

~ MEJO 141.2 – Media Ethics: The Fall 2019 Edition ~

Classroom: Greenlaw 101 **Time:** TR 2-3:15 p.m.

Instructor: Lois Boynton

Office: 237 Carroll (come visit!!)

e-mail: lboynton@email.unc.edu

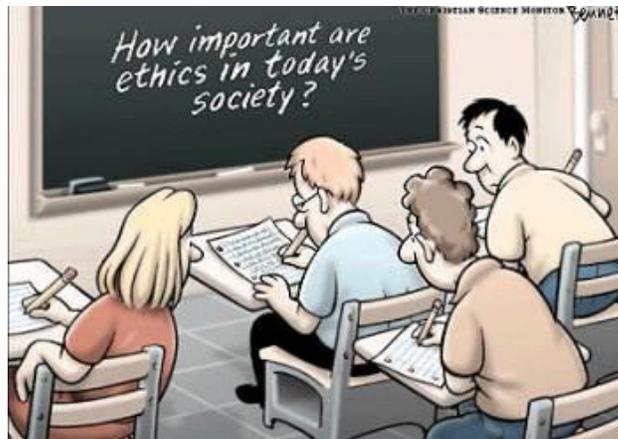
Office phone: 919/843-8342

Home phone: 919/960-6093 (leave message if needed)

Office hours: M 2-5 p.m.; TR 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; by appointment; when my office door is open.

TA: Erik Brooks

e-mail: ejbrooks@live.unc.edu



[ABOUT]

We're going to look at the relationships of professional 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 opportunities to explore – both in class discussions and in written assignments – what constitutes professional ethical practices, what interferes with acting ethically, and what emerging ethical issues may challenge you as the newest generation of professional communicators.

Prereqs? Nope!



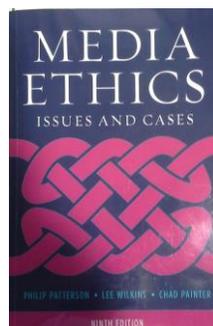
MEJO 141 meets the General Education requirement for philosophical and moral reasoning (PH)!

That means, during the semester, each student will complete at least 10 pages of writing. As you'll see in the week-to-week schedule, there are a few writing assignments that, together, meet this stipulation.

Objectives

The purpose of this class is to help you make effective ethical decisions within your profession. By semester's end, you should be able to:

- ① integrate ethical foundations and apply those ideas to professional situations to resolve ethical dilemmas;
- ② critically analyze current media professional practices through reading and discussing communication topics found in trade journals and other media;
- ③ compare ethical codes and standards of our professions and examine how similarities and differences help or hinder their professional relationships;



↔ **da book:** **Media Ethics: Issues and Cases** by Philip Patterson, Lee Wilkins & Chad Painter, 9th edition

plus readings on [Sakai](#) –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!

About the content: This course may at times include topics, materials and discussions that can be disturbing or distressing, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate all the directions our conversations may take. If you find it necessary to step out of the classroom, you may do so without penalty. However, you still are responsible for any material covered during time that you miss, and you should make arrangements to get notes from a classmate. I will be happy to meet with you if you have concerns. Please also remember that the university provides a number of resources and services to help you cope with any difficult challenges you face while part of the Carolina community and beyond, through Counseling and Psychological Services (aka CAPS): <https://caps.unc.edu/>



Always Be Curious

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 through regular reading/viewing of traditional and evolving media channels.

One resource I like is [The Skimm](#); you may have others. Find ethical issues that professionals in your field face 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!

Attendance and Participation

Please be here! You'll find it to be handy. I consider this a professional environment and you to be the professionals (OK, I'll be professional, too!). In the professional world, there's no such thing as not attending a meeting or workday "just because." So, treat attendance as an expectation.

Please **sign yourself in** each class period you attend – the lists are in the back of the classroom. It is **your** responsibility to **sign in** each class period.

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 **3 times** ("excused" or "unexcused") before I take points off for missed classes.

Please note, however, that you are held accountable for any material covered

during classes, and you will lose credit for any in-class assignment or activity completed during classes you do not attend.

