

JOMC 141: Professional Problems & Ethics

Fall 2014: Monday/Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m., Dey Hall 305

Instructor: Brooks Fuller

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Office Hours: Monday 9:30am-10:30am; Friday by appointment

“The job of the news media is to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.” – Nicholas Kristof

“I would not know how I am supposed to feel about many stories if not for the fact that the TV news personalities make sad faces for sad stories and happy faces for happy stories.” – Dave Barry

Prerequisites: NONE! This class is a requirement for JOMC majors (you must pass with a C- or greater) and fulfills a requirement for a minor in Social and Economic Justice.

Course objectives. Welcome to JOMC 141! The University catalog and the JOMC Course Directory say JOMC 141 is: “Intensive study through concepts and cases of ethical issues and problems facing mass communication professionals in modern society.” In our time together, through in-class discussions and written materials, we will look at a variety of mass media professions and examine how professional (and perhaps amateur) practitioners manage ethical dilemmas given myriad competing interests (money, fame, status, competing loyalties, personal morals, etc.). Better yet, we will discuss how these issues are likely to impact your development as professionals immediately following graduation and throughout your respective careers.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the sources of difference between ethical values in communication fields, social structure, and cultures
- Identify or “spot” ethical issues in professional practice. This means taking a critical (though not necessarily antagonistic) approach to the communication work of colleagues, peers, and yourself, and discuss ethical issues using clear and critical arguments.
- Apply fundamental ethical decision-making principles to modern ethical dilemmas.
- Distinguish between ethical guidelines and other forms of decision-making guidelines or mandates (i.e. law, morals, gut instinct, etc.).
- Develop and articulate relevant ethical guidelines for your own professional aspirations.

Required texts and readings. *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*, 8th edition, by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins. The textbook will be supplemented by articles or other readings, which you may access via Sakai. 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 and perspectives, disagree, argue, share knowledge, etc.

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. You are also encouraged to bring in questions about media coverage of current events or post them on Sakai. Whether you watch MSNBC, FOX, or CNN, or read TMZ.com or the DTH, you should be thinking about what constitutes ethical communication in the context of real-life events.

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. You should properly attribute any work done by others. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected, and it is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes a violation of the Honor Code. In your group work you should also be mindful that you are responsible for upholding and maintaining the honor of our University learning community.

Diversity. The University's policy statements on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination are outlined here: <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.

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 are 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.

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 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 and accommodations, visit the Learning Center website at <http://learningcenter.unc.edu/ldadhd-services/> or call 919-962-3782.

Attendance. You are expected to attend class. Learning is a participatory process. Attendance will be taken every day by a sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to sign in each class period, so please seek out the attendance sheet. You may make up to three (3) absences for any reason without it adversely impacting your grade. You do not have to

notify me of your reasons for these three absences, and 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 three, your final course grade will be lowered by three points. For example, if your grade is a B- (81) and you have four absences, your final grade will be changed to a C+ (78). No absence after your three allowed absences will be excused unless extenuating circumstances exist. If circumstances exist that require substantial time out of class, I will contact the Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies for help in applying the attendance policy fairly under the circumstances.

Arriving on time is a courtesy to your fellow classmates. Repeated tardiness (10 min or more) will affect your attendance and participation grade. If you must leave class early, please let me know prior to the start of class.

Participation. This course is enriched by your active participation in the class and/or on Sakai. Our classroom will be a safe space for the discussion of divergent viewpoints, but we must maintain decorum and respect at all time. I think you'll find it makes learning easier and more fun when we recognize the array of possible viewpoints that help inform the outcomes of ethical dilemmas. Here are criteria I follow for determining the participation portion of grade (15%).

- **A** students participate in most of the class discussions in almost 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 are active listeners. 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 provide interesting comments or questions either 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 resist active listening or participation. They may have had some pretty good things to say but just don't speak up/contribute online very often. They may have no absences or perhaps they have more than they should. They may have noticeable tardiness to the point of disrupting the beginning of class on more than a few occasions (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 excessive absences. If their attendance is acceptable, they still fail to participate in class. They tend to respond only when called on. They may or may not have arrived to most classes on time. (≤ 4)

Late Work. All homework assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class period or at the date announced on Sakai. Late work will lose one full letter grade (10%) if it is turned in late, but within 24 hours of the due date and time. No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in more than 24 hours after its deadline – a grade of 0 will be recorded. You are responsible for turning in all projects on the dates they are due, even if you are absent that day. In-class assignments will be completed during class and turned in during class. Missing an in-class assignment constitutes a zero for that item and cannot be made up if you are absent. In-class assignments may take the form of quizzes, mini-group projects, structured debates, brief presentations, etc.

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 use your laptop only to take notes for class or view course materials and websites. Other use may result in my asking you to leave your laptop at home. Please silence your cell phones and keep them in your bags. If you are expecting an important phone call or must respond to an emergency, please let me know. I have no problem allowing you to monitor your cell phone for such purposes, but your courtesy is expected and appreciated. If I must repeatedly ask you to turn off your cell phone, it will be reflected in your participation grade.

