

~ MEJO 141.2 – Media Ethics: The Fall 2023 Edition ~

Classroom: Greenlaw 101

Time: TR 2-3:15 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! Student hours and Zoom

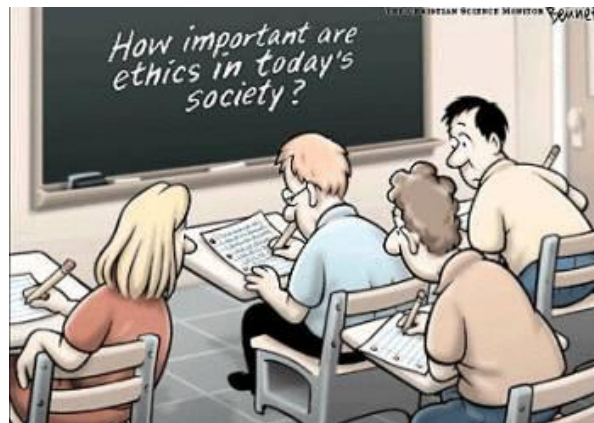
Mondays 10-11:30 a.m. and 2-4:30 p.m.

Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:30-5 p.m.

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

And, by appointment

*** see Canvas 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.

Prereqs? Nope!



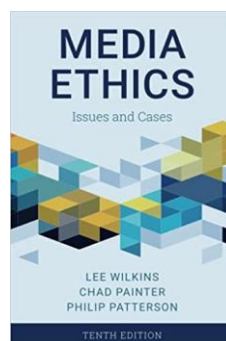
MEJO 141 meets an IDEAs in Action (a.k.a. gen ed) requirement in ethical and civic values (FC-Values).

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.

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.



⇐ **da book:** **Media Ethics: Issues and Cases** by Lee Wilkins, Chad Painter, & Philip Patterson, **10th ed**
[1 copy on reserve in Park Library]
• **Plus, scintillating readings in Canvas Modules**

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 Canvas 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. 7-12

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 Canvas! 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).

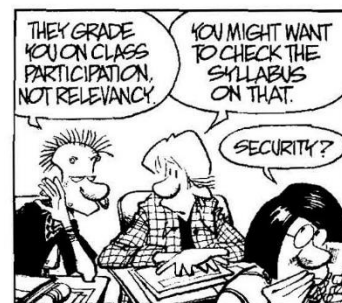
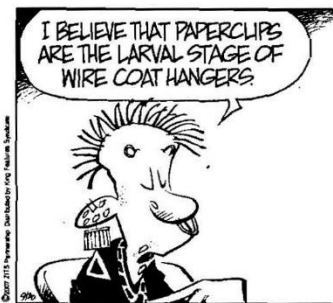
Yes, there are exceptions: University approved absences are authorized university activities, disability, religious observances, or pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#). Also, significant health 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 during classes you do not attend unless you get approval from 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 Canvas Discussion Board – 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. See the form on **Canvas - Pages**

A (9-10)	B (7-8)	C (5-6)	D and F (≤ 4)
Consistently participates in class and/or on Discussion Board each week. Thought-provoking ideas, asks/posts interesting questions. On time. No absences.	Participates in class and/or on Discussion Board each week consistently through semester. Good ideas, asks/ posts questions. On time, no absences.	Participates in class and/or on Discussion Board time to time. Mostly prefers to lurk. Pretty good input but doesn't speak up in team or class discussions or contribute on Discussion Board consistently. Attends classes.	Barely says anything all semester whether in class or on Discussion Board. Mostly lurkers even if has good attendance. May or may not be on time.

Canvas-ing: Whar's it at?

- ♦ **Calendar** – due dates
- ♦ **Syllabus** – This thing with week-by-week
- ♦ **Modules** – These folders house readings, PowerPoints, links to Assignments, etc. Start with each Module's [What's on Tap](#) document to ensure you're prepared for class.
- ♦ **Assignments** – in-class and homework. Any homework assignments announced in class will be posted after that class period.
- ♦ **Discussion Board: Yes, sharing your views on Canvas Discussion Board counts as participation.** Continue and/or spark class discussions.
- ♦ **Grades:** 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).

Quizzes – 6 quizzes (1 gets dropped), 1 test, midterm, final



Assignments and deadlines

All homework assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class period (aka, 2 p.m.). Late papers (2:01 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 discussion board)	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 a 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 Canvas in the Assignments tab. When in doubt – head to the Modules, which will have links to supplemental readings, assignments and discussions. Deadlines are also on your Canvas calendar.

In-class activities – some will be completed in small groups; others, you'll do independently. I will post them in the Assignments tab, available the day of that activity. **NOTE:** In-class activities are for in-class only, unless otherwise approved.

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... $5 \times 20 = 100$. Ooh! Math!).

TARES group project – You will work with a team (you and 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.

