COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURE 3370 L11
ETHICAL ISSUES IN MEDIA
Summer I 2017

Course #: XXXXX
Class: Mon., Tues. Wed., & Thurs. 1:00-4:00pm
Classroom: XXX

Professor: Michael D. High
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Course Description:
This course examines the major ethical issues around the production, distribution, and consumption of media. It will cover many of the ethical principles and controversies related to investigative journalism, objectivity, representation, freedom of speech, privacy, transparency, sharing, and digital technology. Through lectures focused on academic articles, small group discussion of news stories on particular ethical cases, an analytical paper, and responses to a weekly media analysis program, the course will develop students’ understanding of the complexity of ethical issues in media.

Learning Objectives:
• Understand the perennial and contemporary ethical issues in media.
• Recognize ethical controversies in the media and engage their different dimensions.
• Learn the concepts and terminology of ethics and Media Studies.
• Develop critical thinking through the study and analysis of written texts.
• Develop oral communication skills through in class discussion.
• Compose critical arguments and evaluate texts in writing.

Required Texts:
A College Dictionary

Blackboard:
All readings are posted in the Readings section in the course menu of Blackboard. These readings are in PDF format. You are responsible for having read all assigned texts before class starts. If reading the text online or on a mobile device, you should bring a laptop or tablet to class to reference the readings during discussions. If you print out the readings, bring the printouts with you.

All assignments will be uploaded to Blackboard. Assignment prompts and links to upload assignments are in the Assignment section of the course menu on Blackboard. You must upload all assignments in DOC, DOCX, or PDF format. Do not upload other file formats as Blackboard will not recognize them. Do not bring paper copies to class.

All grades are posted on Blackboard. To access your grades, go to MyGrades in the Tools section of the course page. Contact the instructor if any scores are entered incorrectly.

Class announcements will be posted on Blackboard and sent through email. Check your email daily and review the announcements on the course’s Blackboard home page when you access it.

Office Appointments:
To make an appointment for the office hours, go into Blackboard and click the Office Appointments link in the course menu. Instructions are detailed there.

**Course Requirements:**

**Attendance/Participation Policy**—This discussion based course demands constant attendance. You are allowed 1 unexcused absence from class. After that, for each unexcused absence you will lose 5% of the 15% total attendance grade.

Excused absences are for medical and family emergencies only. Following an emergency, contact the instructor as soon as you can and bring *some* form of documentation (doctor’s note, ER receipt, police report, etc.) to the next class you attend. Do not offer to get documentation after an absence; get it beforehand and bring it with you to class. If you plan on missing for a religious holiday not scheduled by the university, please let the instructor know at least a week in advance.

Five instances of tardiness equal one absence and early departures will add up to absences. If you are sleeping during class, texting, not prepared, or not participating you will not receive credit for being in class. If you miss class, you are responsible for contacting another student to find out what you missed.

You can have unexcused absences forgiven for participation. Those who contribute frequently and consistently to the large discussion will receive forgiveness for 2 additional unexcused absences and those who contribute occasionally will receive forgiveness for an additional unexcused absence.

**Quizzes**—To ensure that students are reading and absorbing the material, there will be pop quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will test whether or not students have read the texts assigned for that day. Although quizzes are out of 4 questions, they will only be worth 3 points. *Quizzes are given during the first five minutes of class.* The lowest quiz will be dropped. Missed quizzes can be supplemented by the Extra Credit assignment.

**Paper**—You will write a 7-9 page research paper on the ethics of a specific media action, decision, or practice from the last 15 years that we do not discuss in class. All Papers must be in MLA format and reference at least 1 academic class texts and 3 outside sources.

**Exams**—There will be 2 non-cumulative exams to test students’ understanding and retention of material. Only material covered in the lectures and discussion groups will be on the exams. Exams will be open note, book, and internet.

**Anonymous Grading**—All assignments (with the exception of quizzes) will be graded anonymously. Therefore, students should not put their names anywhere within the files they upload to Blackboard. Instead, use your Fordham ID #.

**Late Work**—Any work submitted to Blackboard after class begins on the assigned day is late. Late work is penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late (~40% maximum).

**Extra Credit**—To make up a missed quiz, students may write a 1-2 page essay on the connection between the academic reading covered in the missed quiz and one text in the Supplemental Texts.
section of Blackboard. An extra credit essay can replace a low quiz grade with a score of 3/3, though full credit is not guaranteed. You can only make up 2 quizzes.

