# ~ MEJO 141.4 - Media Ethics: The Spring 2020 Edition ~

Classroom: Carroll 33 Time: TR 3:30-4:45 p.m.

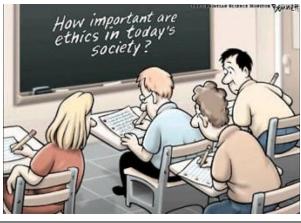
**Instructor:** Lois Boynton

Office: 237 Carroll (come visit!!) e-mail: <a href="mailto:lboynton@email.unc.edu">lboynton@email.unc.edu</a> Office phone: 919/843-8342

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

Office hours: M 10-11:30 a.m. and 2-5 p.m.; TR 1-2:30 p.m.;

by appointment; when my office door is open.





We're going to look at the relationships of <u>professional</u> 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)!

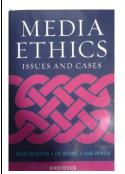
That means, during the semester, each student will complete at least 10 pages of

writing. As you'll see in the week-to-week schedule, there are a few writing assignments that, together, meet this stipulation.



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;



plus readings on <u>Sakai</u> –Resources Folder

All assigned readings should be completed <u>before</u> 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): <a href="https://caps.unc.edu/">https://caps.unc.edu/</a>

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# 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 <u>The Skimm</u>; you may have others. Find ethical issues that professionals in your field face by taking a look at the trade journals available in the <u>Park Library</u> (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 <u>sign in</u> 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, and aligns with the university's class attendance policy. University approved absences are authorized university activities, religious observances, disability, serious health problem, or

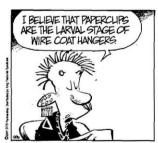
emergency approved by the dean of students. **Please note**, however, that you are held accountable for any material covered during classes, and you will lose credit for any in-class assignment or activity completed during classes you do not attend.

Use your absences wisely. If you know you need to be absent for university-related activities or other obligations, be sure to factor them in.

You may be absent from class 3 times ("excused" or "unexcused") before I take points off for missed classes. 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).

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.







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)

Consistently participates in class and/or online twice a week. Thought-provoking ideas, asks interesting questions. On time. No absences.

### B (7-8)

Participates in class and/or online once or twice a week consistently through semester. Good ideas, asks questions. On time, no absences.

## C (5-6)

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.

## D and F (<4)

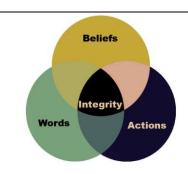
Barely says anything all semester whether in class or on Sakai Forums. Mostly lurkers even if has good attendance. May or may not be on time. **Diversity & Inclusion:** The School of Media and Journalism's <u>Diversity and Inclusion Mission and Vision statements</u> are online.

**Our 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, , odos@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 – <a href="http://carolinacupboard.web.unc.edu/">http://carolinacupboard.web.unc.edu/</a>

- 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 <u>within a week</u> 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, 3:30 p.m.). Late papers (3:31 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%	Grading Scale:
*Participation (in class and/or on Sakai)	10%	A = 90-100
*In-class assignments, quizzes, etc. (lowest dropped)	12%	B = 80-89
*TARES group project	13%	C = 70-79
*Research participation	5%	D = 60-69
*Test	10%	F = <60
*Midterm exam	15%	(and +/- as appropriate)
*Final exam	20%	

\* 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:

<u>Option 1</u>: 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 April 28, 7 p.m. Each summary counts for 1 hour of research participation.

- (a) write assessment (two pages each) of a study topic in <u>Journalist's Resource</u> with ethical ramifications; and/or
- **(b)** write two-page summary/critique of an academic research article <u>no older than 2 years</u>. 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.

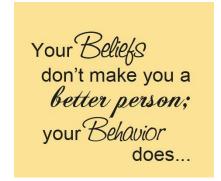


**A Few Words on Grades:** I follow the <u>University's Grading Standards</u>, adopted by the Faculty Council. *Fabulous* reading, I assure you!!

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 <u>within a week of receiving that grade</u>. 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 3:30 p.m. Jan. 10 to earn some extra credit.