Office hours. My office hours are Monday 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. in Carroll 366. You are also welcome to make an appointment by email at least two days in advance or by visiting <https://brooksfuller.youcanbook.me>. You may also email me with questions. I will try to answer questions by email within 24-48 hours of receipt. I rarely respond to e-mail after 8pm, so please consider this when you need to ask questions about assignments or other issues. Please do not wait until the last minute.

Your final grade will be based upon:

* Homework, in-class assignments	15%
* Participation (in-class/Sakai)	15%
* Midterm exam	20%
* Group project	20%
* Final exam	25%
* Research participation requirement	5%

Grade scale. The alpha/numeric conversion for course grades is as follows:

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 = 60-66
F = below 60

*This course is required for students enrolled in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. You must earn a C- to avoid repeating the course.

Grades are not negotiable. However, I am happy to meet with you regarding a specific assignment or exam grade as long as you contact me within one week of receiving the grade. I am happy to correct any clerical errors.

Exams. We will have two in-class exams, a midterm and a final. The exams will cover material presented in class and in the readings. Exam questions may appear in the form of multiple choice, true-false, short answer, or essay questions.

Group Project. You will be assigned groups of four to five students to do one of two types of group projects: either a case study of a current news ethics controversy, or a TARES (Truthful, Authentic, Respect, Equity, Socially responsible) test on an ad. During the first few weeks of class, we will discuss this project in more detail and split into groups based on general interests and your track in the J-School. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your findings and presentation. All group members will receive the same grade. If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with me early on so that we can find the appropriate solution.

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*. Summaries are due no later than **Monday, November 24 at 5 p.m.** Early paper submissions are encouraged.

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) Core Competencies:

In addition to the specific objectives listed in the syllabus above, the UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication promotes the following core competencies and objectives for students in all specializations:

- 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 – JOMC 141, Fall 2014

Please note: this schedule is subject to change.
Always check the syllabus on Sakai for the most up-to-date info

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
Week 1 Wednesday, Aug. 20	Welcome! Introduction to the course and syllabus. Why do we study ethics?	Deal or No Deal?: Knee-Jerk reactions to ethical/unethical media practice. Come prepared to share your opinions.
Week 2 Monday, Aug. 25	Case discussion: What were they thinking?!?!	* "UW-Madison doctors photo to stress diversity" (Sakai) * "KTVU reports racist joke as names of Asiana 214 pilots" (Sakai) * "Trust me, an infamous serial liar says" (Sakai)
Wednesday, Aug. 27	Philosophical Foundations: (some) Really Old Guys	*Ch. 1 – Patterson & Wilkins * "Building Blocks" handout (Sakai) * "What Americans Think About Media Ethics" (Sakai)
Week 3 Monday, Sept. 1 LABOR DAY	Acting Ethically on Vacation	Be careful and have a great day off!
Wednesday, Sept. 3	More Really Old Guys	* "Live-streamer reveals quandary of an OWS activist/journalist (Sakai) * "Concept: Pitching the baby, keeping the bathwater: The removal of moral absolutes" (Sakai) * "Ethical communication handout" (Sakai) * Optional – "Aristotle's Golden Mean" (Sakai)
Week 4 Monday, Sept. 8	Advertising, public relations and persuasion	* Ch. 3 - Patterson & Wilkins * "What the ad doesn't tell you" (Sakai) * "Obsession' DVD insert" (Sakai) * "Controversial film on Islam delivered nationwide" (Sakai) * "Readers obsessed with anti-Islam video" (Sakai) Due: Turn in Dead Guys exercise (Sakai, Assignments)
Wednesday, Sept. 10	Going undercover: the (nearly) lost art of deceptive journalism.	* "Their Men in Washington" (Sakai) * "I Just Wanted to Fly Solo: A Night at the Sugar Ray Festival" (Sakai)
Week 5 Monday, Sept. 15	Loyalties	* Ch. 4 - Patterson & Wilkins * "One person's tragedy, another person's prize" (Sakai) * "The case of the phony teenager" (Sakai) Due: Email me by 5 p.m. at pfuller@live.unc.edu with preference of final project topic (case study of current news controversy or TARES

