

MEDIA ETHICS

Description / Prerequisites / Meeting Times & Location

UNC Catalog description: *Explore what constitutes ethical practices, what interferes with ethical practices, and what emerging ethical issues may challenge the newest generation of professional communicators. Cases involve print, broadcast, and Internet news media; photojournalism; graphic design; public relations; and advertising.* This course fulfills the Philosophical/Moral Reasoning (PH) general education requirement.

This course section **meets in person** 3:30-4:45 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Carroll Hall room 58.

Instructor Contact Information & Student Hours

Joe Bob Hester, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

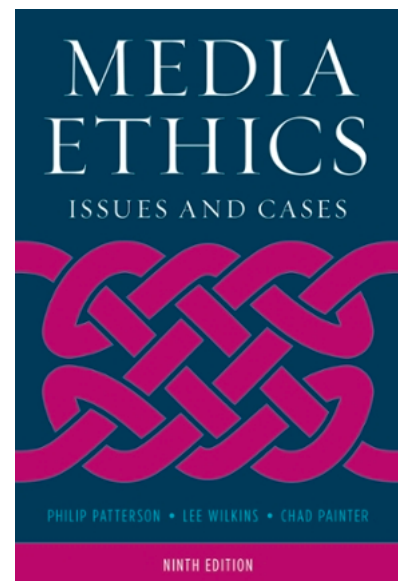
Student hours are 3:00-4:00 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday in my office (233 Carroll Hall) or by appointment at other times (virtually). These hours are made available to provide you with time outside of the classroom for discussion of matters related to course work, as well as for academic and/or career advising.

Email joe.bob.hester@unc.edu

Required & Suggested Materials

The required textbook for this course is *Media Ethics: Issues & Cases* (9th edition) by Philip Patterson, Lee Wilkins, and Chad Painter. Be sure to get the **9th edition**; there should be plenty of used copies available, and you can even rent a copy through Amazon.

Additional readings and other materials from a variety of sources will be provided electronically via the internet, the UNC library system, or through Sakai.



Course Goals and Objectives

Welcome to MEJO 141! We're here to learn about media ethics. Media professionals talk a lot about doing the right thing, but they're constantly criticized for ethical and moral shortcomings. In this class, we will discuss the ethical dilemmas that confront professionals in print, electronic and online news; advertising; public relations; photojournalism/graphic design; and social media. We will examine codes of ethics for each of these professions and evaluate how these guidelines have been applied in specific settings. In the end, this course is designed to

MEDIA ETHICS

familiarize you with the tools needed to make ethical decisions in a professional setting and to help you develop a personal yardstick by which to measure your own ethical decisions.

Here are the specific course objectives:

- Integrate ethical foundations and apply those ideas to professional situations;
- Critically analyze current mass communication professional practices through reading and discussing communication topics found in trade journals and other media;
- Compare ethical standards of mass communication professions and examine how similarities and differences help or hinder their professional relationships;

You'll get out of this course what you put into it, so your preparation for and involvement in class discussion are vital. Success in this course will depend upon your willingness to keep up with the readings, participate in class, and keep an open mind when dealing with issues and others' opinions. Here's to a good semester!

Class meetings will be recorded using Zoom. You will have access to those recordings on Sakai/Panopto for review purposes. <https://unc.zoom.us/j/93699859396>

Assignments / Determination of Grade

Primary assignments are graded in-class quizzes, in-class Ethics in the News (EITN) team presentations, in-class Quick Cases, an interview paper, and 2 exams. Assignments contribute to your final grade as follows:

Quizzes (10%)

Interview paper (20%)

Quick cases (10%)

Mid-term exam (20%)

EITN team presentation (15%)

Final exam (25%)

There are no extra credit projects available in this course. Course grades are assigned using the University of North Carolina Grading System based on the following percentage scales.

Minimum Score	Letter Grade	Minimum Score	Letter Grade
93.0%	A	77.0%	C+
90.0%	A-	73.0%	C
87.0%	B+	70.0%	C-
83.0%	B	67.0%	D+
80.0%	B-	60.0%	D

NOTE: Percentage score of less than 60.0% = F

MEDIA ETHICS

Attendance

University Policy: No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

Class Policy: Each student is responsible for all the work, including tests and written work, of all class meetings. Late submissions or make-up opportunities for assignments are only available for excused absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), I will excuse the absence if notified at least 48 hours in advance.