# ACEJMC

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications

**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 <a href="here">here</a>. 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 Spring 2020

<u>Please note</u>: 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 3:30 p.m. Please save/submit assignments in <u>Word</u> or <u>PDF</u>

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments for this day
Jan. 9	Welcome!	Whine about winter break being over 😂
	Why talk about ethics?	GOT ETHICS?
Jan. 14	Case discussion: What were they thinking?!	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Trust me, an infamous serial liar says</li> <li>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)</li> <li>Portrayal of female journalist in 'Richard Jewell' is 'worst kind of trope,' editor says and Richard Jewell's lawyer agrees the movie smeared Atlanta newspaper reporter (in 1 document)</li> <li>Handicapped parking signs covered at State Fairgrounds, spaces reserved for dog show judges</li> </ul>
Jan. 16	Foundations – the dead guys!	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Ch. 1</li> <li>Ethical communication focus handout</li> <li>Philosophy (dead guys) highlights – Aristotle and Kant</li> <li>NY1 puts Anthony Weiner on indefinite leave</li> <li>***Turn in Dead Guys – Part 1 ***</li> </ul>
Jan. 21	More dead guys	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Philosophy (dead guys) highlights – Mill, Ross,</li> <li>Communitarianism</li> <li>Kate Spade's death and the unintentional consequences of suicide coverage</li> <li>ProPublica finds a side effect of transparency</li> <li>On the First Amendment: Indiana University bigoted professor</li> <li>Case 8-D: Above the fold: Balancing newsworthy photos with community standards (NOTE: includes disturbing photos)</li> </ul>

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments for this day
Jan. 23	Finish up the dead guys with Communitarianism  Start moral development, starring Kohlberg and Gilligan	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Ch. 11</li> <li>Videos to supplement book chapter: (1) Carol Gilligan's theory of moral development and (2) Kohlberg's theory of moral development</li> <li>'Patchwriting' is more common than plagiarism [for homework]</li> <li>***Turn in plagiarism exercise***</li> </ul>
Jan. 28	More Kohlberg and Gilligan	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Supplemental reading: Online guide to ethics and moral philosophy</li> <li>Experience: I write fake news</li> <li>On a long-ago Christmas Eve, an editor understood what we were supposed to do</li> <li>Ad of the day: Whirlpool put washers and dryers in schools</li> <li>UW-Madison doctors photo to stress diversity</li> <li>*** Turn in Dead Guys - Part 2 (Sakai - Assignments)***</li> </ul>
Jan. 30	Finish up moral development  Standpoint-ing and social justice	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Case 4-H: How one tweet ruined a life (pp. 131-133)</li> <li>Ch. 9</li> <li>Standpoint theory basics</li> <li>How Alexandra Bell is disrupting racism in journalism</li> </ul>
Feb. 4	More standpoint-ing and social justice	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Implicit bias</li> <li>The many voices of journalism</li> <li>None of the 2020 presidential candidates' websites are fully accessible to disabled voters</li> <li>'I left work as Michael and returned as Maeve': A corp comms MD on coming out as transgender at Goldman Sachs</li> </ul>
Feb. 6	Test #1	WATT: NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
Feb. 11	Decision-making techniques  RIGHT MYRONG	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>pp. 5-8 (Bok model) and pp. 105-109 (Potter Box)</li> <li>Rawls' veil of ignorance</li> <li>Just for fun: Trying to decide if you should publish that dirty word? aka, the potty box</li> <li>Supplemental/Optional: Potter Box chart</li> <li>Students protest Jeff Sessions' speech and what followed.</li> <li>**Reading quiz 2**</li> </ul>
Feb. 13	Encore! More decision- making techniques	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Be ready to make an informed ethical decision using the</li> <li>Bok model and Potter Box for an in-class assignment.</li> <li>Edelman staffers play get out of jail card</li> </ul>
Feb. 15 Are ya participatin'??	Wrap up Potter & Bok Onward with TARES assessments  NEXT TIME YOURE AFRAID TO SHARE IDEAS REMEMBER SOMEONE ONCE SAID IN A MEETING LETS MAKE A FILM WITH A TORNADO FULL OF SHARKS	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>pp. 70-75: Thinking about the message: A systemic test – aka TARES</li> <li>Be ready to assess an ad by conducting a TARES test in class</li> <li>**Reading quiz 3**</li> </ul>
Feb. 20	Wrap up TARES	Revisit questions to guide reading
Feb. 25	Professionalism and ethics codes	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Characteristics of a profession</li> <li>From JUUL to Facebook, Self-Regulation is Always Bad PR</li> <li>Students stand up to the PR machine and Editorial: Why we said no and Editorial: On integrity (in 1 document)</li> <li>Case 4-G: Quit, blow the whistle, or go with the flow</li> <li>**TARES Team Project Basics*** – who's on your team, and what persuasive political message will you take on?</li> </ul>
Feb. 27	More professional-ing and codes-ing	<ul> <li>Twitter Says It Has New Rules to Curb Hate Speech Targeting Religious Groups and Updating our rules against hateful conduct (in 1 document)</li> <li>The Ethics (&amp; Economics) of Freebies</li> <li>Her Amazon purchases are real. The reviews are fake</li> <li>***Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due***</li> </ul>
March 3	Review for midterm ⊗	Bring your notes and your questions.

