

JOMC 141.004: Professional Problems & Ethics

Fall 2013: M, W 8-9:15 a.m.

Dey Hall, Room 0305

Instructor: Suzannah Evans

389 Carroll Hall

sdevans@live.unc.edu

Office Hours: Monday 10-11:30 a.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 goals and 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

Patterson, P. & Wilkins, L. (2011). *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Please note: There is a newer edition of this book available (8th edition; 2013). We are using the **7th edition** because I want you to have the ability to buy a used version. You are strongly encouraged to buy this book online via Amazon.com or another vendor. The student stores are convenient but you will save money by ordering the book online. A copy of the book is available on reserve at the Park Library in Carroll Hall. Additional readings will be available on Sakai.

You are expected to complete all readings in advance of class. 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 counts as news and how stories unfold. You are also encouraged to bring in questions about media 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 all are 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.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class! Learning is a participatory process. Attendance will be taken every day by a sign-in sheet. You are permitted three absences. After three absences, each absence will result in 2 points removed from your final grade. In other words, if you have a 91 (A-) and miss a fourth class, your grade will be lowered to an 89 (B+). I will not be asking you for reasons for your absences, but you should know that no absence after your three allowed absences will be excused. You are strongly encouraged to save your permitted absences for when you really need them.

Timeliness. Our class begins at 8 a.m. on Monday and Wednesday. This is very early, but remember, we're all in the same boat, and it's a courtesy to your fellow classmates to be on time. Repeated tardiness (10 min or more) will affect your attendance and participation grade.

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 is 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.

Participation. Speaking up in class is encouraged, but you may also participate by posting on our Sakai site. Posting on Sakai will be considered an equivalent contribution as speaking in class. If you never speak in class, however, you should be posting on Sakai at least twice per week (once for each class period). You may also speak up frequently in class and rarely post on Sakai. Of course, I encourage you to do both – at least reading others' posts on Sakai – in order to get the most out of your classmates' contributions.

I will post a discussion prompt for each week's topic on the previous Friday (or earlier). You may post responses (minimum 100 words) on that thread. Alternately, you may post topics inside other general forums on the site, for example, general ethical issues in the news. This can be an interesting news item or media topic that happened that week. You are not required to write much about news links – just post it and write why you think it's an interesting ethical issue.

Regarding guest speakers. We will have several guest speakers during the semester. I hope you'll enjoy learning from them. You will be asked to turn in **three**

short response papers (one double-spaced page) reflecting on the guest speakers' lecture in the following class. What did you learn that surprised you? What might affect how you think about the media or your own work? This will count toward your participation grade. You may choose which speakers to write about, but you must write about three.

Please note: **READING is required for this course!** The best thing you can do to make class more fun and engaging for yourself is to do the readings, especially current events and case studies.

Participation grades will be based on the following:

- **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 arrive to class on time and do not miss classes. From their comments, it is clear that they have done the class readings. (9-10)
- **B** students participate in some of the class discussions each week and/or contribute online at least once or twice weekly. They may have no absences and they arrive to class on time. It is usually clear that they have done the assigned readings. (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. It is not clear that they have done the readings. (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 and give no indication that they have done the readings. (≤ 4)

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 walk-in hours are Monday 10-11:30 a.m. in Carroll 389 (third floor directly above Park Library). You are also welcome to make an appointment by email at least two days in advance. You may also email me with questions. **Please put "JOMC 141" and something about your question in the email subject heading.** Example: "JOMC 141: Midterm exam question." I will try to answer questions by email

with 24-48 hours of receipt. You should not plan on getting an email answer in less than 24 hours! So try not to leave it until an hour before your paper is due.

Diversity. The University's policy statements on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination as 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.

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 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/>.

Grades

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Attendance: 15%

Participation: 25%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Paper: 20%

Group paper and presentation: 20%

Grade scale

Final grades will be based on the following scale.

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 = 63-66

D- = 60-62

F = 59 or below

Grades are not negotiable and will not be "rounded up." However, I will meet with you regarding specific assignment or exam grades as long as you contact me within one week of receiving the grade, with the exception of the final paper.

Exam

We will have one in-class exam, a midterm. The exam will cover material presented in class and in the readings and will be comprised of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Group Project

You will be assigned groups of three to four 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. You will receive an individual grade and a group grade. Your individual grade will be determined by a 2-3 page double-spaced paper describing your role in the project and the most important finding of your research. This paper is due on the day you give your presentation. Your group grade will be determined by the quality of your findings and presentation, in addition to a peer-review survey of the class after your presentation, so be sure to engage your fellow students!

Final Paper

Your final assignment will be an 8-10 page paper (double spaced, 12-point font, plus a minimum of 10 references) that will be due at the time of our final exam, which is Friday, December 6. You must drop a hard copy at my office (Carroll 389) **by 12 pm on Friday**. E-mailed copies will not be accepted unless we have extreme weather and the university is closed. No late papers will be accepted. You may use any citation style (APA, Chicago, etc.) as long as you are consistent and accurate.