Canvas Discussion Board – I will post weekly prompts for you to share your perspectives and apply the concepts we'll discuss in class. **You're required to post once a week, minimum.** 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. See the Study Guide Module on Canvas, where I will post **study guides** 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 2 p.m. – please 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, please 😊).

BTW, research shows there is a high correlation between cybersurfing and below-average test grades [[Education Psychology](#)]. Just sayin' 😊

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

I strive to make this class an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions and conversations. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the [University's Office for Diversity and Inclusion](#) mission.

In summary, I and UNC-Chapel Hill are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and do not discriminate in offering access to 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. Additional information is available at the [University of Office for Diversity and Inclusion](#).

The Dean of Students handles inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies, including the campus-wide policy on [prohibiting harassment and discrimination](#). Call [919] 966-4042; NC Relay, 711, email dos@unc.edu, or visit Student Academic Services Building, Suite 1106, 450 Ridge Road.

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](#).



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, dos@unc.edu, 919/966-4042 or NC Relay 711. You may visit them at Student and Academic Services Building North (SASB), 450 Ridge Road, Suite 1106

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



Get Help Now

For immediate mental health help call or text **988**. **Call 911** for a medical emergency.

Click for additional 24/7 mental health resources.

Mental Health Resource Hub

A comprehensive and filterable list of the mental health resources available to campus community members.

Trainings

Mental Health First Aid and other trainings for students, staff and faculty to support health and well-being.

Peer Support

Student Peer Support resources - By students, for students!

LSN ("Listen") Peer Supporters

Suicide Prevention

Learn about suicide signs, symptoms and prevention resources.

Care Referral

When you're concerned about someone's health or behavior and your concern is not an emergency.

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




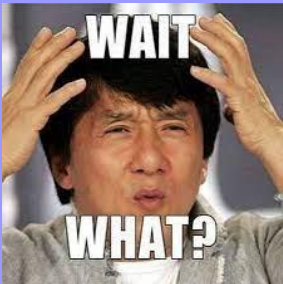
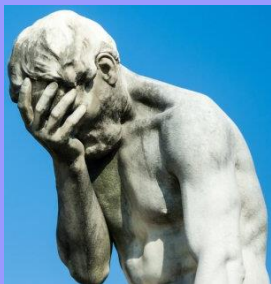
Week by Week – MEJO 141-002 for Fall 2023





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



Readings: textbook and in Canvas Modules
Assignments: in Canvas Assignment tab. **Due 2 p.m.**
 Please save/submit assignments in **Word** or **PDF**



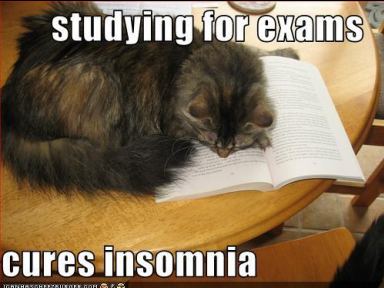
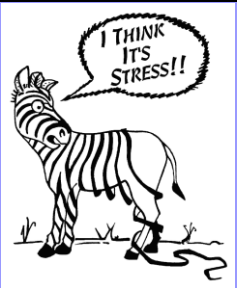
Date	Topic	Readings and assignments due this day
Aug. 22	<p>Welcome!</p> <p>Setting the stage: Why talk about ethics?</p>	<p>☹️ Whine about summer break being over ☹️</p> 
Aug. 24	<p>Case discussion: What were they thinking?!</p> <p>Intros from Carolyn Ebeling – MEJO embedded counselor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>A clothing brand's email claimed to be from a neighbor watching recipients in their underwear. Some customers aren't happy.</i> ▪ <i>BBC apologizes for reporter's 'inappropriate' question to Morocco women's team captain</i> ▪ <i>Microsoft pulls AI-written article telling tourists to visit the Ottawa Food Bank</i> ▪ <i>The co-founder of Snopes wrote dozens of plagiarized articles for the fact-checking site</i> ▪ <i>Tone-deaf advertising: The Aggregator Show</i> ▪ <i>'Patchwriting' is more common than plagiarism, just as dishonest [for plagiarism homework]</i> <p>Discussion post 1</p> <p>Turn in plagiarism exercise</p>
Aug. 29	Foundations – the dead guys!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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>
Aug. 31	More dead guys ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <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 <p>Discussion post 2</p>