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
March 5	Midterm – ewwww!	That studying thing?
HAPPY SPRING BREAK!	FinallySpring Break!!	March 6, 5 p.m Sunday, March 15
Welcome back!	Truth-tellin' – part 1	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Ch. 2</li> <li>Case 2-D: Can I quote me on that?</li> <li>Monsanto's spies [Note: There's at least 1 cuss word in this story.]</li> <li>**Reading quiz 4**</li> </ul>
March 19	Let's be truthful for a bit longer	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>On defining truth</li> <li>Op-ed: Bias is good. It just needs a label</li> <li>TV pundits praising Suleimani assassination neglect to disclose ties to arms industry</li> <li>***TARES Team Project Due***</li> </ul>
March 24	Wrap up truthing. Objectivity, frames, etc.	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Revisit ch. 2, pp. 26-31</li> <li>Snake-handling Pentecostal pastor dies from snake bite</li> </ul>
March 26	More objectivity and framing	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>How to be (or not to be) an advocacy journalist</li> <li>Against objectivity</li> <li>False media balance</li> </ul>
March 31	Persuading	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Unspun – chapters 2, 3, 4</li> <li>**Be ready to find examples of various         UnSpun strategies in class**</li> </ul>

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day	
April 2	Persuade some more	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Ch. 3</li> <li>Women inmates: Why the male model doesn't work</li> <li>'Meth. We're on it' campaign rolls out in South Dakota to confusion, ridicule</li> </ul>	
April 7	Visual/photo challenges	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Ch. 8</li> <li>Fake videos of real people – and how to spot them (short TED Talk video)</li> <li>'Napalm girl' photographer returns - with iPhone, Instagram</li> <li>** Reading Quiz 5**</li> </ul>	
April 9	Loyalties	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Ch. 4</li> <li>The social contract</li> <li>Declaration of Independence</li> </ul>	
April 14	Being loyal some more	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>In a heartbreaking open letter, a father denounces his son's participation in the Charlottesville white nationalist rally</li> <li>One person's tragedy, another person's prize</li> </ul>	
April 16	Privacy	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Ch. 5</li> <li>Case 9-C: Cincinnati Enquirer's heroin beat</li> <li>Heroin addiction: Why we took on this 7-day project</li> <li>Peruse the series just to get an idea of what's there: Seven days of heroin: This is what an epidemic looks like</li> <li>**Reading Quiz 6**</li> </ul>	
April 21	Still bein' private	<ul> <li>Questions to guide reading</li> <li>Case 6-B: Doxxer, doxxer, give me the news?</li> </ul>	
April 23 - LDOC!	HAPPY dAnge.	<ul> <li>Finish up, pull it all together and review for final</li> <li>Confederate statues have nothing good to teach student journalists</li> <li>Advertising with Olympic athletes</li> </ul>	
April 28, 4 p.m.	Final exam (ewww²!!!)  PLEASE NOTE DATE AND TIME!!!	THINK ITS STRESS!!	

# Yep, I read the syllabus:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the MEJO 141.004 syllabus for Spring 2020 in its entirety. Along with this, I 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: <a href="mailto:lboynton@email.unc.edu">lboynton@email.unc.edu</a>

*Please return this by the second day of o	<u>:lass</u> – aka January 14.	
Print your name:		
Your autograph:	Date:	
Thank you!		