		test on ad). If you do not have a preference, you do not have to email me. If I do not receive your email by 5 p.m., you will be randomly assigned.
Wednesday, Sept. 17	Truth, honesty and their antecedents Assign groups for project	* Ch. 2 - Patterson & Wilkins * "Detroit News auto writer resigns after review changed" (Sakai) * "Fact-checkers force campaigns to keep messages on point" (Sakai) * "The Oregonian fires editor who provided false information" (Sakai)
Week 6 Monday, Sept. 22	What about money? The role of media economics.	* Ch. 7 - Patterson & Wilkins
Wednesday, Sept. 24	Decision-making techniques	* Patterson & Wilkins pp. 4-7 (Bok model), pp. 99-103 (Potter Box); * "Potter Box chart" (Sakai) * Rawls' Veil of Ignorance (Sakai) * "Road rage - what do you show?" (Sakai) * "Boston blasts show two sides of social media" (Sakai) * "Facebook bows to campaign groups over 'hate speech'"(Sakai)
Week 7 Monday, Sept. 29	Professionalism and codes	* "Friend of the Victim: The Case of the Murdered Student" (Sakai) * "Visualizing September 11" (Patterson & Wilkins) Read the following codes of ethics: American Advertising Federation Ethics and Principles http://www.cuny.cuny.edu/adpr/upload/Advertising-Code-of-Ethics.pdf National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics https://www.nppa.org/code_of_ethics Public Relations Society of America Member Code of Ethics http://www.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/Ethics/CodeEnglish/ Radio Television Digital News Association Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct http://www.rtdna.org/article/rtdna_code_of_ethics Society for News Design http://www.snd.org/about/code-of-ethics/ Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp [Proposed UPDATE to SPJ Code of Ethics – Sakai] Article on SPJ Code revisions http://ajr.org/2014/04/09/new-code-spj-struggles-define-rules-online-journalism/ Due: Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due (Sakai, Assignments)
Wednesday, Oct. 1	Using ethics codes and making decisions – case discussion	*"Why I didn't march" (Sakai) * "Photo manipulation-Toledo Blade" (Sakai) * "With Boston Manhunt, Media Is Part of a Story It Is Covering" (sakai) 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.
Week 8		
Monday, Oct. 6	Review Day	Review the Study Guide posted to Sakai and develop questions and issues to discuss during review
Wednesday, Oct. 8	Midterm Exam	
Week 9	Ethics in TV shows	In-class film and discussion!
Monday, Oct. 13		
Wednesday, Oct. 15 FALL BREAK	Acting ethically on vacation!	Be careful and have fun!
Week 10		
Monday, Oct. 20	Privacy	* Ch. 5 - Patterson & Wilkins * "The Jolie Treatment" (Sakai) * "Saunders: The 24/7 news cycle should slow when justice is at stake" (Sakai)
Wednesday, Oct. 22	More truth!!!	* "Steering the Narrative" from Coaching the Mind blog (Sakai) * "Pulling a fast one at the polls" (Sakai) * "20 Questions A Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results" (Sakai)
Week 11	Moral development	* Ch. 11 - Patterson & Wilkins * "Can AA be anonymous in the paper?" (Sakai) * "Mountain Dew's lambasted ad" (Sakai) * "What it feels like to be photographed in a moment of grief" (Sakai) * "A tough call on a big story" (Sakai)
Monday, Oct. 27		
Wednesday, Oct. 29	Objectivity, frames, subjectivity, manipulation	* Ch. 9 - Patterson & Wilkins * "Seven principles of media objectivity" (Sakai) * "Going out of business sales not such a bargain" (Sakai) * "AP: 'Illegal immigrant' no more" (Sakai) Due: Find an example of a news story or image in the media that you believe is lacking objectivity. Bring it to class (yes, this means print it out or rip it out or bring the whole newspaper/book/magazine/ad, etc.). This can be from any type of media. We'll talk about them in class.
Week 12		
Monday, Nov. 3	Ethics in Research	Readings TBD
Wednesday, Nov. 5	The Documentary: Is it journalism? What are the rules for truth? Guest speaker: Jesse Abdenour	Optional but Interesting: Watch a documentary (on Netflix, from the Media Resource Center, etc.). What ethical lines do you see? How do you distinguish art and journalism? Should you?

Week 13 Monday, Nov. 10	Photo Challenges	* Ch. 8 - Patterson & Wilkins * "Deceptive Fast Food Advertisements vs Reality" (Sakai)
Wednesday, Nov. 12	Issues of diversity, sexism and stereotypes	* "Intolerant of 'racial tolerance'" by Barry Saunders (Sakai) * "10 Essential points about the Boston Marathon bombers, Islam, and America" (Sakai) * "Racist letters: To run or not to run" (Sakai) * "Racist letter in DTH" (Sakai) * "How to cover Hillary Clinton without being sexist" (Sakai) Due: Find an example of stereotyping in the media. There is no set guidelines for what constitutes stereotyping -- what do you think it is? Bring your example to class (yes, this means print it out or rip it out or bring the whole newspaper/book/magazine/ad, etc.). This can be from any type of media. We'll talk about them in class.
Week 14 Monday, Nov. 17	In-class work day	Due: Turn in Diversity Game (Sakai, Assignments) http://www.mije.org/diversitygame
Wednesday, Nov. 19	Mass media in democracy	* Ch. 6 - Patterson & Wilkins * "CSR Showdown" (Sakai) * "Social media free speech rights complicated for workers" (Sakai) * "Facebook 'Like' is Protected Speech" (Sakai)
Week 15 Monday, Nov. 24	Catching up	Case studies TBD, In-class work day Due: Research participation summaries (Sakai, Syllabus)
Wednesday, Nov. 26 THANKSGIVING	Acting ethically while eating turkey and watching football	Be careful and have a wonderful break! (Share the gravy)
Week 16 Monday, Dec. 1	Group Project Presentations	
Wednesday, Dec. 3	Group Project Presentations	
Final Exam TBD	Final Exam	Please note date and time!