

~ MEJO 141.4 – Media Ethics: The Spring 2023 Edition ~

Classroom: Carroll 33

Time: TR 3:30-4:45 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Lois Boynton (she/her/hers)

Office: 237 Carroll Hall

e-mail: lboynton@email.unc.edu

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

Stop by! Office and Zoom

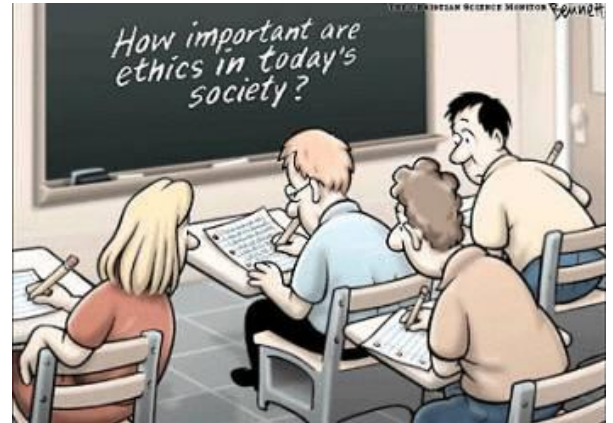
Mondays 10-11:30 a.m. and 2-4:30 p.m.

Tuesdays/Thursdays 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Wednesday 3-4 p.m. **on Zoom only**

And, by appointment

*** see Sakai for office hours Zoom link and password**



"He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger." ~ Confucius

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, business and social interactions; public relations; advertising; and even hybrids.

This class permits all students opportunities to explore – both in-class discussions and written assignments – what constitutes professional ethical practices, what interferes with acting ethically, and what emerging ethical dilemmas may challenge you as the newest generation of professional communicators... and communication consumers.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this class is to help you make effective ethical decisions within your profession. Course objectives include:

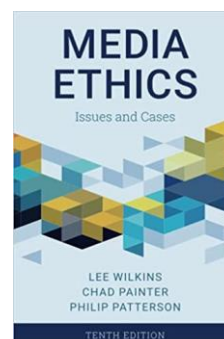
- ① What goes into making an ethical decision? Explore ethical foundations to apply in professional ethical dilemmas;
- ② The value of having a process: Applying ethical codes and standards of our professions to resolve ethical dilemmas;
- ③ Critically analyze ethical expectations and challenges in our professions through reading, writing and discussing communication topics found in news outlets, trade journals and other media.

Prereqs? Nope!



MEJO 141 meets an IDEAs in Action (a.k.a. gen ed) requirement in ethical and civic values (FC-Values).

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.



⇐ **da book:** **Media Ethics: Issues and Cases** by Lee Wilkins, Chad Painter, & Philip Patterson, **10th ed**

• **Plus, scintillating readings on Sakai in the Resources Folder**

All assigned readings should be completed before the class starts so you're ready to discuss, ask questions, offer opinions, disagree, argue, share knowledge, etc. That's what will make this class fun!

Where it's at in the syllabus

Participation criteria – p. 2-3

What's on the Sakai site – p. 3

Grades/grading – pp. 3-4

Research requirement – p. 4

Campus resources – p. 5

Accreditation Council – p. 6

Week-by-week schedule – pp. 7-11

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 class, you may do so without penalty. However, you still are responsible for any material covered during time that you miss, and you should arrange 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 (see p. 5 below).



Always Be Curious

This is a real-world class – we'll examine 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 find ethical issues that professionals in your field face in trade journals like *PR Week*, *Ad Age*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, etc.

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

Attendance and Participation

Step 1 – Attend

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. 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).

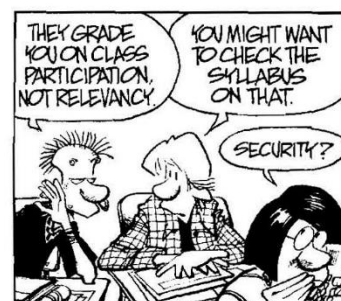
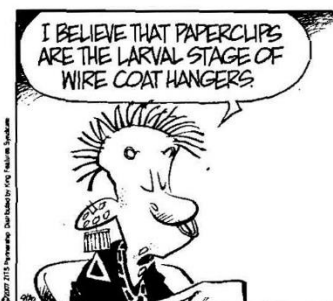
Yes, there are exceptions: University approved absences are authorized university activities, disability, religious observances, or pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#). Also, significant health conditions and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) and/or EOC.

