on references to race in Boston bombing coverage' (Sakai) <b>*** Turn in Diversity game (see Sakai for assignment info)***</b> <a href="http://www.mije.org/diversitygame">http://www.mije.org/diversitygame</a>
April 21	Mass media in democracy	Ch. 6 * Social media free speech rights complicated for workers (Sakai) * 'The media doesn't ( <i>sic</i> ) own the story anymore' (Sakai)
April 23	Last day of class! Review, wrap-up, prep for final exam	Bring your notes, questions, etc.
May 1	<b>Final exam (ewww<sup>2</sup>!!!) noon</b>	PLEASE NOTE DATE AND TIME!!!