

MMC 3203, Ethics and Problems in Mass Communications

Fall 2018

Instructor: Casey McDonald, MissCMcD@ufl.edu, Weimer Hall 044

Welcome

Welcome to the Summer C course for media ethics and problems in Mass Communications! I am your instructor Miss Casey McDonald. This course was designed by the Advertising department chair Dr. Tom Kelleher and we will be using his instructional videos throughout for discussion material. Please don't be confused- I am a third-year PhD. student here at the University of Florida. Please feel free to contact me directly for any questions you may have about the course outline below. I hope the instructions are clearly laid out for you to follow throughout the semester. A tentative schedule for the entire semester is attached to the end of this syllabus.

Overview

Catalog description: *A cross- disciplinary introduction to ethics- relevant situations faced by media professionals. Topics include professional standards of conduct, audience representation and engagement and issues associated with the production, presentation and delivery of messages that reflect the best interests of audiences, clients and stakeholders.*

Much of what we learn in college and in life helps us sort right from wrong. A big part of education in advertising, journalism, public relations and telecommunication is learning right from wrong— what you're supposed to do versus what you're not supposed to do. From introductory principles courses (e.g., ADV 3008, MMC 1009, MMC 2604, PUR 3000, RTV 3001) to *Law of Mass Communication* (MMC 4200), students learn what they should and should not do as matters of professional practice and legal responsibility. But in media, as with any discipline, difficult dilemmas arise when we recognize that some issues are not matters of right versus wrong or legal versus illegal. Some of the toughest issues are *right versus right!* These issues raise moral questions, and we will work to answer them in this course.

In this course we will learn and practice techniques for identifying and analyzing ethical issues and problems in mass communications.

Prerequisites

2JM designation and ADV 3008, JOU 1001, PUR 3000 or RTV 3001 with minimum grade of C.

Resources

Canvas - <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

Required Textbook

Black, J., & Roberts, C. (2011). [*Doing Ethics in Media: Theories and Practical Applications*](#). New York: Routledge.

Requisite Skills for this Course

You should be prepared to 1) manage academic responsibilities and meet deadlines on the Canvas online course management system, 2) employ analytical skills in the evaluation of situations and content presented in course lectures and readings, 3) articulate these thoughts and ideas clearly in writing, including online forums, and 4) justify/defend your own perspectives, as well as argue on behalf of perspectives that potentially run counter to your position about ethics situations.

Course Goals

Successful completion of this course will require you to:

- Demonstrate understanding of key principles and concepts of media ethics.
- Recognize the most pressing moral issues facing media professionals today.
- Develop analytical skills to resolve dilemmas through a systematic ethical reasoning process.
- Apply ethical reasoning standards across multiple mass communication disciplines.

Student Learning Outcomes and Grading

This course is organized into 8 Modules. Throughout the semester, for each module you will be asked to read the course material, watch a video from the department head, participate in a discussion, and then quizzed about the reading. For one of these modules, you will be assigned to a group to design and lead the discussion. Your group will also write a synopsis of what was discussed and then you will review your group member's participation. At the end of the semester, you will write a final paper of analysis on a media-based ethical issue. Finally, you will be required to fulfill some small tasks throughout the semester such as updating your profile information. The Expectations and Assignments are laid out in this syllabus in this order:

	Understand principles and concepts	Recognize moral issues	Develop analytical skills to resolve dilemmas	Apply ethical reasoning across disciplines	Grade weight
Online discussion participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	25%
Discussion leading	✓	✓	✓	✓	20%
Quizzes	✓	✓			20%
Final Analysis paper	✓	✓	✓		30%
Other deadlines & participation					5%
					100%

Final Grade % & Instructor Anticipations

A	90-100%	C	70-76%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	80-86%	D	60-66%
C+	77-79%	E	Below 60%

Due to the open-ended nature of this course, late work is generally not accepted. You are given an allotted amount of time within which you may upload your assignment, take the quiz, or participate in the discussion after which the opportunity will close. However, I recognize in some cases extenuating circumstances may allow the possibility to turn in late work (up to a week past the due date) with a straight deduction of 20% of the total grade. This policy does not extend to certain assignments as indicated below. If you find yourself in need to use this policy, please email me directly. Also, if you would like to turn in some of the assignments early, that may also be a possibility for which you should also contact me directly. I am always willing to hear explanations and offer possibilities for makeup work, however in order to earn these amenities, I do expect all students to go above and beyond- taking responsibility for their actions and schedule. This is particularly important in an ethics class. I anticipate that you will be forthright!

Expectations and Assignments

Online Discussion Participation (25%)

Your contributions to online discussions are a major part of this course.

