

JOMC 141: Professional Problems & Ethics

Summer 2016: MTWThF 1:15-2:45 p.m.

Carroll Hall, Room 0283

Instructor: Dr. Suzannah Evans

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Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and by appointment

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:

- 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 your own ethical guidelines for your professional aspirations

Required texts and readings

Patterson, P. & Wilkins, L. (2013). *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*. New York: McGraw-Hill. 8th edition.

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.

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

Because this is an intensive summer session, attendance is very important. Attendance will be taken every day by a sign-in sheet. You are permitted two absences. After two 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 third class, your grade will be lowered to an 89 (B+). I will not be asking you for reasons for your absences (and you don't need to email me unless it's an exam/presentation day), but you should know that no absence after your two 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 1:15 p.m. It's a courtesy to your fellow classmates and your professor to be on time. Repeated tardiness (5 min or more) will affect your 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 sometimes 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. You are expected to show that you've prepared for class by doing the readings and demonstrating your understanding of the readings through participation. We will also hold class discussions on ethical issues, where your thoughtful and fact-based opinion is welcomed.

Participation grades will be based on the following:

- **A** students participate in most of the class discussions during every class period (or try to participate by raising their hands often when questions are asked). 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 every day. 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 from time to time. 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, or even if they have contributed occasionally, they might have too many absences. 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)

Opening class discussion. In addition to your overall participation, you will be responsible for opening class one time during the session with an example of a

contemporary ethical issue. This can be related to news, PR, advertising, social media, political communication, and so on. At the beginning of class, you should introduce the issue and ask one discussion question for the class. We will spend 5-10 minutes total on this.

Exams. Two exams will test your understanding of the material covered in lectures, assigned readings, and class presentations. The final exam is cumulative.

Ethics in the Media Presentation. You'll be responsible for selecting an ethical issue in the media. You'll make an in-depth (15 min) presentation to class to explain the situation in light of the theories we'll be discussing in class.

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.

Office hours. My walk-in hours are Wednesday 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in Carroll 389 (third floor directly above Park Library). You are also welcome to make an appointment by email at least one day 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." During the summer session, I will do my best to respond to your email in the same day. However: *I do not respond to email questions that can be answered by checking the syllabus.*

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, **you must let me know the first week of class. After an assignment or due or after an exam has been taken is too late. I cannot give retroactive special accommodations.** 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:

Participation: 25%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%
Presentation: 25%

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 three days of receiving the grade, with the exception of the final exam.

Schedule

May 11: Introduction to the course/syllabus

May 12: Concepts and Principles of Ethics – Old dead guys

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

May 13: More basics of journalism ethics

Reading: Chapter 2 of Patterson & Wilkins.

May 16: Framing

Reading: Chong & Druckman “Framing Theory”

May 17: 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.”

May 18: Photojournalism

Reading: Chapter 8 of Patterson & Wilkins

May 19: Codes of Ethics

Reading: See Sakai for codes of ethics for IAE (ads); bloggers; RTNDA (radio and TV); Society of Professional Journalists; NPPA visual journalism; and PRSA. Read the one that's most pertinent to your field and be prepared to discuss in class.

May 20: The TARES Test

Reading: The TARES Test: Principles of Ethical Persuasion

May 23: Midterm exam

May 24: Loyalty; Strategic Communications and Public Relations

Reading: Chapters 3 and 4 of Patterson & Wilkins

May 25: PR Crisis Management

Assignment: Post an example of a political ad (current or historic) and a short description of its context and ethical implications on Sakai by 7 p.m. for discussion in class on the 26th.

May 26: Political communication

Reading: TBD

May 27: "Grassroots" political communication

Reading: "Grassroots for Hire," Chapter 1, by Ed Walker

May 30: MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS

May 31: Advocacy communications

Reading: "Reporting Conventions: Journalists, Activists, and the Thorny Struggle for Political Visibility," Sarah Sobieraj

June 1: First Amendment law, The University of Missouri, "safe spaces," and student journalism

Reading: [There's a good reason protesters didn't want the media around](#) and [At the University of Missouri, An Unlearned Free Speech Lesson](#)

June 2: Case study: *Rolling Stone* and the University of Virginia

Reading: [The Columbia School of Journalism Report](#)

June 3: Watch "Spotlight"

June 6: Finish "Spotlight"; in-class writing response (bring your laptop)

June 7: Presentations

June 8: Presentations

June 9: Presentations

June 10: Presentations

June 13: Guest instructor: Kylah Hedding on science communication

Readings: [Why Science Is So Hard To Believe](#) and [Major EPA Fracking Study Cites Pollution But Sees No 'Systematic' Damage So Far](#)

June 14: READING DAY – NO CLASS

June 15: Final exam available on Sakai