Schedule

Wednesday, August 21: Introduction to the course and syllabus. Why do we study ethics? Confidence in journalism/media is low. Media get a lot wrong. What can we do?

Reading: None.

Monday, August 26: Concepts and Principles of Ethics – Old dead guys.

Reading: Chapter 1 of Patterson & Wilkins; “What Americans Think About Media Ethics” on Sakai.

Wednesday, August 28: More dead guys; the case study approach; Social Responsibility Theory.

Reading: “The uneasy intersection of politics and journalism” on Sakai.

Monday, September 2: Labor Day – NO CLASS

Wednesday, Sept. 4: More basics of journalism ethics

Reading: Chapter 2 of Patterson & Wilkins and “An Ethical Audit” on Sakai. Bring in a copy of a recent Daily Tar Heel for an in-class discussion.

Also: Groups will be assigned for group project.

Monday, Sept. 9: Decision-making in-class exercise to get to know your group. You will be given a case study to discuss. Use one of the ethical guidelines discussed in

earlier classes to analyze and make a recommendation. It is recommended that one member of your group brings a laptop.

Due: Turn in a short (1-2 doubled-spaced pages) essay based on the in-class exercise at the end of class. You may email it to me at sdevans@live.unc.edu with the subject heading: "JOMC 141 decision-making exercise."

Wednesday, Sept. 11: Documentary: Is it journalism? What are the rules for truth? Guest speaker: Jesse Abdenour
Reading: None.

Monday, Sept. 16: The TARES Test
Reading: The TARES Test: Principles of Ethical Persuasion on Sakai.
Due: Response paper on Jesse Abdenour's presentation.

Wednesday, Sept. 18: Copyright OR more on the TARES Test and Loyalty
Guest speaker: Rich Powell, copyright scholar and former journalist
Reading: Chapter 4 of Patterson & Wilkins

Monday, Sept. 23: Strategic Communications and Public Relations.
Reading: Chapter 3 of Patterson & Wilkins
Due: Response paper on Rich Powell's presentation.

Wednesday, Sept. 25: Going undercover: the (nearly) lost art of deceptive journalism.
Reading: "Their Men in Washington"; "I Just Wanted to Fly Solo: A Night at the Sugar Ray Festival."

Monday, Sept. 30: Photojournalism.
Reading: Chapter 8 of Patterson & Wilkins.
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.

Wednesday, Oct. 2: Privacy; social media and the definition of a source.
Reading: Chapter 5 of Patterson & Wilkins

Monday, Oct. 7: Media and democracy; war and national security.
Reading: Chapter 6 of Patterson & Wilkins

Wednesday, Oct. 9: Codes of Ethics: What do they mean?
Reading: See Sakai for IAE (ads) Code of Ethics, Bloggers' Code of Ethics, RTNDA (radio and TV) Code of Ethics, Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, NPPA visual journalism ethics, and PRSA Code of Ethics. Read the one that's most pertinent to your field and be prepared to discuss in class.

Monday, Oct. 14: New media

Reading: Chapter 9 of Patterson & Wilkins.

Wednesday, Oct. 16: Guest speaker: Radio & broadcast journalist and producer Rosemary Pennington.

Monday, Oct. 21: Diversity, Sexism and Stereotypes

Due: Post an example of stereotyping in the media on the forum on Sakai by Sunday at noon. That means before class! I will show some of your examples to everyone. Also, response paper to Rosemary Pennington's presentation.

Wednesday, Oct. 23: What about money? The role of media economics. Guest speaker: Dave Bockino.

Reading: Chapter 7 of Patterson & Wilkins

Monday, Oct. 28: Midterm Exam!

Wednesday, Oct. 30: You worked hard preparing for your exam, so today is MOVIE DAY! We will watch and discuss an episode a popular TV shows that deals with journalism, democracy and ethics. I will take a vote on which program to show.

Monday, Nov. 4: Guest speaker: Sportswriter and sports radio columnist Art Chansky.

Wednesday, Nov. 6: Public spaces, public faces: celebrities and more.

Reading: Chapter 10 of Patterson & Wilkins

Due: Response to Art Chansky's presentation.

Monday, Nov. 11: In-class group project work. Ask me anything!

Wednesday, Nov. 13: New media and a shifting landscape.

Reading: TBD

Monday, Nov. 18: Crisis management for PR professionals.

Reading: TBD

Wednesday, Nov. 20: Group Project Presentations

Monday, Nov. 25: Group Project Presentations

Wednesday, Nov. 27: THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS

Monday, Dec. 2: Group Project Presentations

Wednesday, Dec. 4: Final group presentations. Semester review; what have we learned? Final paper questions.

Friday, Dec. 6: Hard copy of final paper due to my office (Carroll 389) by 12 pm.