You do not 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.

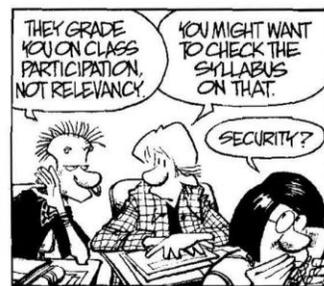
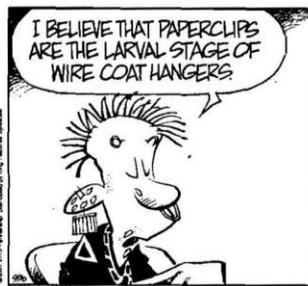
For each class you miss after 3, your final grade will be lowered by 3 points. For example, if your grade average is a B- (81) and you have four absences, your final grade will be C+ (78).

Chances are EXCELLENT that you will need all your absences for sick days or other types of emergencies or opportunities. I strongly suggest you save your absences for these purposes.

DO NOT waste your absences on "the weather's too nice (or too lousy) to come to class" and then ask for an exception to the attendance policy when you actually get the flu.

ZITS

8/27/11
D. KRAMER



Additionally, I distinguish between attendance and participation. **In short, attendance is expected but not sufficient condition for an outstanding participation grade.** 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 your grade. I'll also ask you to **assess yourself** via these same criteria at the end of the semester.

| A (9-10) | B (7-8) | C (5-6) | D and F (≤4) |
|---|---|--|---|
| Consistently participates in class and/or online twice a week. Thought-provoking ideas, asks interesting questions. On time. No absences. | Participates in class and/or online once or twice a week consistently through semester. Good ideas, asks questions. On time, no absences. | Participates in class and/or online time to time. Mostly prefers to lurk. Pretty good input but doesn't speak up/ contribute online consistently. Attends classes. | Barely says anything all semester whether in class or on Sakai Forums. Mostly lurkers even if has good attendance. May or may not be on time. |

Diversity & Inclusion: The School of Media and Journalism's [Diversity and Inclusion Mission and Vision statements](#) are online.

Our Mission: *The UNC School of Media and Journalism's mission is to train the next generation of media professionals and ultimately to ignite public conversation. Because meaningful and productive public conversation depends on the inclusion of diverse perspectives, the school is committed to providing an environment for teaching, learning and research that includes individuals from diverse backgrounds and with differing interests, lived experiences and goals; that reflects the diversity of the state of North Carolina and the world beyond; and that supports intellectual inquiry, dialogue and opportunities for lifelong learning and growth necessary to successfully engage in public conversation in a global marketplace of ideas.*

[Honor Code](#)

You are expected to conduct yourself within the guidelines of the University honor system. 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. You may retrieve the full document, *The instrument of student judicial governance*, [here](#).

The University's *Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct* is outlined [here](#) and [here](#).



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 or 919/966-4042.

UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities based on age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Discrimination violates the university's [Honor Code](#), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments.

Class Accommodations: If you require accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Resources & Service Office [website](#), call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.

If you need **individual assistance**, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor (that's me!). If you are serious about improving your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness. Please don't wait!!

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, UNC has a great resource called Carolina Cupboard – <http://carolinacupboard.web.unc.edu/>

- ♦ **Syllabus** – You know, this thing you should check every now and then...
- ♦ **Resources** – PowerPoints, readings. PowerPoints are merely outlines for discussion – I do not provide all the detail – that's what listening and note-taking are for. Every career requires you to take good notes to make sure you report accurately, represent your clients accurately, and get the names accurate for photo cutlines.
- ♦ **Assignments** – in-class and homework. Any homework assignments announced in class will be posted after that class period.
- ♦ **Forums:** **Yes, participation in Sakai forum discussions counts as class participation.** Continue and/or spark class discussions at any time – even if it's a topic area that we've already covered.
- ♦ **Gradebook:** I or my TA will post grades. If you have a question about a grade, please bring it to my attention within a week of it being posted (rather than waiting until the semester ends).

