

MEDIA ETHICS

MEJO 141.001
Summer Session I, 2019
M-F 1:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
CA 283

Instructor

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Office Hours

By appointment; *please reach out and schedule at least a day or two beforehand*

Text Book / Reading

Media Ethics: Issues and Cases (9th edition) by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins

The textbook will be supplemented by **articles** or **other readings**, which you may access via the “Resources” folder in Sakai. *Always check Sakai for assigned readings* (even when the syllabus specifies the textbook only).

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 vibrant!

Course Overview

We’re going to look at the relationships of ethics, ethical dilemmas, and ethical practices within a variety of media professions – print, broadcast, and online journalism; various visual communications approaches for news and business; public relations; advertising; and even hybrids.

This class permits 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 within your profession 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 media 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

Written assignments/exercises

Any written assignments/exercises are due at the beginning of class on their due date. Please print out your assignment, bring the hard copy to class and turn it in to me at the end of class in order to receive a grade. When there is a word count, it is an approximation within 50 words. Late papers will receive a reduced grade. No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in more than 24 hours after its deadline – a grade of 0 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.**

Attendance + Class Policy

Please sign the attendance sheet when you arrive to class. While in class, all cell phones need to be silenced (vibrate does not count as silent) and put away. All class computer screens must be on sleep mode unless we are working on them. Laptops must stay in your book bags; note taking must be done with paper and pen. Learning how to focus and listen is a critical aspect in Communication and we will practice this kind of attentiveness and respect in class. Screens are like second hand smoke; they are not simply distracting to you, they disturb those around you. This class policy is not flexible and will affect your grade.

Part of your grade evaluation will include participation. We need each other. The success of this class depends in large part on the quality of class discussion. 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** – ask questions, offer your opinions, and challenge. I think you’ll find it makes learning easier and even more fun. We can make the class community interactive and ethical decision-making more effective through dialogue. Your voice and ideas matter.

You will be allowed 1 un-excused absence; after that 1 percentage point will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE. If your semester average is 91% and you miss 3 classes, your final average would be 89% and so forth. The exception to this will be a serious medical condition or emergency.

Professional Curiosity

This is a real-world class in which we’re going to examine the challenges and dilemmas of today’s media and communication professions. Please keep up with what’s going on in the world and in your profession. Take some time each day to check out the news in papers, magazines, TV and/or online. One suggested resource is *The Skimm* (<http://www.theskimm.com/>), available online and as a daily newsletter. *The New York Times* offers a variety of subject-specific newsletters (<http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters>) and *The Daily Brief* from *Quartz* (<http://qz.com/daily-brief>) sends out short recaps about current events each morning. Additionally, news apps like *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* offer push notifications and daily debriefs. You can also like different new organizations on Facebook, like AJ+ (<https://www.facebook.com/ajplusenglish/>).

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) or online. See something interesting? Bring it to class or post it on Sakai! The more the merrier!

Rubric

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.

Your final grade will be based upon:

Assignments (homework & in class)	25%
Participation	15%
Ethics in the News (group project)	10%
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	25%

SYLLABUS – MEJO 141, Summer Session I, 2019

(syllabus is subject to change)

Date		Assignment (note: always check Sakai for additional reading material when <i>Media Ethics</i> is specified)
W May 15	Welcome!	Let reality sink in that the session has started, and yes, you're in a classroom...over summer break.
Th May 16		* SAKAI readings
F May 17		* SAKAI readings ** Plagiarism – in class exercise
M May 20	The Dead Guys	* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 1 (pp. 1 – 23)
Tu May 21		* Ch. 11 ** Handouts: “Building Blocks” and “Ethical Communication”
W May 22	FILM: <i>The Axe Fight</i>	* SAKAI Readings
Th May 23		* SAKAI readings **Ethics in The News – discuss assignment/assign teams **Implicit Bias – in class exercise *** DUE: Dead Guys exercise (Sakai)
F May 24		* <i>Media Ethics</i> , pp. 70-75 ** TARES – in class exercise
M May 27	MEMORIAL DAY NO CLASS	
Tu May 28		* <i>Media Ethics</i> , pp. 5-8 (Bok model), pp. 104-109 (Potter Box); ** Potter Box chart – in class exercise

W May 29	FILM: <i>Farmer Veteran</i>	* SAKAI readings *** DUE: Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt (Sakai)
Th May 30	GUEST SPEAKER: Jeremy Lange, <i>Farmer Veteran</i>	* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 4
F May 31		* TBD
M June 3	TEST 1	* Midterm Review
Tu June 4		* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 8
W June 5	GUEST SPEAKER: Dan Partridge, <i>The Jazz Loft</i>	* SAKAI readings
Th June 6		* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 2
F June 7		* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 3
M June 10	ETHICS IN THE NEWS	*** DUE: ETHICS IN THE NEWS PRESENTATIONS TODAY
Tu June 11	ETHICS IN THE NEWS	*** DUE: ETHICS IN THE NEWS PRESENTATIONS TODAY
W June 12		* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 5
Th June 13	GUEST SPEAKER: Sarah Riazati, <i>Monumental</i>	* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 7
F June 14		* <i>Media Ethics</i> , Ch. 6
M June 17	FINAL CLASS	*TBD

FINAL EXAM: JUNE 20