Individual participation assessments will be posted after each module. Participation scores for each module will be weighted evenly. Combined they will account for 25% of your course grade. During the module for which your group leads the discussion, you will not be assessed on your individual response to prompts, but instead will be assessed on how your group leads and monitors the discussion (see next section).

Below is the rubric for online discussions:

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Comprehension and evaluation of key components of the required readings and online resources	Posts demonstrate clear and analytical understanding.	Posts indicate an awareness of course resources.	Posts do not respond to course resources.
Insight and originality to help create dialogue	Posts were thoughtful, interesting, and unique- not redundant .	Posts showed evidence of original thinking.	Posts echoed other points or expressed general agreement/disagreement.
Meaningful connections	Posts relevant to discussion, with meaningful connections to other course content, personal experience, current events, etc.	Posts on topic and relevant to discussion.	Posts not relevant to discussion prompts or course content.
Grammar, spelling and coherence	Very well written and organized.	Generally well written and organized, some spelling/grammar issues.	Unclearly written or organized or hard to follow (possibly due to spelling/grammar issues).
Timeliness and interaction	Posted early enough for classmates to respond and posted later in response to others.	Involved in discussion boards either early or late, but limited interaction with classmates.	Limited meaningful interaction with classmates.

Discussion-leading Project (20%)

During the first week of class, you will be randomly assigned to a group of students who will lead the class discussion for one of the week-and-a-half-long modules during the semester. Your job is as follows:

- Connect with your group on Canvas using the “Groups” function *as soon as possible*. Or you can use the top-most pinned discussion “Discussion-Leading Group Collaboration” to speak privately with your group. Introduce yourselves to each other to make sure everyone knows how to communicate in advance of your assigned week. If one of the members is not responding- let the instructor know IMMEDIATELY to resolve the issue.
- Read the assigned readings for your assigned weeks as soon as you get a chance.
- Develop two discussion prompts (one for each chapter) and provide related case articles or videos that you find to use as springboards for discussion. Try to find cases that would invoke discussion- it should promote your classmates to think deeply and allow for not everyone to coming to the same conclusion.
- E-mail your group’s two prompts to the instructor by **Thursday** prior to the week your module starts. Make sure everyone is CCed on the email. If applicable, provide graphics as well to introduce the prompts. Edits or suggestions will be sent to the group if needed.
- Monitor and lead the class discussion between **Monday** and the first **Wednesday** of the second week. Ask follow up questions and pose possible arguments to enrich the discussion. Each member of the group should be doing this and will count as that week’s discussion credit. (i.e. Everyone should still be posting that week.)
- Write and edit a synopsis (about two pages for each prompt) and upload it to Canvas (“Discussion Leading - Synopsis”) or by 11:59 p.m. on **Friday** of the second week. One synopsis will be uploaded by the group.
- Complete a confidential “Peer Discussion Rubric” (found in the files section on Canvas under “Rubrics”) for each of your group members, and upload the document directly to the “Discussion Leading - Peer Review” assignment. Each group member will do his or her own individual peer evaluations. Do this by 11:59 p.m. on **Sunday** of the second week.

I have organized this visually two ways to help you understand the schedule better:

Visualization #1 By Task and Due Date:

Task	Due Date
<u>Connect</u> with your group on Canvas and identify your assigned module using the “Groups” function.	As soon as possible during first week of class
<u>Read</u> the chapters for your week. Choose appropriate cases/examples for discussion.	At least one week before your discussion
<u>E-mail</u> discussion questions to instructor. (Instructor will edit if needed and post the following week).	Thursday of the week before your discussion
<u>Moderate/lead</u> the online discussions.	Normally Monday of first week through Wednesday of the second week. Discussion closes at 11:59 p.m. so you can start writing synopses and conducting peer evals. (Dates are slightly adjusted on weeks with holidays – see calendar.)
<u>Submit synopsis</u> as a group to instructor. (upload to “Group Discussion Synopsis”)	11:59 p.m. Friday of the second week (That's 2 days after the discussion closes)
Submit individual peer discussion rubrics. (upload to “Group Discussion Peer Review”)	11:59 p.m. Sunday the week after your module ends (That's 2 days after the synopsis is due)

Visualization #2: Week Outlook (Check dates for changes due to holidays):

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Before week:				E-mail discussion questions/prompts to instructor.			
Your week:	Discussion begins	Moderate/lead the online discussions ----->----->----->----->					
After week:	----->----->		Discussion Closes		Submit Discussion Synopsis (Group)		Submit peer discussion rubrics (Individual)

Quizzes (20%)

Quizzes will cover each module’s assigned readings and lectures. Quizzes may include multiple-choice, short-answer and matching questions. The idea is to motivate you to keep up with the reading and lectures. You will have only one opportunity to take each quiz during the specified module time period. Please see the timeline below and the schedule on Canvas.