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

One more note: You are responsible for any material covered during classes, and you will not earn 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
Blair

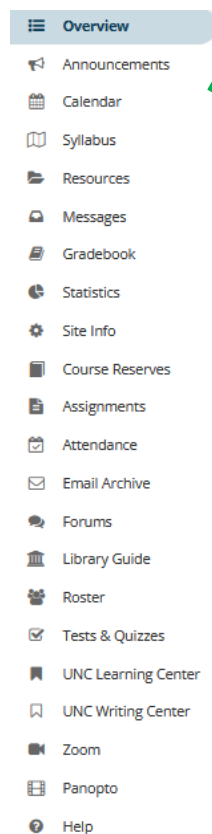


Step 2 – Participate.

In short, I expect you'll attend but that's not sufficient for an outstanding participation grade. In addition to attending class twice a week, I expect everyone to be **active** participants ① in class, ② in small-group discussions and ③ on Sakai forums – ask questions, offer your opinions, and challenge. Yes, it's a large class, but interaction makes ethical decision-making more effective through dialogue (not to mention less boring!). 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 on forums twice a week. Thought-provoking ideas, asks/posts interesting questions. On time. No absences.	Participates in class and/or on forums twice a week consistently through semester. Good ideas, asks/ posts questions. On time, no absences.	Participates in class and/or on forums time to time. Mostly prefers to lurk. Pretty good input but doesn't speak up in team or class discussions or contribute on forums 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.



Sakai-ing: Whar's it at?



- ♦ **Calendar** – due dates
- ♦ **Syllabus** – This thing with week-by-week
- ♦ **Resources** – Topics folders with readings and PowerPoints.
- ♦ **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 participation.** Continue and/or spark class discussions.
- ♦ **Gradebook:** I will post assignment 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).
- Tests & Quizzes** – 6 quizzes, 1 test, 1 midterm, 1 final



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 have agreed 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: Save/turn in assignments as Word or PDF documents. I am not able to open assignments in pages

Your final grade will be based on:

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

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100	B = 80-89	C = 70-79
D = 60-69	F = <60	
and +/- as appropriate		

Extra Credit: In the rare event that it's offered, the opportunity will be class-wide, so please don't ask for individual extra credit assignments.

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.

Assignment highlights – Here's what's happening this semester:

Homework – Posted on Sakai in the Assignments tab. Deadlines are also on the Sakai calendar, and you will receive an email from the Sakai elves 24 hours before an assignment is due.

In-class activities – some will be completed in small groups; others, you'll get to do independently. They will be posted in the Assignments tab and available the day of that activity.

Reading quizzes – There will be 6 reading quizzes (multiple choice and T/F), each worth 20 points. I will drop the lowest quiz grade and tally the remaining 5 to count as 1 in-class assignment (you know... $5 \times 20 = 100!$).

TARES group project – You will work with a team (at least 1 other person) to assess a political or issue-based ad using the TARES test to rate its truthfulness, authenticity, respectfulness, equity, and social responsibility. Details will be posted in the Assignments tab.

Sakai forums – I will post weekly prompts for you to share your perspectives by applying the concepts we're discussing in class. **You're required to post once a week, minimum**; more frequently is encouraged. Posts count as participation along with your involvement during each class period (small groups and full class).

Research participation – complete 2 hours of research in one of 3 ways: (1) Sign up to participate in 2 academic research studies in the School of Journalism and Media. (2) Write article summaries of a study topic in [Journalist's Resource](#) or an academic research journal with ethical ramifications. (3) Combo! 1 research study and 1 summary. See Assignments tab for details.

Test 1, midterm, and final will include multiple choice, matching, true/false, short answer and brief chats. I will post **study guides** in the Resources tab of Sakai about a week before each one.

See the week-by-week schedule below for assignment due dates and test dates.

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 3:30 p.m. – be here!

♦ **Be respectful** as you listen to others, participate and discuss. 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.

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

♦ **Turn off the ringers** – Please silence your digital toys before class starts.
♦ **Pause the shopping and give social media a rest!** Be attentive to what's happ'nin' and be part of the action.

Use your laptops and other digital tools to take class notes or do in-class assignments (not homework for your other classes, either 😊). BTW, research shows there is a high correlation between cybersurfing and below-average test grades [[Education Psychology](#)]. Just sayin' ☺

Since you made it this far, let me know you've read the syllabus by posting a photo of your favorite animal in the 'Syllabus' forum on Sakai by 9 a.m. Jan. 11 to earn some extra credit.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

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, ethnicity, 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.

Student Conduct

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 Prohibit Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct is outlined [here](#).

Discrimination violates the university's [Honor Code](#), 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, odos@unc.edu, 919/966-4042 or NC Relay 711.

