

Instructor: Professor Peter Przytula

MASS MEDIA ETHICS

Office hours to be announced in class

Summer Semester 2019
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June 2019

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Course description:

The purpose of this course is to offer a review of ethical and moral considerations relevant to mass communication practice i.e. photojournalism, news gathering and dissemination, advertising, public relations, media research and media management.

We will study metaethics, normative ethics as well as applied ethics. A considerable amount of time shall be devoted to the discussion of classical ethical theories -- both deontological and teleological -- and the examination of their strengths and weakness, as well as their applications. Alternative ethical approaches, principles and rules, such as situation ethics or relativism, will also be covered in detail. Above all, however, we will be involved in discussions/analysis of numerous cases in mass communications.

In the fast-paced media world, important decisions have to be made in a very short time, frequently, in just a few minutes or , on occasion, in just a few seconds. More often than is commonly recognized, let alone admitted, moral aspects are involved in majority of those decisions. It is crucial that -- while making such decisions -- we keep in mind their ethical/moral dimensions and that the final determinations are made NOT by reflex, or on impulse, but by reflection, no matter how short it may be. This course shall assist you in recognizing the presence and the significance of the aforementioned ethical dimension involved in 'doing' mass communication.

OPTIONAL TEXTS

Patterson, Philip and Lee Wilkins, Media Ethics. Issues and Cases, Sixth Edition, McGraw Hill, 2008

Christians, Clifford, Kim B. Rotzoll, Mark Fackler, Kathy Brittain McKee, Robert H. Woods, Media Ethics. Cases and Moral Reasoning, Seventh Edition, Pearson, 2010.

Assignments:

1. Participation in class discussions (not just attendance)
2. Two case presentations
3. Major paper on the topic announced in class

Please, notice that case presentations and class participation are an important part of your final grade. So, be sure to be active and engaged in ALL class discussions.

If you are unable to come to your scheduled case presentation, you need to inform the instructor ahead of time (minimum 24 hours). The acceptable absences -- all of which have to be documented -- include: death in the family, serious illness, or another very serious event/development beyond your control.

Case presentations

Each student will be assigned to do two case presentations. These will be delivered on two separate occasions .

You are free to choose the two dates of presentations of your cases.

Case presentations must include presentation of all relevant facts of the case, Potter's Box analysis, application of different ethics theories, and an extensive class discussion of the case. Presentations should be not shorter than 20 minutes and not longer than 30 minutes. Each presenter needs to make sure that TWO COMPLETELY opposite views are expressed. This may mean that you will present your own real views but those of a devil's advocate. That is OK as long as you manage to present both arguments for and against.

Following each presentation, you will also lead a discussion with the students. It will be inspired by the case at hand and you will be free to introduce new elements into a case and ask students how they would act, how they would justify their particular decision and what aspects of the case are most important to them.

APPROXIMATE COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Session 1-2 Orientation. Ethical foundations and perspectives. Values, theories, principles.

Session 3-4 Privacy: ethical obligations versus what the law allows. Relationship between reporters and sources.

Session 5-6 Ethical issues in photojournalism and new social media.

Session 7-8 Loyalties in mass communication ethics: your employer versus your viewers/listeners/readers/clients. Organizational pressures in media ethics; codes of conduct in media organizations, professional organizations as well as international organizations bringing together communicators from around the world.

Session 9-10 Ethical considerations in covering politicians, the government, and large corporations. Ethical issues in government-media relations.

Session 11-12 Ethical considerations in new mass media technologies.

Session 13-14 Ethics in advertising and public relations as well as communication research.

Session 15 Ethical dimensions in the entertainment industry. Calls for censorship.

Test

Additional chapters and handouts may be assigned throughout the semester.

All students are expected to be familiar with all of the content of this syllabus.

BOOKS ON MEDIA ETHICS

Media Ethics: Issues and Cases by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins (9th edition, 2019)

Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning (10th Edition) by Clifford G. Christians, Mark Fackler, Kathy Brittain Richardson and Peggy J. Kreshel (Feb 26, 2017)

Ethics in Media Communications: Cases and Controversies (with InfoTrac) by Louis A. Day (Mar 1, 2005)

Digital Media Ethics by Charles Ess (Second edition, 2014)

The Ethics of Emerging Media: Information, Social Norms, and New Media Technology by Kathleen German and Bruce E. Drushel (Mar 17, 2011)

Lost in Media: The Ethics of Everyday Life (Minding the Media: Critical Issues for Learning and Teaching) by Tony Kashani and Benjamin Frymer (May 15, 2013)

Ethics of Media by Nick Couldry, Mirca Madianou and Amit Pinchevski (Jul 19, 2013)

Living Ethics: Across Media Platforms by Michael Bugeja (Aug 23, 2007)

Media Ethics by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, Oxford Press, 2011

Media and Ethics: Key Principles for Responsible Practice, Sage, Partick Plaisance(Second edition, 2014)

Ethics in Human Communication by Richard L. Johannesen, Kathleen S. Valde and Karen E. Whedbee (Six edition, 2008)

Communication Ethics (Critical Intercultural Communication Studies) by Ronald C. Arnett and Kathleen Glenister Roberts (Aug 6, 2008)

Media Ethics at Work: True Stories from Young Professionals by Lee Anne Peck and Guy S Reel (Sep 11, 2012)

Communication Ethics Literacy: Dialogue and Difference by Ronald C. Arnett, Janie Harden Fritz and Leanne M. Bell (Aug 4, 2008)

Communication Ethics and Universal Values by Clifford Christians and Michael Traber (Jan 28, 1997)

Mass Communication Ethics: Decision Making in Postmodern Culture (2nd Edition) by Larry Z Leslie (Jul 11, 2003)

Just a Job?: Communication, Ethics, and Professional Life by George Cheney, Daniel J. Lair, Dean Ritz and Brenden E. Kendall (Nov 12, 2009)

Communication Ethics, Media, and Popular Culture (Popular Culture & Everyday Life, Vol. 9) by Phyllis M. Japp, Mark Meister and Debra K. Japp (Jul 1, 2005)

The Handbook of Communication Ethics (ICA Handbook Series) by George Cheney, Steve May and Debashish Munshi (Dec 3, 2010)

Media Ethics: Key Principles for Responsible Practice by Patrick L. (Lee) Plaisance (Oct 3, 2008)

Media Ethics at Work: True Stories from Young Professionals by Lee Anne Peck and Guy S Reel (Sep 11, 2012)

Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making by Paula S. Tompkins (Jan 17, 2010)

The Handbook of Mass Media Ethics by Lee Wilkins and Clifford G. Christians (Jul 23, 2008)