

~ MEJO 141.2 – Media Ethics: The Fall 2020 Edition ~

Classroom: Zoom! *

Time: TR 3-4:15 p.m.

Instructor: Lois Boynton

Office: 237 Carroll

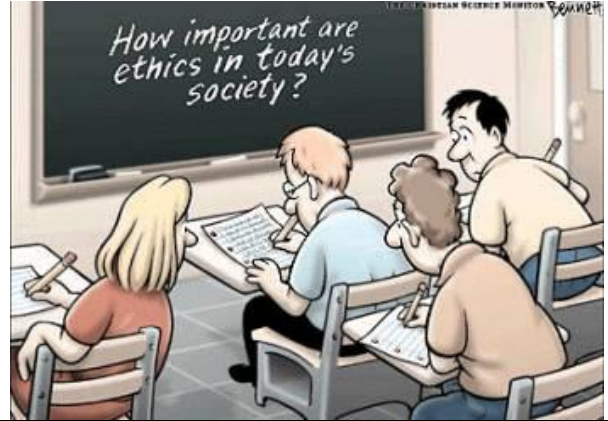
e-mail: lboynton@email.unc.edu

Office phone: 919/843-8342

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

Student hours: Zoomin' MW 11 am-noon and 3-5 pm; TR 12:45-2 pm; and by appointment *

* see Sakai for Zoom links and passwords



Before getting to the official stuff...

Let's face it... this semester isn't exactly what any of us would have picked... a pandemic does have a way of messing up a perfectly good academic experience, right? But, rather than focus solely on the downsides, I hope we can come up with some positives as we plow through professional media ethics online. Like – you don't have to wear a mask to this class, and social distancing is built in!



A balancing act.

A “normal” semester can be quite a balancing act. Toss in a pandemic and **uff da!** (as they say in Norway).

But, you don't have to go it alone... misery loves company, or something like that. ☺ I hope you'll take advantage of campus resources:

- **CV19 Student Care Hub:** <https://keeplearning.unc.edu/> includes FAQs about academic, financial and wellness issues.
- **This DTH article provides Top 10 tips to stay successful and sane while learning online**
<https://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2020/05/top-10-tips-to-stay-successful-and-sane-while-learning-online>
- **And, please let me know how I might help you!** Student hours are my o-fficial meeting times, but I will work with you to e-meet at other times, too. We got this!!

OK... on with the course stuff!



[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)!

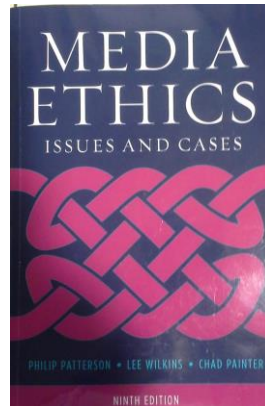
That means, during the semester, each student will complete at least 10 pages of writing. As you'll see in the week-to-week schedule, there are a

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 e-class, 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 record class meetings and post them on Sakai, as well.

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. There's Counseling and Psychological Services (aka CAPS), and other resources to access through the Health and Wellness Care Hub - <https://keeplearning.unc.edu/wellness/>.



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 like *PR Week*, *Ad Age*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, among others.

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

Attendance and Participation

Please e-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." Treat attendance as an expectation.

The [university's class attendance policy](#) states, "Regular class attendance is a student obligation. Students are responsible for all of their work, including assessments, tests, and written work, and for all class meetings. ... No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings..." The university considers more than 3 absences to be a concern. That's why I have an attendance policy.

Yes, taking attendance on Zoom is a bit wonky – I'm just setting up some gutters to help you avoid the natural temptations we all face.

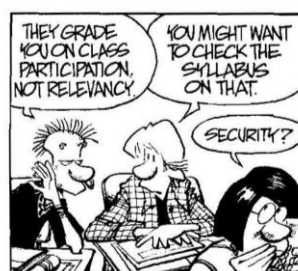
You may be absent from class **3 times** before I take points off for missed classes. **For each class you miss after 3**, your final grade will be lowered by 3 points. For example, if your grade average is a B- (81) and you have 4 absences, your final grade will be C+ (78).