**Grade Breakdown:**
- Attendance/Participation: 15%
- Quizzes: 20%
- Paper: 25%
- Exams: 40%

**Grade Scale:**
- A+: 100 – 97
- B+: 89.9 – 87
- B+: 86.9 – 83
- A: 96.9 – 93
- A-: 92.9 – 90
- C+: 79.9 – 77
- C: 76.9 – 73
- C-: 72.9 – 70
- D: 69.9 – 60

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

**Week 1**

5/30  Introductions; Syllabus; Overview; Donald K. Wright “Communication Ethics”


**Week 2**


6/7  Stereotypes: Lawrence Blum “Stereotypes and Stereotyping: A Moral Analysis”; Joan Voight “Creative: Realistic or Offensive?”; Tanzina Vega and Bill Carter “Stuck on Stereotypes”; Renee Lewis “Ferguson Reports Raise Questions on
Media Criminalization of Blacks”; Tom Jacobs "Selfies Reveal the Pervasiveness of Gender Stereotypes"

6/8 Screening: I Am Not Your Negro

Week 3

6/12 Midterm


Week 4

6/19 PAPER DUE (Upload to Blackboard); In Class Screening: Reflections of Media Ethics

6/20 Digital Technology: James Moor “Can Cyberspace Be Just?”; Robert Niles "Online, News Archives Never Die, Nor Do They Fade Away"; Julia Angwin, Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu and Lauren Kirchner “Machine Bias”; Olivia Solon “How Facebook Plans to Take Over the World”; Steven Poole's "The Truth About Smart Cities: ‘In the End, They Will Destroy Democracy’"

6/21 Screening: Lo and Behold Reveries of the Connected World

6/22 Digital Journalism: Jesús Díaz-Campo and Francisco Segado-Boj "Journalism Ethics in a Digital Environment- How journalistic Codes of Ethics Have Been Adapted to the Internet and ICTs in Countries Around the World”; Jim Rutenberg “Yes, the News Can Survive the Newspaper”; Michael Massing “Digital Journalism: How Good Is It?”; Katharine Viner “How Technology Disrupted the Truth”; David Carr, "Sowing Mayhem, One Click at a Time"
Week 5


6/27  Screening: Terms and Conditions May Apply

6/28  Digital Sharing: Volker Grassmuck “The Sharing Turn: Why We Are Generally Nice and Have a Good Chance to Cooperate Our Way Out of the Mess We Have Gotten Ourselves Into”; David Carr “Selfies on a Stick, and the Social-Content Challenge for the Media”; Joe Nocera "A Tight Grip Can Choke Creativity"; Trip Gabriel "Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in Digital Age"; Jason Koebler "Angola’s Wikipedia Pirates Are Exposing the Problems with Digital Colonialism"

6/29  Final Exam

Important Dates:
5/31 Last Day Add/Drop
6/15 Last Day to Request Pass/Fail and Last Day to Withdraw

University Statement on Academic Integrity: A University, by its nature, strives to foster and recognize originality of thought. Originality can only be recognized, however, when people acknowledge the sources of ideas or works that are not their own. Therefore, students must maintain the highest standards with regards to honesty, effort and performance. As a Jesuit, Catholic University, Fordham is committed to ensuring that all members of the academic community strive not only for excellence in scholarship but also for integrity of character. In the pursuit of knowledge and personal development, it is imperative that students present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique and eventual reformulation. As part of this process, each student must acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others…. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials. For further details, consult the Standards of Academic Integrity on the University website
http://www.fordham.edu/academics/handbooks_publicati/undergraduate_academ/index.asp

Students with Disabilities: As a University, Fordham will offer reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to assist otherwise qualified persons in achieving access to its programs, services, and facilities once students meet with ODS for an initial intake meeting to develop an accommodation plan directly with the student in accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students who are seeking accommodation(s) for a disability should contact Jessica Hawkins,
Electronic Devices:
You may not use phones in class, though you can use tablets and laptops. If you are not paying attention, however, you will be asked to turn off your device. If you are asked a second time you will lose the privilege of using the device in class.

Department Page, Facebook, and Twitter:
Please check the Department of Communications and Media Studies webpage frequently for program information at www.fordham.edu/cms. All students are encouraged to “like” the CMS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FordhamCMS and follow the department on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/FordhamCMS to receive departmental news, notices of jobs, internship opportunities, etc.

Bibliography of Academic Texts:

**Bibliography of Articles/Blog Postings:**


