

RTV 4931
ETHICS AND PROBLEMS
Fall 2013

**The U.S. Communications Act of 1934 stipulates that broadcast stations shall
"operate in the public interest, convenience, and necessity."**

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Office Hours: Monday 11:30am – 2:30pm, and by appointment

Class Meeting Time/Location: Mondays 8:30 – 11:30am (periods 2-4), G030

Required Books/Readings:

There are no required textbooks.

All required readings will be posted in ARES.

Please note: while we will often discuss readings as part of class, you are responsible for reading *all* material and should expect to see questions related to it on the exams. Do not assume that because we don't specifically discuss a reading that you will not be tested on it.

Other Resources:

You should routinely keep up with coverage of the U.S. and international media. Some recommended resources include:

- CNN's *Reliable Sources*, aired at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays and at www.cnn.com
- NPR's *On The Media*, aired at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays on WUFT-FM, and online at <http://www.onthemedial.org/>
- The Poynter Institute's Ethics and Diversity section at <http://www.poynter.org/subject.asp?id=32>
- The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at <http://dartcenter.org/>
- Reporters Without Borders at http://www.rsf.org/index.php?page=rubrique&id_rubrique=2

About the Course

Course Objectives

Broadcasters face ethical questions every day. This course is designed to help you work through those questions and provide a framework for making ethical decisions. The class will include discussion, lectures, guest speakers and case studies to explore important topics related to broadcast media ethics.

What You Will Learn in this Class

- perspectives on current media controversies and issues
- strategies for making ethical decisions as broadcast professionals
- insight into how ethical issues are addressed by media professionals
- ethical theories as they relate to the media
- how to incorporate issues of diversity in broadcast programming

Class Policies

Classroom Atmosphere

Each of you plays a role in shaping this course. I encourage you to be actively involved in class discussion and activities. Please be respectful of the contributions of all others, including the guest speakers, and help create a class environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

Cell Phones, Tablets, and Computer Use in Class

As a matter of courtesy to your fellow class members, please set cell phone (and all other communication devices) ringers to silent prior to the start of class. It is not appropriate to use computers, tablets, or cell phones for anything other than course-related activity during class. Electronic devices should be turned off and put away during exams. Failure to do so could result in failing the exam.

Attendance

Like the field of broadcasting, this class is fast-moving and demanding. Your attendance and participation are important to making this class a success. Roll will be taken for every class meeting. I reserve the right to lower final grades based on excessive absences or tardiness.

Missing Deadlines or Assignments

In the communication field, completing assignments on deadline is vital. The same holds true in this class. If you believe you have an exceptional reason for missing a deadline, please discuss it with me immediately. However, a missed deadline will generally be counted as a missed assignment and will result in a “0” for the assignment. Make up work will only be offered for university-approved absences.

*** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.*

Honor Code

As a student at this university, you have accepted a commitment to the Honor Code, and the principles of academic integrity, personal honesty, and responsible citizenship on which it was founded. As an instructor at this university, I am also charged with its enforcement and take that responsibility very seriously. It is my expectation that you will conduct yourself in an academically ethical way in all assignments. **Cheating, plagiarism and related offenses will be grounds for significant academic penalties, up to and including failure in the course.**

The Honor Code’s Preamble reads in part: “...the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.”

I encourage you to consult me if you are uncertain about your Honor Code responsibilities within this course.

Students with Disabilities

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact the instructor personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (391-1261). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Course Grading and Assignments

General University policies regarding grading are found at:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

Attendance/Participation	40 points
Presentation/Discussion Leadership	60 points
Policy Memo	100 points
Midterm	100 points
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total	400 points

Grades are based on a 400 point scale (described below) – *not on percentages*. Please be aware that there will be **no rounding** of grades at the end of the semester. Your point total is final and grades will be assigned as described below.

Grading Scale (in points)

Points Earned in Class	Letter Grade	Grade Points
360 – 400	A	4.00
348 – 359	B+	3.33
320 – 347	B	3.00
308 – 319	C+	2.33
280 – 307	C	2.00
268 – 279	D+	1.33
240 – 267	D	1.00
Below 240	E	0.00

Presentation/Discussion Leadership

You will be assigned a day to prepare a short presentation highlighting a media issue that presents an ethical dilemma related to that day's lecture content. Your presentation should be 5 minutes long. It should include a thorough, but brief, overview of the issue and ethical dilemma, how it relates to the day's lecture topic, and appropriate audio/visual accompaniment. In addition, you must come to class with three discussion questions related to your presentation, and be prepared to lead discussion on your topic. A "tips" sheet will be distributed to guide you in putting together your presentation.

**Presentation dates will be assigned via email on September 2nd*

Policy Memo

This assignment asks you to address an area of media ethics relevant to the communication field you want to pursue. You will write a policy memo that sets forth guidelines for ethical behavior in your chosen field. In particular, *you need to address ethical dilemmas specific to your field, and how they should be approached*. This assignment should reflect your own work and thoughts. You should reference other material and that material should be clearly acknowledged and appropriately cited.

The memo should be approximately five pages, double spaced and at least 1,250 words. **A one-page proposal is due September 30th**. (We will also have brief individual meetings on October 7th to go over the proposals. Failure to turn in the proposal will result in a 6-point reduction on the paper.)

***Proposal due – September 30th**

***Policy memo due – November 18th**

Midterm & Final Exam

Exams will be traditionally formatted – including multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. Exam questions will be based on the readings, lectures (including individual presentations and guest speakers), and other materials assigned and/or discussed in class.