Each quiz will have a time limit (25 minutes). You can take the quiz any time between the opening of the module on Monday of the first week and 11:59 p.m. on Friday of the second week of the module, but you will have only 25 minutes to complete the quiz once you start. The idea behind the time limit is for you to prepare by organizing your knowledge of the course material in such a way that you can confidently answer questions quickly and accurately. Although there's no rule against using your notes and books, those who have mastered the material likely will perform MUCH better than those who try to look everything up as they go.

Taking each quiz must be an individual effort!

Quiz Schedule	
Quiz 1	Open Aug 22 to Aug 26 at 11:59 p.m.
Quiz 2	Open Aug 27 to Sep 8* at 11:59 p.m.
Quiz 3	Open Sep 10 to Sep 21 at 11:59 p.m.
Quiz 4	Open Sep 24 to Oct 5 at 11:59 p.m.
Quiz 5	Open Oct 8 to Oct 19 at 11:59 p.m.
Quiz 6	Open Oct 22 to Nov 1* at 11:59 p.m.
Quiz 7	Open Nov 5 to Nov 17* at 11:59 p.m.

* Please note the one extra or less day due to holidays!

A fuller tentative schedule for the entire semester is attached to the end of this syllabus including these deadlines. Please make a note of them in your calendar so you don’t miss a quiz.

Ethical Analysis Paper Final (30%)

For the analysis paper, your assignment will be to identify a case in **media ethics** in which you would have acted differently than the media practitioner(s) at the center of it. To be clear, the criterion is that you identify an ethical dilemma specific to a media organization or a practitioner. Please do not choose a general ethical problem such as “rape” to argue against- it should be related to the communications field and occur primarily there. Please see the paper assignment on Canvas for the full grading rubric. Your final paper will be checked for plagiarism or improper attribution. Please CITE YOUR RESOURCES. The paper should be organized in a way that makes clear how you will answer the six major questions from *Doing Ethics in Media*:

1. **What's your problem?** Briefly describe the case and what choices were made. (You may attach a published blog, article, case study, or news story as a link or as an appendix for background.) Spell out what makes this situation a moral dilemma. Leave yourself with a clearly stated question to be answered.
2. **Why not follow the rules?** Are there some precedents, guidelines, codes, or laws you should keep in mind? If so, are there reasons your dilemma can't be resolved by them? If not, what guidelines might the originator used?
3. **Who wins, who loses?** Who are the stakeholders, and what impact is your decision likely to have on each of them in the short term and in the long term? Be sure to address both winners AND losers in your case.
4. **What's it worth?** Prioritize your values—both moral and non-moral values—and decide which one(s) you won't compromise. This may be the place to address why the losers are acceptable losses.
5. **Who's whispering in your ear?** In general—and specifically in this case—which school of philosophy or set of moral principles provides you with a moral compass?
6. **How's your decision going to look?** State your conclusion, and imagine what your friends and people you respect will think about your decision-making. How will this impact your decision?

As a guideline for length, each section of the paper should be about 1-2 pages double-spaced, for a total length of about 6 -12 pages. I recommend thinking of your paper topic near the beginning of the semester so that you can think through the questions as they come up for discussion during the semester. You might then be able to draft sections of the paper as we go.

Paper Topic: Before you begin your final paper, in the assignment "Topic for Ethical Analysis Paper", briefly describe the media-based ethical dilemma you wish to address. More instructions are in the assignment itself. Submission of your topic will count toward your *Other Participation* grade (see below) as either complete or incomplete. The deadline for submission will be Sunday, Oct 28th.

Rough Draft & Peer Reviews: You will be asked to provide a rough draft of your paper and after you submit your rough draft paper, you will be assigned three peer reviews to complete. Draft papers are due on Friday, Nov 9th at 11:59 p.m. At that time, Canvas will automatically assign each paper three peer-reviewers (and each reviewer will be assigned three papers). **If you miss the deadline**, even by a few minutes, you will not be included in that process since the number of papers reviewed and the number of reviewers is exactly equal to the number of papers submitted at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, Nov 9th.

Of course, the more developed your draft is on that Friday, the better, but I strongly recommend you submit whatever draft you have at that time in any case. If you don't make the deadline, there will be no option to submit late. Submission of your draft paper will count toward your *Other Participation* grade (see below) as either complete or incomplete.

