

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO
ETHICS AND COMMUNICATION 215-201
SPRING SEMESTER 2015
MAGUIRE HALL 360, 10:25 -11:15 am , M-W-F

Instructor: Sue Castorino, scastorinominkoff@luc.edu

Form of communication: Email is preferred and checked regularly

Course overview: The journalism profession faces ethical dilemmas on a daily basis. Controversy itself is nothing new; humankind has been grappling with right and wrong since the beginning of time. But the methods in which the information is imparted are not always clear cut. Today's reporters, editors, producers, news directors and other decision makers face continuous challenges on how to gather the facts, how to determine the legitimacy of sources, and how to produce and write the stories, while making certain they are adhering to their outlet's own internal rules and regulations. Sometimes the reporters themselves become the story—for better or worse—and must address the ensuing consequences. Companies and organizations face the challenge of protecting themselves in crises and communicating in an honest manner, both internally and externally. Performers and entertainers face the challenge of being ostracized or possible censorship. The legitimacy of social media continues to have a major impact and has posed even more challenges. What does the First Amendment mean in the 21st century? The bottom line in today's world: Public vs. private no longer exists and everything is on the record. What does that ultimately mean for the media and the public?

Course specifics: We will examine newsworthy issues from the past and present and determine what can be learned from how they were handled (or in many cases mishandled.) You are strongly encouraged to be aware of contemporary events, bring examples to class, and actively participate in all discussions. In addition there will be relevant videos and appropriate case studies. There will be several written assignments that I will go over in detail during the semester that will take several different forms. There will also be a group presentation and final paper, which will be combined as your final exam.

Important FYI: While we will cover all of the topics on the schedule, there will be always be news, and events on any given day may take precedence. When that happens, we will take the time for discussion and may postpone the topic at hand. This will be somewhat free-flowing in nature, keeping in mind that we are talking about the news of the day and the opportunities for instant analysis in 'real world real time' scenarios.

Special note: There is no required textbook for this class. Therefore, it is imperative that you take complete notes in class. If you absolutely cannot attend class, you must let me know *immediately* so that it does not impact your overall grade. It is your responsibility to seek out a classmate regarding material covered that day. You must turn in ALL assignments on time, even if you are unable to attend class for a specific reason.

Grades: For most assignments you will receive a letter grade: A(excellent), B(very good), C(average), D(poor), F(automatic for any incomplete assignment.) Your overall grade is based on many factors: attendance, active participation in discussions, creativity and thoughtfulness on all written assignments. In some isolated cases you will receive a ‘complete’ for an assignment; I will be very clear up front about grade expectations during each project. You will receive each grade in a timely fashion. The combined final exam will be more heavily weighted.

A few last words:

- Be on time. Lateness is strongly discouraged.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Be original. Be ethical (remember the title of the class!), be honest with me and in your work. Always. Plagiarism is a serious offense and won't be tolerated.
- Don't ever hesitate to ask for clarification or direction.
- Be aware of what's going on in the world and be prepared to participate in all discussions.
- Engage your brain and enjoy this class. I promise it will be thought-provoking, relevant, and extremely valuable for your life during and after Loyola.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week 1: Introduction & overview: Modern day ethics

- The state of journalism today, why Codes of Ethics exist
- The First Amendment and “Truthiness”
- Issue management in a crisis; are scandals out of control?
- Contemporary stories & discussion (ongoing weekly)

Week 2--(no class Jan 19, Martin Luther King holiday):

What we can learn from the ancients

- A brief and somewhat revisionist history, why it still matters today
- Information imparted: from the Town Crier to faux news
- Journalism’s own scandals (Part I/Jayson Blair)

Week 3: The rise of modern ‘investigative journalism’

- The legacy of Ben Bradlee and The Washington Post
- The Pentagon Papers, Watergate, & Janet Cooke

Week 4: Watergate is *The Watershed*

- “All the President’s Men” viewing and in-class quiz

Week 5: The airwaves & power of broadcasting

- The impact of ‘60 Minutes’ and other newsmagazines
- Integrity vs. ratings
- The power of the FCC & censorship, from George Carlin to Howard Stern

Week 6: The impact of social media

- From Deadspin to TMZ: Tabloids for the Internet Age
- Determining what is legitimate
- Lessons to be learned: Everything is on the record

Week 7: Journalists and Celebrities: Blurred Lines

- Should reporters ever be anything but ‘journalists’?
- Crossing the line, what is acceptable to the public and the profession itself?

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE(continued)

Week 8: No class March 2-6

Week 9: Trust & verify: The ultimate ethical dilemma

--“Shattered Glass” viewing and in-class quiz

Week 10: In-class followup discussion of previous week & preparation for group presentations

Week 11 & 12: In-class group presentations

Week 13: (no class April 3, 6, Easter break)

Week 14: The changing journalism landscape

--“Page One: Inside The New York Times” viewing & assignment

Week 15: Where are we headed?/The economics of journalism

--Wrapup discussion

April 24: Final written exam due