Sakai-ing:
← **What you'll find online**



Assignments and deadlines

All **homework assignments** are due at the beginning of the designated class period (aka, 2 p.m.). Late papers (2:01 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 – it'll get ya a zero.

In-class assignments are just that – you'll work on them in class and turn them in when class ends. Missing an in-class assignment constitutes a zero for that item.

NOTE: All assignments should be saved/turned in as Word or PDF documents



Your final grade will be based upon

| | |
|---|-----|
| *Homework | 15% |
| *Participation (in class and/or on Sakai) | 10% |
| *In-class assignments, quizzes, etc. (lowest dropped) | 12% |
| *TARES group project | 13% |
| *Research participation | 5% |
| *Test | 10% |
| *Midterm exam | 15% |
| *Final exam | 20% |

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = <60

(and +/- as appropriate)

❖ **Extra Credit: It's unlikely you will receive extra credit opportunities in this course. In the rare event that they occur, they will be class wide, so please don't ask for individual extra credit assignments.**



Guess what?! You get to complete 2 hours of research this semester! How, you ask? Allow me to expound:

Option 1: Participate in two academic research studies in the School of Media and Journalism. Participating in studies is a valuable way for you to receive first-hand experience with media and 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!

Option 2: Write article summaries – **due Dec. 7, 3 p.m.** Each summary counts for 1 hour of research participation.

(a) write assessment (two pages each) of a study topic in [Journalist's Resource](#) with ethical ramifications; and/or

(b) write two-page summary/critique of an academic research article no older than 2 years. Among the journals to consult: *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, *Journal of Media Ethics*, *Mass Communication and Society*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Public Relations Review*, *Public Relations Journal* (online), and *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*.

Option 3: Combo! 1 research study and 1 assessment

Need assistance? Set an appointment with Park Library director extraordinaire Stephanie Brown.



A Few Words on Grades: I follow the [University's Grading Standards](#), adopted by the Faculty Council. *Fabulous* reading, I assure you!!

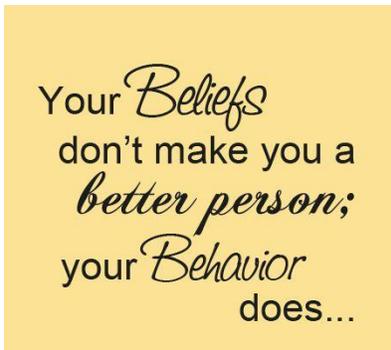
Grades are not negotiable, but I will give every consideration to concerns you have about a grade, IF the concern is identified **promptly**. If you have questions about or dispute a grade, the issue needs to be taken care of within a week of receiving that grade. The only grades I'll discuss at the end of the semester are those assignments you complete at the end of the semester.

And....

♦ **Please be on time** – it's a matter of professionalism, responsibility, and mutual respect (all huge themes of this course). Class starts promptly at 2 p.m. – be here!

♦ **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 lively 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 leave the room for a biology break or another reason, please limit the disruption; like, don't let the door slam!



♦ **Turn off the ringers** – Please silence your phones/digital toys before class starts. Yes, I have been known to answer the phone for students!

♦ **Keep the classroom neat and clean** – Please make sure you pick up after yourselves – manners are good!

♦ **Give social media a rest!** Part of participating is being attentive to what's happ'nin' in class. So, use your laptops and other digital tools to take class notes or do in-class assignments.

If you use a computer for other means, you may lose the privilege of using it for the rest of the semester. BTW, research there is a high correlation between cybersurfing and below average course grades [[Education Psychology](#)]. Just sayin' 😊

♦ **Take the opportunity** to let me know you read the syllabus. Since you made it this far, post a picture of your favorite animal in the Forum section of Sakai by 2 p.m. Aug. 21 to earn some extra credit.



Professional values and competencies: The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them [here](#). No single course could possibly give you all these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. The values and competencies in bold are most relevant for this course:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- **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;**
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- **Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;**
- **Think critically, creatively and independently;**
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Week by Week – MEJO 141-002 for Fall 2019

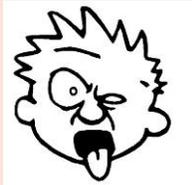
Please note: this schedule may change if speaker opportunities arise, we have a snowstorm, etc. I will advise.