There are exceptions:

- ① *University approved absences* are authorized university activities, religious observances, disability, serious health problem, or emergency approved by the dean of students.
- ② *COVID-19*: It has a habit of raising a ruckus on our lives. I get that. Please let me know and let me work with you to get through the challenges.

Please note that you are responsible for any material covered during classes, and you will lose credit for any in-class assignment completed during classes you do not attend unless you make arrangements with me ahead of time.

ZITS
SCOTT AND
BROWN



Additionally, I distinguish between attendance and participation. **In short, attendance is expected but not sufficient condition for an outstanding participation grade.** In addition to Zoom class twice a week, I expect everyone to be **active** participants in the class (vocalizing or via Chat) **and/or** in Sakai forums– 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 university's [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#) has valuable resources. And, Hussman School of Journalism and Media's [Diversity and Inclusion](#) Mission and Vision statements 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](#).



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 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...
- ♦ **Lessons** – with luck, I'll figure out that feature to help you navigate effectively ☺
- ♦ **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. Additionally, I'll record class meetings and post them on Sakai.
- ♦ **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, 3 p.m.). Late papers (3:01 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 (<i>lowest dropped</i>), etc.	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 Hussman School of Journalism and Media. 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 Nov. 23 by 3 p.m.** (aka, exam day). 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.

YOU ≠ YOUR GPA

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 3 p.m. – be here!

♦ **Be respectful** – We need to hear what folks have 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.

♦ **Turn off the ringers** – Please silence your phones/digital toys before class starts.

Your *Beliefs*
don't make you a
better person;
your *Behavior*
does...

♦ **Zoom etiquette** –

① With a class this size, it would help to mute the audio until you have something to share.

② I love to see your bright faces, but I also realize that wifi limitations ... and occasional bedhead ... may preclude you from being on camera. 😊

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

BTW, research shows 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 p.m. Aug. 11 to earn some extra credit.

ACEJMC

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications


Professional values and competencies: The Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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 2020

Please note: this schedule may change if speaker opportunities arise, we have a hurricane, etc. (Oh my, 2020!) I will advise.



Readings: textbook and in Sakai's Resources tab
Assignments: in Sakai's Assignment tab. Due 3 p.m.
Please save/submit assignments in Word or PDF

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments for this day
Aug. 11	Welcome! Why talk about ethics?	☹ Whine about summer break being over ☹ 
Aug. 13	Case discussion: What were they thinking?!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Trust me, an infamous serial liar says ▪ Philadelphia Inquirer journalists call out sick after paper publishes the headline: 'Buildings Matter, Too' ▪ Manager fired, training planned, money donated to Muslim council after ad runs in Tennessean ▪ 'Patchwriting' is more common than plagiarism, just as dishonest [for homework] ↓ <p>***Turn in plagiarism exercise***</p>
Aug. 18	Foundations – the dead guys!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 1 ▪ Ethical communication focus handout ▪ Philosophy (dead guys) highlights – read about Aristotle and Kant ▪ Optional: Aristotle's golden mean ▪ Optional: A tough call on a big story <p>***Turn in Dead Guys – Part 1 ***</p>
Aug. 20	More dead guys ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Philosophy (dead guys) highlights – read about Mill, Ross, Communitarianism ▪ African ethics - Social, not individualistic, ethics ▪ Blowing the whistle on unethical practices – Paula Pedene
Aug. 25	Finish up the dead guys Start moral development, starring Kohlberg and Gilligan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 11 ▪ Videos to supplement book chapter: (1) Kohlberg's theory of moral development and (2) Carol Gilligan's theory of moral development <p>***Reading quiz 1 – Ch. 11***</p>

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments for this day
Aug. 27	More Kohlberg and Gilligan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Online guide to ethics and moral philosophy [supplemental] <p>These stories reflect people acting at different levels of moral development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why good people do bad things in the workplace ▪ Experience: I write fake news ▪ On a long-ago Christmas Eve, an editor understood what we were supposed to do ▪ Whirlpool adds to school laundry program ▪ UW-Madison doctors photo to stress diversity <p>*** Turn in Dead Guys – Part 2***</p>
Sept. 1	Finish up moral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revisit questions to guide reading ▪ Case 4-H: How one tweet ruined a life (pp. 131-133)
Sept. 3	Guest speaker day!  Richard Griffiths	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Richard Griffiths' brief bio
Sept. 8	Test #1 Study guide will be posted on Sakai	 
Sept. 10	Standpoint-ing and social justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 9 ▪ Standpoint theory basics ▪ How Alexandra Bell is disrupting racism in journalism ▪ Implicit bias