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
Sept. 5	No class – It's well-being day!	
Sept. 7	Moral development, starring Kohlberg and Gilligan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Reading quiz 1 – Ch. 11</p>
Sept. 12	Continuing with moral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>On a long-ago Christmas Eve, an editor understood what we were supposed to do</i> <i>The vaccine had to be used. He used it. He was fired.</i> <i>Whirlpool adds to school laundry program</i> <i>Experience: I write fake news</i> <i>'I lost my job, my reputation and I'm not able to date anymore'</i> <p>Discussion post 3</p>
Sept. 14	Standpoint-ing, DEI and social justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standpoint theory basics <i>How Alexandra Bell is disrupting racism in journalism</i> <i>Implicit bias</i> <p>Discussion post 4</p>
Sept. 19	More DEI, prep for test [study guide will be posted in Canvas Module]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 6 – <i>Informing a just society</i>, pp. 173-186 <p>Discussion post 5</p>
Sept. 21	Test 1	 
Sept. 26	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 Textbook: Case 2-B Don't tweet ill of the dead, pp. 53-54 <p>Discussion post 6 Reading quiz 2 – Bok (pp. 7-10) & Potter (pp. 107-112)</p>

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
Sept. 28	Encore! More decision-making techniques.	<p>***Be ready to make an informed ethical decision using the Bok model and Potter Box for an in-class assignment. ***</p> <p>Discussion post 7</p>
Oct. 3	TARES-ing!  <p>Source: https://themanifest.com/digital-marketing/blog/ethical-marketing-examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook: pp. 214-218: <i>Thinking about the message: A systemic test</i> (aka TARES Test) Case 7-D: <i>Keeping up with the Kardashians' prescription drug choices</i> <p>Discussion post 8</p> <p>Reading quiz 3 – doing TARES</p>
Oct. 5	More TARES-ing	<p>You'll work with others in class to assess an ad using the TARES test ooh! What fun!</p> <p>Discussion post 9</p>
Oct. 10	Guest speaker!  <p>Richard Griffiths</p>	<p>Please read Richard Griffiths' bio</p> <p>TARES Team Project Basics due</p>
Oct. 12	University Day! 	<p>No in-person class. (I know you're heartbroken!)</p> <p>Perhaps attend the events ... or study for the midterm? (Decisions, decisions!). And, Discussion post 10!!</p> <p>I will have in-person (Carroll 237) and/or Zoom office hours during class time to chat or answer any questions.</p>
Oct. 17	Midterm test!	 

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
<p>YAY!</p> 	<p>Fall Break!!!</p> <p>October 19-22</p>	
Oct. 24	<p>Professionalism and ethics codes</p> <p>Every profession has scoundrels as well as saints. The scoundrels are no reason to condemn the entire profession, nor are the saints a reason to glorify it. ~ Michael Turney, 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Characteristics of a profession</i> ▪ Case 4-A Cuomo interviews Cuomo (pp. 113-114) ▪ <i>Opinion – Chris Cuomo’s advice to Gov. Andrew Cuomo crosses a journalistic line</i> ▪ <i>A Levi’s executive left the company after her tweets opposing pandemic school closures drew attention and Levi’s exit adds fuel to employee activist fire (2 in 1 PDF).</i> <p>Discussion post 11</p>
Oct. 26	<p>Finish up professionalism</p> <p>Start on loyalty</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>About the public editor</i> ▪ <i>NPR standards need more clarity around when to name a mass shooter</i> <p>NOTE: These items are in the Loyalty Module</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ch. 4 – Loyalty (pp. 99-107) ▪ <i>The social contract</i> (short video) ▪ <i>Opinion: Your loyalties are your life</i> <p>Discussion post 12 Ethics Code Scavenger Hunt due</p>
Oct. 31	<p>Finish up loyalty</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At minimum, read paragraph 2 of the <i>Declaration of Independence</i> ▪ <i>One person’s tragedy, another person’s prize</i> <p>TARES assessment due</p>
Nov. 2	<p>Truth-tellin’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ch. 2 – Information ethics, pp.29-49 <p>Discussion post 13 Reading quiz 4 – ch. 2</p>

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
Nov. 7 Election Day!!!!!! 	Let's be truthful for a bit longer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Truth continuum chart ▪ <i>I interviewed a breast-cancer survivor who wanted me to tell her story. She was actually an AI</i> ▪ <i>Exxon lobbyist caught on video talking about undermining Biden's climate push</i> Discussion post 14
Nov. 9	Objectivity? Neutrality? Transparency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revisit ch. 2, pp. 26-31 ▪ <i>False media balance</i> ▪ <i>Media bias alert: Reporting differs in incident with St. Louis couple, protesters</i> ▪ <i>Opinion: Why climate experts are criticizing a Hawaii headline from ABC News</i> Discussion post 15
Nov. 14	More objectivity and neutrality + Sneak peek into visual and photo challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Snake-handling Pentecostal pastor dies from snake bite</i> ▪ <i>Against objectivity</i> Discussion post 16
Nov. 16	Visual and photo challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ch. 8 <i>Picture this</i>, pp. 239-251 ▪ <i>An ethical conundrum: Should companies post diverse imagery if they're not diverse?</i> ▪ <i>Pushing the envelope - Photographing war crimes in Ukraine</i> Discussion post 17 Reading quiz 5 – ch. 8
Nov. 21	Persuading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ch. 7 – <i>Strategic communication</i>, pp. 207-223 ▪ Case 9-C: <i>And the Oscar rejects ... Frida Mom</i> (pp. 298-299) ▪ <i>Daryl Hannah announced a new 'EcoWarrior' plastic-free Barbie. Turns out, it was an elaborate hoax by climate-change activists. (Exclusive)</i> Discussion post 18
Nov. 22-26	No classes!! Thanksgiving Break	
Nov. 28	Persuading some more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Unspun</i> chapters Be ready to find examples of Unspun strategies in class + Discussion post 19