If you haven't already, check out the Heels Care Network – <https://care.unc.edu>



If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone [right now](#):

Text **START** to the Crisis Text Line at **741-741**

[Chat with, call, or text](#) the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline **988**

Call CAPS 24/7 at 919/966-3658 or drop in M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Professional values and competencies: The 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](http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/principles/). 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. <http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/principles/>

- 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.







My TAs – Juno and Luna


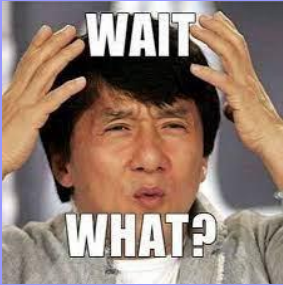
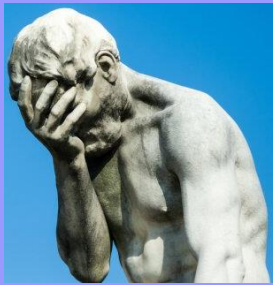

Week by Week – MEJO 141-002 for Spring 2023




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



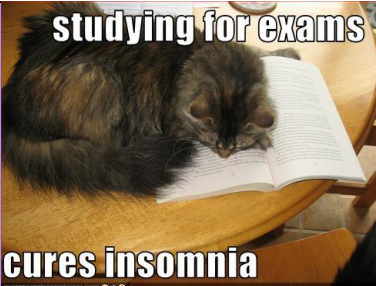
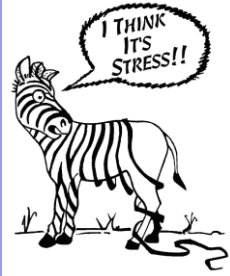
Readings: textbook and in Sakai's **Resources** tab
Assignments: in Sakai's Assignment tab. Due 3:30 p.m.
 Please save/submit assignments in **Word** or **PDF**

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
Jan. 10	Welcome! Setting the stage: Why talk about ethics?	☹️ Whine about winter break being over ☹️ 
Jan. 12	Case discussion: What were they thinking?!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ <i>PRSA New York condemns 5WPR CEO; and Everything PR</i> Edelman blog post (2 articles in 1 PDF) ▪ <i>Following criticism of Asian mail-order bride ad, newsweekly halts sponsored posts</i> ▪ <i>Reporter who quit Bloomberg News to date jailed 'Pharma Bro' Martin Shkreli talks journalism ethics</i> ▪ <i>The co-founder of Snopes wrote dozens of plagiarized articles for the fact-checking site</i> ▪ <i>'Patchwriting' is more common than plagiarism, just as dishonest</i> [for homework] <p>***Turn in plagiarism exercise***</p>
Monday, Jan. 16	MLK Day	See the university website for the week's observances https://diversity.unc.edu/events-programs/mlk/
Jan. 17 MEJO Day of Action	Foundations – the dead guys!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ Ch. 1, pp. 1-21 ▪ <i>Philosophy (dead guys) highlights</i> – read about Aristotle, Kant, Mill ▪ <i>Ethical communication focus</i> handout <p>***Turn in Dead Guys – Part 1 ***</p>
Jan. 19	More dead guys ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ <i>Philosophy (dead guys) highlights</i> – read about Ross, Communitarians ▪ Textbook: pp. 182-184 – <i>Communitarianism and social justice</i> ▪ <i>African ethics - Social, not individualistic, ethics</i> (section 8) ▪ 3 Communitarian examples

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
Jan. 24	Moral development, starring Kohlberg and Gilligan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ Ch. 11 – <i>Becoming a moral adult</i>, pp. 349-361 ▪ Videos to supplement book chapter: (1) <i>Kohlberg's theory of moral development</i> and (2) <i>Carol Gilligan's theory of moral development</i> <p>*** Turn in Dead Guys – Part 2 ***</p> <p>*** Reading quiz 1 – Ch. 11 ***</p>
Jan. 26	Continuing with moral development Career services visit	<p>As you read ...think about the level of moral development these people are in. PS – the articles are short! PPS – don't memorize facts from these articles!!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>On a long-ago Christmas Eve, an editor understood what we were supposed to do</i> ▪ <i>Reporter is hit by car on air, striking nerve with TV journalists</i> ▪ <i>PR agency foots Uber bills for New Yorkers skipping the subway after mass shooting</i> ▪ <i>Experience: I write fake news</i>
Jan. 31	Standpoint-ing, DEI and social justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ Standpoint theory basics ▪ <i>How Alexandra Bell is disrupting racism in journalism</i> ▪ <i>Implicit bias</i>
Feb. 2	More DEI, prep for test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide reading (ch. 6) ▪ Ch. 6 – <i>Informing a just society</i>, pp. 173-186
Feb. 7	Test 1	 
Feb. 9	Having a process: Decision-making. Starting with Potter & Bok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ pp. 7-10 (Bok model how to) ▪ pp. 107-112 (Potter Box how to) ▪ <i>The veil of ignorance</i> ▪ Step by step with Potter and Bok ▪ Case 4-F <i>Quit, blow the whistle, or go with the flow?</i> (pp. 126-129) <p>** Reading quiz 2 – Bok (pp. 7-10) & Potter (pp. 107-112) **</p>
Feb. 14 No class!!	<p>Wellness Days!!</p> <p>Feb. 13-14</p>	<p>and Happy Valentine's Day!</p> 