Readings: textbook and in Sakai's Resources tab
 Assignments: in Sakai's Assignment tab. Due 2 p.m.
 Please save/submit assignments in Word or PDF

| Date | Topic | Readings and Assignments for this day |
|---------|---|--|
| Aug. 20 | <p>Welcome!</p> <p>Why talk about ethics?</p> | <p>☹️ Whine about summer break being over ☹️</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> |
| Aug. 22 | Case discussion: What were they thinking?! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Trust me, an infamous serial liar says ▪ Juul told ninth graders vaping is 'totally safe' and Juul spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on programming for children and teens (in 1 document) ▪ Revealed: how Monsanto's 'intelligence center' targeted journalists and activists ▪ Las Vegas judge posts, removes doctored photo of 'The Rock' |
| Aug. 27 | <p>Fabulous guest speaker!</p> <p>Richard Griffiths</p> <p>Retired CNN exec and ethicist extraordinaire</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medical journalist of the highest standard by Richard Griffiths ▪ Griffiths' bio <div style="text-align: right;">  </div> |
| Aug. 29 | Foundations – the dead guys! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 1 ▪ Ethical communication focus handout ▪ Dead guys highlights <p style="text-align: center;">***Turn in Dead Guys – Part 1 ***</p> |
| Sept. 3 | Back to the dead guys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ ProPublica finds a side effect of transparency ▪ UW-Madison doctors photo to stress diversity ▪ Kate Spade's death and the unintentional consequences of suicide coverage ▪ 'Patchwriting' is more common than plagiarism [for homework exercise] ↓ <p style="text-align: center;">***Turn in plagiarism exercise***</p> |

| Date | Topic | Readings and Assignments for this day |
|----------|---|--|
| Sept. 5 | Moral development – Kohlberg and Gilligan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 11 ▪ Videos to supplement book chapter: (1) Carol Gilligan’s theory of moral development and (2) Kohlberg’s theory of moral development ▪ Supplemental reading: <i>Online guide to ethics and moral philosophy</i> <p>*** Turn in Dead Guys – Part 2 (Sakai - Assignments)***</p> <p>***Reading quiz 1***</p> |
| Sept. 10 | More developing morally | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Experience: <i>I write fake news</i> ▪ <i>On a long-ago Christmas Eve, an editor understood what we were supposed to do</i> ▪ <i>Ad of the day: Whirlpool put washers and dryers in schools</i> ▪ Case 4-H: <i>How one tweet ruined a life</i> (pp. 131-133) |
| Sept. 12 | Standpoint-ing and social justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 9 ▪ Standpoint theory basics ▪ <i>How Alexandra Bell is disrupting racism in journalism</i> |
| Sept. 17 | Test #1 | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div> |
| Sept. 19 | Decision-making techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ pp. 5-8 (Bok model) and pp. 105-109 (Potter Box) ▪ Rawls’ veil of ignorance ▪ Just for fun: <i>Trying to decide if you should publish that dirty word? aka, the potty box</i> ▪ Supplemental/Optional: Potter Box chart <p>**Reading quiz 2**</p> |
| Sept. 24 | Encore! More decision-making techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Be ready to make an informed ethical decision using the Bok model and Potter Box for an in-class assignment. ▪ <i>When showing credibility imperils a story’s subjects</i> ▪ Case 3-D: <i>Between a (Kid) Rock and a hard place</i> (pp. 88-89) |