Date	Topic	Readings and assignments for this day
Nov. 30	Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 3 – Privacy, pp. 67-81. Case 3-D: <i>Doxxer, doxxer, give me the news?</i> (pp. 91-93) <p>Discussion post 20 Reading Quiz 6 – ch. 3 - - LAST ONE!</p>
Dec. 5 Our LDOC!!		Wrap up and prepare for the final test.
Tuesday, Dec. 12, noon 	Final test (ewww³!!!) Please note date and time	 

Then...



MESSAGE FROM CAROLINA



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

e-blast sent 8/18/2023 by the Office of the Provost

Dear Carolina Community:

Carolina's commitment to fostering a free exchange of ideas is one of the core elements that make us a vibrant academic community. We will continue our longstanding traditions of protecting and promoting free speech and write to share information about our campus policies and expectations as we begin the fall semester.

The First Amendment at Carolina

Freedom of speech lies at the root of academic freedom. The faculty and the UNC Board of Trustees have affirmed this principle, and our campus has a long tradition of vigorous debate and public engagement. We want our faculty, staff and students to enjoy a culture where the lively exchange of ideas contributes to deeper knowledge. It's a crucial part of the role we play in strengthening democracy.

The principle of free speech is also enshrined in the North Carolina Constitution, which ordains that "freedom of speech and of the press are two of the great bulwarks of liberty and therefore shall never be restrained." As a public university, Carolina embraces these words along with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and we uphold the [North Carolina Restore and Preserve Free Speech Act](#) and the UNC System [Board of Governors Policy on Free Speech and Free Expression](#).

At Carolina, like all public universities, you will have the opportunity to hear a wide range of viewpoints from members of our campus community and from visiting speakers. Speakers may be invited by a school, department or student organization, among others. These speakers may rent University facilities for events.

Under the First Amendment, the University cannot prohibit a person from speaking on campus because some in our community may not agree with what that person has to say or even because the speech is considered offensive. However, just because we uphold the law does not mean the University endorses or approves such speech in any way.

Demonstrations and Rallies Are Possible

Throughout the year, demonstrations, rallies and other events are possible on campus and in the local community. As a state institution, outdoor public spaces on campus are open to all regardless of their views, as long as they follow the law and University policies. Permits are not required for gatherings in most of McCorkle Place but are in other quads and locations under our [Facilities Use Policy](#) and [Facilities Use Standard](#).

We respect and believe in the rights of peaceful protesters. While anyone — including students, faculty and staff — may gather and exercise their rights to free speech, state law and the Board of Governors policy prohibit significant disruption of University operations. We expect all campus community members to comply. If you do not wish to participate in events on or near campus, plan to use caution and discretion before walking or traveling near those areas.

Supporting our Community

Your safety is the University's highest priority, and we work closely with town officials and local law enforcement agencies to keep our communities as safe as possible. But we understand that some messages and the presence of some visitors on campus may cause members of our community to feel unsafe — and can cause anxiety and fear. For support, students may contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) at 919-966-3658 or [Student Wellness](#) at 919-962-9355.

Faculty and staff may contact our [Employee Assistance Program](#) 24 hours a day at 877-314-5841. If you ever feel your physical safety is threatened, including on social media, you should call police immediately by dialing 911.

Free Speech Policy Resources

Understanding the laws and policies related to freedom of speech can be difficult. If you have questions or concerns, the following individuals are available as resources regarding institutional policies affecting the exercise of free speech.

- [Chris Lundberg](#), Vice Provost for Communication
- [Katie Nolan](#), Executive Director of Strategy, Policy, and Special Projects for Human Resources and Equal Opportunity and Compliance
- [Jonathan Sauls](#), Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- [Matthew Teal](#), Associate Director of the Office of Ethics and Policy

This message is sent in accordance with the North Carolina Restore and Preserve Free Speech Act and UNC Board of Governors Policy § 1300.8.

Sincerely,

J. Christopher Clemens, Provost and Chief Academic Officer
George Battle, Vice Chancellor for Institutional Integrity and Risk Management
Amy Johnson, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Becci Menghini, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and Equal Opportunity and Compliance

This message is sponsored by: Office of the Provost