***Midterm – October 14th**

***Final Exam – December 2nd**

Extra Credit

There will be several opportunities to earn extra credit points throughout the semester. You will have the chance to accrue up to 20 points of extra credit to be added to your total points earned for the class. Although there may be opportunities totaling more than 20 points, 20 is the MAXIMUM amount you may add to your point total.

24/7 Rule

I will send a ListServ email when I have posted grades or extra credit points to the class Sakai site. If you would like to seek clarification on an exam or assignment grade, or believe you are missing extra credit points, you may request a review as long as these procedures are followed:

1. You must wait at least 24 hrs after the posting of exam grades/EC points before requesting a review
2. The review must take place within 7 days after exam grades/EC points are posted
3. All **grade** reviews must be conducted face to face (EC reviews may be done via email).

Class Schedule

**While it is my intention to follow this syllabus and schedule as closely as possible, I reserve the right to make adjustments as needed.*

Meeting	Topic	Readings for Class
1 – Aug 26	Introduction to the Class	
Sep 2	NO CLASS – Labor Day	
2 – Sep 9	Understanding Ethical Considerations and The Philosophical Roots of Ethics	<p>“An Introduction to Ethical Decision Making” – <i>Media Ethics</i></p> <p>“A Philosophically Based Inquiry into the Nature of Communicating Humans” – <i>Handbook of Media Ethics</i></p>
3 – Sep 16	Codes of Ethics and Media Ownership: Conflicted Interests?	<p><i>RTNDA Code of Ethics</i> at http://www.rtdna.org/pages/media_items/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct48.php</p> <p><i>SPJ Code of Ethics</i> at http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp#; and Clark Hoyt</p> <p>“Media Ownership in a Corporate Age” – <i>Handbook of Media Ethics</i></p> <p><i>In NBC Interview, a Failure to Note Network Ties</i> at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/03/business/media/03gate.html</p>
4 – Sep 23	Media Objectivity & Transparency	<p>“Truth and Objectivity” (pp. 37-58) from <i>Ethics in Journalism</i> (6th ed.) by Ron F. Smith. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing)</p> <p><i>Are NPR Reporters Too Involved in Their Stories?</i> at http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5452082</p> <p>“Too Transparent?” by Rachel Smolkin. <i>American Journalism Review</i>, April/May 2006.</p>

<p>5 – Sep 30</p>	<p>Covering Tragedy, Privacy, and Breaking News</p> <p><i>Due: Proposal for Policy Memo Assignment</i></p>	<p>Review the <i>Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma</i> website at http://dartcenter.org/</p> <p>“Shifting Roles, Enduring Values: The Credible Journalist in a Digital Age – <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> 22(4): 262-279.</p> <p>“Privacy: Looking for Solitude in the Global Village” – <i>Media Ethics</i></p> <p><i>Twitter and Newsgathering: Trafigura scandal in UK</i> http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/oct/13/trafigura-tweets-freedom-of-speech</p> <p><i>Gerry Ryan's Death and Social Media:</i> http://www.yourtechstuff.com/techwire/2010/04/breaking-news-death-and-twitter.html</p>
<p>6 – Oct 7</p>	<p>Strategic Communication</p>	
<p>7 – Oct 14</p>	<p>MIDTERM</p>	
<p>8 – Oct 21</p>	<p>Mass Media in a Democratic Society</p>	<p>“Mass Media in a Democratic Society: Keeping a Promise” – <i>Media Ethics</i></p>
<p>9 – Oct 28</p>	<p>Serving a Diverse Audience</p>	<p>“The Whole Story: Diversity Tips and Tools” at http://www.spj.org/divws2.asp</p> <p><i>From Fear to Storytelling: Covering Disability From Outside Your Comfort Zone</i> http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=58&aid=104987</p> <p><i>Covering Arab Americans</i> from SPJ at http://www.spj.org/divguidelines.asp</p> <p><i>Covering New Communities</i> from SPJ at http://www.spj.org/divws3.asp</p>
<p>10 – Nov 4</p>	<p>Entertainment Ethics and The Ethics of Prosocial Content</p>	

Nov 11	NO CLASS – Homecoming	
11 – Nov 18	Ethics in Sports Journalism and Photo/Video Ethics <i>Due: Policy Memo</i>	“Picture This: The Ethics of Photo and Video Journalism” – <i>Media Ethics</i>
12 – Nov 25	Internet/Social Media Ethics and Shock Journalism	<p>“Going Public: Should Journalists Express Their Political Views on Social Networking Sites?” By Stephanie Gleason, <i>American Journalism Review</i> (Winter 2009), pp. 6-7</p> <p>“Times Standards, Staffers or Not,” <i>New York Times</i>, (Jan. 3, 2010), p. wk8. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/03/opinion/03pubed.html</p> <p><i>Media Elite Versus Blogger Peasants</i> http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2009/07/09/lyons/</p> <p><i>RTDNA Social Media and Blogging Guidelines</i> at http://www.rtdna.org/pages/media_items/social-media-and-blogging-guidelines1915.php?g=37?id=1915</p> <p>“In Animated Videos, News and Guesswork Mix: <i>New York Times</i> at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/business/media/06animate.html?_r=1&</p> <p>“Turn the Dial: Shock Radio and Freedom of Speech.” Freedom Forum.com at http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=16987</p>
13 – Dec 2	FINAL EXAM	