| Date | Topic | Readings and Assignments for this day |
|--|---|--|
| Sept. 26 | TARES assessments  Are ya participatin'?? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ pp. 70-75: <i>Thinking about the message: A systemic test</i> – aka TARES <p>Be ready to assess an ad by conducting a TARES test in class</p> <p>**Reading quiz 3**</p> |
| Oct. 1 | Professionalism and codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ <i>Characteristics of a profession</i> ▪ <i>News media paid Melania Trump thousands for use of photos in 'positive stories only'</i> ▪ <i>Case 4-E: Whose Facebook page is it anyway?</i> <p>**TARES Team Project Basics*** – who's on your team, and what persuasive political message will you take on?</p> |
| Oct. 3 | More professional-ing and codes-ing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ <i>Bribe or harmless incentive?</i> ▪ <i>CNN chief medical correspondent appearing in Dem campaign ads</i> ▪ <i>Case 8-D: Above the fold: Balancing newsworthy photos with community standards</i> ▪ <i>Edelman the latest company to face employee blowback over border-related work</i> <p>***Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due***</p> |
| Oct. 8 | Truth-tellin' – part 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 2 ▪ <i>Case 2-D: Can I quote me on that?</i> <p>**Reading quiz 4**</p> |
| Oct. 10 | Review for midterm ☹️ | <p>Bring your notes and your questions.</p> |
| Oct. 15 | <p>Midterm – ewwww!</p>  | <p>That studying thing...?</p> |
|  <p>Happy Fall Y'all!</p> | | <p>Classes end at 5 pm Oct. 16 and resume 8 am Oct. 21</p> <p>Enjoy! Maybe even be ethical...? ... yeah, right... 😊😊</p> |

| Date | Topic | Assignment for this day |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Oct. 22 | Let's be truthful for a bit longer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ On defining truth ▪ Fox News apologizes for implying Eagles players knelt during the anthem ▪ Newspaper apologizes for political ad typo |
|  | |  |
| Oct. 24 | Objectivity, frames, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Revisit ch. 2, pp. 26-31 ▪ Snake-handling Pentecostal pastor dies from snake bite ▪ Case 9-C: Cincinnati Enquirer's heroin beat |
| Oct. 24 | Complete objectivity and framing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ How to be (or not to be) an advocacy journalist ▪ Against objectivity |
| Oct. 29 | Persuading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Unspun – chapters 2, 3, 4 |
| Be ready to find examples of various UnSpun strategies in class | | |
| Oct. 31 | Persuade some more | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 3 ▪ Case 3-D: Between a (Kid) Rock and a hard place ▪ Women inmates: Why the male model doesn't work |
|  | | |
| Nov. 5 | Visual/photo challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 8 |
| ** Reading Quiz 5 ** | | |
| Nov. 7 | More visuals and photo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Case 8-D: Above the fold: Balancing newsworthy photos with community standards ▪ 'Napalm girl' photographer returns - with iPhone, Instagram |
| Nov. 12 | Loyalties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 4 ▪ The social contract |
| Nov. 14 | Being loyal some more | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Declaration of Independence ▪ In a heartbreaking open letter, a father denounces his son's participation in the Charlottesville white nationalist rally ▪ One person's tragedy, another person's prize |

| Date | Topic | Assignment for this day |
|---------|-------------------------|--|
| Nov. 19 | Privacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 5 ▪ Case 5-G: Politics and money: What's private and what's not? |
| Nov. 21 | Still bein' private | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Some of the best opioid coverage is not where you'd expect ▪ Case 6-B: Doxxer, doxxer, give me the news? |
| Nov. 26 | Pulling it all together | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confederate statues have nothing good to teach student journalists ▪ Advertising with Olympic athletes |



Thanksgiving break!!!

No classes November 27-Dec. 1.

Happy Turkey Day!

Dec. 3 - **LDOC!**

Finish up and review for final



Saturday, Dec. 7
noon

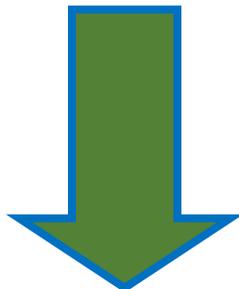


Final exam
(ewww²!!!)

PLEASE NOTE DATE AND TIME!!!



One more page to go...



Yep, I read the syllabus:

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read the MEJO 141.002 syllabus for Fall 2019 in its entirety. Along with this, you agree to the information and the rules – and consequences – presented in the syllabus. If any questions should arise, please feel free to talk with me and/or send an email: lboynton@email.unc.edu

***Please return this by the second day of class – aka Aug. 22**

Print your name: _____

Your autograph: _____ Date: _____

Thank you!