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
Sept. 15	Complete standpoint-ing and start decision-making techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ <i>San Francisco Police Department will stop releasing most mug shots to combat racial bias</i> ▪ pp. 5-8 (Bok model) and pp. 104-109 (Potter Box) ▪ Rawls' veil of ignorance ▪ Edelman staffers play get out of jail card ▪ Potter Box chart [optional] <p>**Reading quiz 2 – Textbook: Bok model and Potter Box**</p>
Sept. 17	Encore! More decision-making techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading <p>Be ready to make an informed ethical decision using the Bok model and Potter Box for an in-class assignment.</p> <p>Homework Assignment: Commentary – Is ghostwriting ethical?</p>
Sept. 22 Are ya participatin'??	Wrap up Potter & Bok... Onward with TARES assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ pp. 70-75: <i>Thinking about the message: A systemic test – aka TARES</i> ▪ <i>Trinkets & Trash: Artifacts of the tobacco epidemic – April 2020 surveillance update</i> <p>**Reading quiz 3 – doing TARES** and You'll assess an ad using the TARES test in class</p>
Sept. 24	Wrap up TARES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revisit questions to guide reading <p>**TARES Team Project Basics** – who's on your team, and what persuasive <u>political</u> message will you take on?</p>
Sept. 29	Professionalism and ethics codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ <i>Characteristics of a profession</i> ▪ <i>From JUUL to Facebook, self-regulation is always bad PR</i> ▪ <i>The ethics (& economics) of freebies</i> ▪ <i>A White House photographer snapped a photo of the press secretary's helpful notes — here's what we think they mean</i>
Oct. 1	More professional-ing and codes-ing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ <i>What's a journalist supposed to be now — an activist? A stenographer? You're asking the wrong question.</i> ▪ <i>Impossible Foods doesn't pay celebrities or microinfluencers. Here's why.</i> <p>***Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due***</p>

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
Oct. 6	Review for midterm ☹️	Bring your notes and your questions.
Oct. 8	Midterm – ewwww! 	That studying thing...?
Oct. 13	Truth-tellin' – part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 2 ▪ Why smart people believe coronavirus myths ▪ 10 questions for fake news detection **Reading quiz 4 – ch. 2**
Oct. 15	Un-Fall Break No class today!	
Oct. 20	Let's be truthful for a bit longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ On defining truth ▪ Op-ed: Bias is good. It just needs a label ***TARES Team Project Due***
Oct. 22	Wrap up truthing. 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 Homework assignment (very brief!) Assess reporters' objectivity
Oct. 27	More objectivity and framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Against objectivity ▪ False media balance ▪ Journalistic objectivity evolved the way it did for a reason ▪ A reckoning over objectivity, led by Black journalists
Oct. 29	Visual/photo challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 8 ▪ Fake videos of real people – and how to spot them (7-minute TED Talk) ** Reading Quiz 5 – ch. 8**

Date	Topic	Assignment for this day
Nov. 3	Persuading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Unspun – chapters 2, 3, 4 ▪ What is the difference between unethical & ethical advertising? <p>**Be ready to find examples of various UnSpun strategies in class**</p>
Nov. 5	Persuade some more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 3 ▪ The role of cognitive dissonance in the pandemic ▪ ‘Meth. We’re on it’ campaign rolls out in South Dakota to confusion, ridicule ▪ Gillette advertorial ▪ In the latest fight against Anti-Asian sentiment, Ad Council releases PSA
Nov. 10	Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 5 ▪ Case 6-B: Doxxer, doxxer, give me the news? (pp. 190-192) <p>**Reading Quiz 6 – ch. 6**</p>
Nov. 12	Loyalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading ▪ Ch. 4 ▪ The social contract ▪ Declaration of Independence ▪ One person’s tragedy, another person’s prize
Nov. 17- LDOC!		Finish up, pull it all together and review for final
Monday, Nov. 23 noon 	Final exam (ewww²!!!) <u>Please note time!</u>	