Students are responsible for regular and punctual class attendance and should be in their before the start of class. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions by sharing observations, insights and questions with the instructor and members of the class. Discussion will allow each student to benefit from all the other students' insights and to work toward a final interpretation or understanding that may differ from the one he or she reached individually. This requires that assigned readings and/or homework exercises be completed prior to arrival to class.

Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) when making a request for a University approved absence.

Honor Code

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself 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. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

MEDIA ETHICS

Syllabus Changes

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve 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.

ARS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Title IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvscc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

MEDIA ETHICS

Policy on Non-Discrimination

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

Diversity Statement

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harassment and discrimination](#). In summary, 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 on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

Mask Use

All enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community -- your classmates and me -- as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/>.

MEDIA ETHICS

Accreditation

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of 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:

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address several the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the following:

- 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.

MEDIA ETHICS

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 00

Thursday, August 19, 2021

- Before class please read the syllabus (link on "Start Here" page)

WEEK 01

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

- Before class please read Chapter 1 - An introduction to ethical decision-making

Thursday, August 26, 2021

- Before class please read Chapter 11 - Becoming a moral adult

Section 1 - Ethics & Journalism

WEEK 02

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

- Before class please read
 - Chapter 2, pp. 24-42 - Information ethics: A profession seeks the truth
 - Chapter 2, pp. 55-57 - When is objective reporting irresponsible reporting?

Thursday, September 2, 2021

- Before class please read
 - SPJ Code of Ethics <https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>
 - Using the SPJ Code <https://www.spj.org/ethics-papers-code.asp>
 - RTDNA Social Media & Blogging Ethical Guidelines http://www.rtdna.org/article/social_media_blogging_guidelines and general code http://www.rtdna.org/content/rtdna_code_of_ethics

MEDIA ETHICS

- In class: Quick case #1

WEEK 03

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

- Before class please read
 - Chapter 8, pp. 251-264 - Picture this: The ethics of photo and video journalism

Thursday, September 9, 2021

- In class: Quick case #2

WEEK 04

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

- Before class please read
 - Chapter 5, pp. 134-148 - Privacy: Looking for solitude in the global village

Thursday, September 16, 2021

- In class: Quick case #3

WEEK 05

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

- Before class please read
 - Chapter 7, pp. 209-225 - Media economics: The deadline meets the bottom line

Thursday, September 23, 2021

- TBD

WEEK 06

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

MEDIA ETHICS

- TBD

Thursday, September 30, 2021

- TBD

WEEK 07

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

- Guest speaker

Thursday, October 7, 2021

- Mid-term exam

Section 2 - Advertising & Ethics

WEEK 08

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

- University Day

Thursday, October 14, 2021

- TBD

WEEK 09

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

- Before class please read
 - Chapter 3, pp. 64-79 - Strategic communication: Does client advocate mean consumer adversary?

Thursday, October 21, 2021 - Fall Break (NO CLASS MEETING)

MEDIA ETHICS

WEEK 10

Tuesday, October 26, 2021

- EITN presentations 1 & 2

Thursday, October 28, 2021

- In class: Quick case #4

Section 3 - Public Relations & Ethics

WEEK 11

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

- EITN presentations 3 & 4

Thursday, November 4, 2021

- Before class please read
 - Chapter 4, pp. 98-109 - Loyalty: Choosing between competing allegiances

WEEK 12

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

- EITN presentations 5 & 6

Thursday, November 11, 2021

- In class: Quick case #5

Section 4 - Other Topics in Media Ethics

WEEK 13

MEDIA ETHICS

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

- EITN presentations 7 & 8

Thursday, November 18, 2021

- TBD

WEEK 14

Tuesday, November 23, 2021 - Plagairism

- NOTE: Interview paper due via email by 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 25, 2021

- TBD

WEEK 15

Tuesday, November 30, 2021 - Catch up and review

FINAL EXAM PERIOD

4:00 p.m. - Saturday, December 4, 2021