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
Feb. 16	Encore! More decision-making techniques.	***Be ready to make an informed ethical decision using the Bok model and Potter Box for an in-class assignment.***
Feb. 21	TARES-ing!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to guide readings Textbook: pp. 214-218: <i>Thinking about the message: A systemic test</i> (aka TARES Test) <p>**Reading quiz 3 – doing TARES**</p>
Feb. 23	TARES-ing x 2  <p>Source: https://themanifest.com/digital-marketing/blog/ethical-marketing-examples</p>	<p>You'll work with others in class to assess an ad using the TARES test</p> <p>Won't that be fun?!? 😊</p>
Feb. 28	Professionalism and ethics codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to guide readings Characteristics of a profession Levi's exit adds fuel to employee activist fire; <u>and</u> A Levi's executive left the company after her tweets opposing pandemic school closures drew attention (2 in 1 PDF). <p>***Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due***</p>
March 2	More professional-ing and codes-ing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case 4-A Cuomo interviews Cuomo (pp. 113-114) About the public editor <p>**TARES Team Project Basics due***</p>
March 7	Midterm test!	 
March 9	Loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to guide readings Ch. 4 – Loyalty (pp. 99-112) The social contract (short video) One person's tragedy, another person's prize Opinion: Your loyalties are your life

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
<p>YAY!</p> 	<p>March 10 @5 pm →</p>	<p>March 19</p> 
March 21	<p>Guest speaker!</p>  <p>Richard Griffiths</p>	<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Griffiths bio
March 23	Truth-tellin'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to guide readings Ch. 2 – Information ethics, pp.29-49 <p>**Reading quiz 4 – ch. 2**</p> <p>** TARES assessment due **</p>
March 28	Let's be truthful for a bit longer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truth continuum chart TV pundits praising Suleimani assassination neglect to disclose ties to arms industry Ethics in journalism and public relations: It's personal Exxon lobbyist caught on video talking about undermining Biden's climate push
March 30	Objectivity? Neutrality? Transparency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to guide readings Case 6-B Journalism and activism? When identity becomes political (pp. 190-192) Revisit ch. 2, pp. 26-31 False media balance Media bias alert: Reporting differs in incident with St. Louis couple, protesters
April 4	<p>More objectivity and neutrality</p> <p>+</p> <p>Sneak peek into visual and photo challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to guide readings Snake-handling Pentecostal pastor dies from snake bite Against objectivity Pushing the envelope - Photographing war crimes in Ukraine

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
April 6	No class!! Wellness Day!!	
April 11	Visual and photo challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ Ch. 8 <i>Picture this</i>, pp. 239-251 ▪ <i>Bills safety Damar Hamlin remains in critical condition after cardiac arrest on field</i> ▪ <i>Photoshop's impact on women</i> <p>** Reading Quiz 5 – ch. 8**</p>
April 13	Persuading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ <i>Unspun</i> chapters <p>*Be ready to find examples of Unspun strategies in class*</p>
April 18	More persuading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ch. 7 – <i>Strategic communication</i>, pp. 207-223 ▪ <i>Can ethical PRs represent unethical clients</i> ▪ <i>Verizon pulls misleading ads claiming its 5G service is 'necessary' for firefighters</i> ▪ <i>LIV Golf shines spotlight on 'sportswashing' – the nascent term for an age-old strategy</i>
April 20	Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions to guide readings ▪ Ch. 3 – <i>Privacy</i>, pp. 67-81. ▪ Case 3D: <i>Doxxer, doxxer, give me the news?</i> (pp. 91-93) <p>**Reading Quiz 6 – ch. 3** Last one!!</p>
April 25	More about privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The sad story of the marine who saved President Ford from assassination</i>
April 27		<p>Wrap up</p> <p>Review for da final</p>
<p>Monday, May 8 at 4 p.m.</p> 	<p>Final test (ewww²!!!)</p> <p>Please note date and time</p>	 

Then... Graduation! Summertime!