Assuming you met the rough draft deadline, the three papers you are to review will be sent to you via email. You will need to click the links and directly grade and review the works assigned to you. The deadline to review all three papers will be Thursday, Nov 15th. After you have given your feedback, please upload a document with the copy and pasted reviews into the assignment "Analysis Paper - Peer Reviews". Submission of this document will help me give you credit you but the important part is to provide feedback to directly to your peers. This will count toward your *Other Participation* grade (see below) as either complete or incomplete.

Other Participation (5%)

This includes assignments that will be tracked as complete/incomplete/late. Meeting deadlines and quality of effort are important here to keep the course running smoothly. For each one of these missed, one percentage point will be deducted. For example, if you miss turning in your paper topic, but complete everything else well and on time, you would earn 4 participation points instead of 5. If you miss uploading a draft, you will not be able to earn the peer review credit as well so you will earn a 3 out of 5 and so on.

- Update Canvas profile by Sunday 8/26
- Discussion Topic email (Dates Vary)
- Ethical Analysis Paper Topic due Sunday 10/28
- Rough draft of ethical analysis paper due Friday 11/9 at 11:59 p.m.
- Peer reviews of paper drafts due Thursday 11/15 at 11:59 p.m.

Extra Credit for Participation in Research Studies

A maximum of two (2) extra credit points (equivalent of 2%) will be offered for research participation through CJC's SONA research system (<https://ufl-cjc.sona-systems.com>).

Please register a SONA account and choose studies to participate in to receive extra credit for this class. Check SONA regularly to see what studies have become available. Typically, studies won't become available until around about the third week of the semester. You should NOT wait until the last minute to sign up for participation because research opportunities may be limited by the end of the semester. In fact, it is probably wise to participate early in the semester when your course loads are the lightest. Please see this video on how to set up your SONA account: https://youtu.be/_1OnT2ZU6QQ.

If you have any questions, please contact the CJC SONA administrator through this email: uf-cjc-sonasystems@jou.ufl.edu.

UF Policies

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>.

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. See the course netiquette guidelines at <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/319319/pages/netiquette>.

Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- (352) 392-HELP OR <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>

** Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the help desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request make-up work.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

UMatter, We Care

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The *U Matter, We Care* initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the *U Matter, We Care Team* can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The *UMatter, We Care Team* can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary of results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

See the next page for tentative schedule:

Tentative Course Timeline

	General Topics	Notes and Deadlines
Module 1	<p>Introductions and syllabus</p> <p>Ethics and moral reasoning (Intro & Ch1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to course resources by 8/26 • Connect with Module Group Discussion • Update Canvas profile by 8/26 • Module 1 discussions open • Wednesday 8/22 - Sunday 8/26 • Quiz 1 closes 8/26 • Group 2 discussion prompts email due 8/25
Module 2	<p>Codes of ethics and justification models (Ch2)</p> <p>Media traditions and the paradox of professionalism (Ch3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 2 discussions open • Monday 8/27 – Thursday 9/6 * • Quiz 2 closes 9/8* • Group 3 discussion prompts email due 9/7* <p>(*Note the extra day for Labor Day holiday 9/3)</p>
Module 3	<p>Moral development and the expansion of empathy (Ch4)</p> <p>Loyalty and diversity (Ch5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 3 discussions open • Monday 9/10 - Wednesday 9/19 • Quiz 3 closes 9/21 • Group 4 discussion prompt email due 9/20
Module 4	<p>Personal and professional values (Ch6)</p> <p>Truth and deception (Ch7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 4 discussions open • Monday 9/24 - Wednesday 10/3 • Quiz 4 closes 10/5 • Group 5 discussion prompts email due 10/11
Module 5	<p>Privacy and public life (Ch8)</p> <p>Persuasion and propaganda (Ch9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 5 discussions open • Monday 10/8 - Wednesday 10/17 • Quiz 5 closes 10/19 • Group 6 discussion prompts email due 10/18
Module 6	<p>Consequentialism and utility (Ch10)</p> <p>Deontology and moral rules (Ch11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 6 discussions open • Monday 10/22 - Wednesday 10/31 • Quiz 6 closes 11/1* • Group 7 discussion prompts email due 11/1 • Paper Topic due Sunday, 10/28 <p>(*Note closes a day early for Homecoming 11/2)</p>
Module 7	<p>Virtue, justice and care (Ch12)</p> <p>Accountability, transparency and credibility (Ch13)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 7 discussions open • Monday 11/5 - Thursday 11/15* • Quiz 7 closes 11/17* • Paper Rough Draft due Friday 11/9 <p>(*Note the extra day for Veteran's Day 11/12)</p>
Module 8	<p>Putting it all together 5 Ws and H</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Reviews of drafts due Thursday 11/15 • Final paper due WEDNESDAY 12/5 at 11:59 p.m. • No late work will be accepted after 12/5