

## **COMM 360 - 201 Digital Media Ethics**

Sarah Leiser ([sleiser@luc.edu](mailto:sleiser@luc.edu))

Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 11:30-12:20

Water Tower Campus: School of Communication; Room 014

Office Hours (Zoom): Mondays, 9:30am-11:30am

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to familiarize students with a new set of ethical dilemmas that have sprung up in the last decade with the rise of new media. Using classical ethical theories, students will formulate appropriate and responsible solutions to ethical dilemmas emerging in a new/digital media context.

Pre-requisites: COMM 200

### **Course Objectives:**

Course Learning Objectives

- Understand classical approaches and theorizations of ethics
- Explore ethical issues related to new media
- Discuss and critically exam current ethical issues in relation to classical ethical theory
- Develop potential solutions to ethical dilemmas

### **Course COVID Policy:**

Please do not come to class if you are feeling unwell, especially if your symptoms include shortness of breath, coughing, difficulty breathing, head and body aches, fever or chills, and loss of smell or taste. Send me an email if you are feeling any of these symptoms and contact Dial A Nurse and follow their instructions. If you have been exposed to a confirmed COVID case and are unsure about coming to class, send me an email and we will figure out what you should do. The health and safety of you and your classmates is very important to me and I will be flexible in accommodating any health concerns. COVID policy subject to change as new guidelines and regulations are released throughout the semester. Go to <https://www.luc.edu/coronavirus/> for information and updates.

### **Late or Missing Work:**

If you are concerned about completing your work or dealing with something that could potentially affect your ability to participate in class, please email me sooner rather than later. I don't need details, but knowing earlier allows me to help find ways to accommodate you and keeps you on track in the class. I publish all due dates and details of assignments from the beginning of the semester so you can plan for them and let me know as soon as possible of any conflicts or concerns. It is disrespectful of my time and dedication to this class to wait until the last few days to reach out and ask for exceptions or accommodations. Additionally, there is often very little I can do or change at the end of the semester due to limited time and university policies.

### **Course Communication and Information:**

- Class announcements and reminders
- Course Sakai Page
- Email

- [sleiser@luc.edu](mailto:sleiser@luc.edu)
- I do not regularly check my email after 5pm or on weekends, but I try to reply within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 on weekends.
- Office hours - via Zoom
  - Mondays, 9:30am-11:30am (link on Sakai)
  - By appointment

### **Required Text:**

All required readings will be posted on our class Sakai page, there is no textbook requirement.

### **AI Policy:**

We will discuss the role of AI in society and how it relates to ethics in the course, as well as responsible and ethical use of the technology. Direct copying and pasting of AI work and passing it as your own will not be allowed in this course. However, using AI to brainstorm assignments or for grammar review is permissible as long as the work has been rewritten and edited by the student.

### **Assignments:**

#### **Participation and In class engagement**

Completing the in class activities and assignments, participating in the in class discussion, and attending class regularly all will add to this score. Attendance and participation will be graded at the midpoint and the end of the semester.

#### **Reading Reviews (2)**

Students will select two readings throughout the semester to write a review on. The review should include a summary of the reading that highlights main the arguments and objectives. It should also include a discussion of how the reading relates to other course readings and discussions, as well as connections to societal examples and personal experiences. Reading reviews should be 700-1000 words, double spaced, in Times New Roman, 12-point font.

#### **Ethics in Practice Papers (2)**

These papers will require the student to put ethical frameworks into the context of newer media. Papers should be 1000-2000 words, double spaced, in Times New Roman, 12-point font.

**Ad Campaign/Brand Analysis:** For this ethics in practice paper, students will choose an advertising or branding campaign to analyze. They will analyze multiple forms of media connected to the brand/campaign. They will give an overview of the brand/campaign and then analyze it, answering the following questions: Who is in charge of the campaign?/what is the Brand? What product or service is being advertised? Who is the target audience for this product or service? What role does this product or service play in culture and society? How are social values being used to correspond to the product or service being sold? How is the campaign using social values to persuade consumers? Students will make an evaluative judgment about whether the campaign is using social values in an ethical way and explain your rationale. Required to use class readings and discussions to support the responses to these questions.

**Case Study:** For this ethics in practice paper, students will choose a case study that interests them. Students will find something (event, person, concept, controversy) in digital media (any form) that connects to class discussions and media ethics more broadly. They will give an overview of the case

and then analyze it, answering the following questions: What role does this case play in society and culture? What social values are involved in this case? What are the main ethical concerns and debates? How does public reaction to this case relate to ethical discussions? Students will make an evaluative judgment about the case and explain your rationale. Required to use class readings and discussions to support the responses to these questions.

### Take Home Final Exam

Students will be given an exam to complete asynchronously and out of the classroom. The exam will be a mix of short and long essay responses. The questions will cover all course material. Detailed instructions on the exam.

Assignment	Points
Participation and class engagement	100
Reading Reviews (2)	100 each (total 200)
Ethics in Practice Papers (2)	200 each (total 400)
Take Home Final Exam	300
<b>Total points:</b>	<b>1000</b>

### Grading Scale:

**A** 940-1000; **A-** 900-939; **B+** 870-899; **B** 830-869; **B-** 800-829; **C+** 770-799; **C** 700-729; **C-** 700-729; **D+** 670-699; **D** 630-669; **D-** 600-629; **F** 599-0

### Accommodations:

Students with Disabilities: If you have documentation from Loyola's Office for Students with Disabilities, let me know as soon as possible and I will make accommodations if there are instances in which course requirements conflict with your needs. If you have a chronic health issue that may become a factor in your ability to complete assignments, do not wait to meet with someone in that office until you have an emergent situation. If there is any possibility that you may need their services or documentation at any time during the semester, please get it now so that there are no questions should an emergency situation arise.

Absences and Tardiness: If you miss a class, you do not need to explain it to me or apologize, but I would appreciate a heads up. However, it is your responsibility to find the information you missed through class resources or classmates. While there is not an attendance grade, missing class means you will also miss that day's lectures and activities, which are part of a cumulative assignment grade. There is a direct correlation between class attendance and overall grades, especially as this class incorporates a lot of applied skill and work on your final project in the classroom.

If you experience illness serious enough to warrant medical documentation and/or the death of someone close to you, please let me know as soon as possible and when you are ready and able, we will create a plan to help you get caught up on material and complete your assignments

If you are late to class, please do not ask me to repeat important information I discussed at the beginning of class. Please get it from a fellow class member. If you are consistently late, your overall grade will be negatively affected.

If you miss class to represent Loyola University Chicago in some formal capacity—e.g. athletics, Model United Nations, etc., please bring me the documentation and accommodations will be made.

### **Academic Integrity**

There is no place for academic dishonesty in the School of Communication or at Loyola University Chicago. Please familiarize yourselves with ALL potential errors of judgment, intentional or unintentional that could be perceived as dishonest behavior. For example, a simple failure to cite sources appropriately will likely result in, at minimum, a failing grade for that assignment and a referral to the SOC Dean's office. Citations and reference pages that are obviously copied and pasted (formatting doesn't match) and incomplete citations can also result in a failing grade for the assignment. Since this is a writing course, these policies are especially important.

### **School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity**

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as: Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; Providing information to another student during an examination; Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination; Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor; Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom; Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;

Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;

Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or

Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source>.

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans. Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicgrievance.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml)

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

The School of Communication policy is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy of the College of Arts & Sciences.