

Jour 608: Ethics and Professional Practice

Spring 2019

11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday
S-F 204

Instructor: Gerri Berendzen

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Office hours: 3 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday; 9-11 a.m. Wednesday; 1 to 4 p.m. Monday and Wednesday. I am at the Bremner Editing Center from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday and 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Wednesday. By appointment at other times.

Text

Media Ethics at Work, 2nd edition, by Lee Anne Peck and Guy S. Reel

Additional readings will be assigned in class per the attached schedule. You will need online access for Blackboard to get readings and external materials.

Course objectives

Jour 608 surveys the techniques for moral analysis, argument and decision-making used by practitioners in news and persuasive journalism. This class will deal specifically with the media and value-based decisions you might make as a member of a media organization. It recognizes that to make those decisions under the pressure of jobs and deadlines, you need to have a framework in place to help guide you.

You'll practice how to make decisions in various situations and learn how professionals grappled with ethical issues in well-known current and historical cases. This class will not dictate your personal values, but it will help you build that framework for identifying your values and acting on them.

Learning Goals

Students completing this course should be able to:

- Define ethics theories, professional codes and decision-making models.
- Recognize and define ethical issues and dilemmas in journalism, marketing, public relations and marketing.
- Increase your sensitivity to the presence of ethics issues in the media.
- Employ rational and defensible ethical decision-making processes and think critically when applying decision-making models.
- Effectively present the issues involved in ethical dilemmas and explain the decision-making processes used to resolve the dilemmas.
- Have knowledge of American media standards and practices, and their impact on stakeholders including minority groups.

Grading and assignments

Each student's final grade in this course will be based on the following assessments worth a total of 550 points:

- 100 points — Two essays (50 points each)
- 100 points — Five reflections (20 points each)
- 100 points — Midterm exam
- 200 points — Final group project and presentation (individual paper)
- 50 points — participation and engagement
- 550 points — Total (grad students will have an additional writing assignment)**

Grades will be based on the total number of points you accumulate. The scale will be:

A 94-100%	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D 60-69%
A- 90-93%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	F 0-59%
	B- 80-82%	C- 70-72%	

Please keep all graded material until you've received your final grade.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Essays: Students will do an early semester essay in which they write about their personal code of ethics. At the end of the semester, those ideas will be incorporated with concepts discussed in class to develop a job-based code of ethics that follows the standard format of a code from a professional organization.

Reflections: Students will do five short reflections on how they would handle a specific ethics dilemma. Reflection topics will be announced in class, one week in advance.

Mid-semester exam: The exam will cover ethics theories and foundations, professional codes, decision-making models and examples discussed in class. Exam will feature essay and non-essay questions. It will be scheduled slightly after the midway point of the semester.

Final project: Students will divide into groups of 2 to 4 to present a mini debate on an ethical situation during class. Each student also must write an individual paper on the dilemma.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

I have adopted the following scale for writing assignments. Assignments will be evaluated first for adherence to the writing prompt, content and development of ideas. However, since you are communications students, grammar, punctuation and style will be part of the grade. Given the number of assignments, I expect to make only brief editing comments on your work. If you have questions about individual grades, please ask me about it.

EXCELLENT (100-90%) — Highly informative or deeply reflective. Analysis is supported with complete and accurate information. The topic is explored at multiple levels. Outstanding organization, content and writing mechanics.

GOOD (89-80%) — Competent, but not outstanding analysis. Writing makes a significant point in support of the analysis. Thorough, accurate details. Mechanics and organization are above average.

AVERAGE (79-70%) — Run-of-the-mill, but acceptable work. Undistinguished. Content identifies the subject, but is either poorly organized or does not go beyond the surface. Other mechanics are generally good but there are flaws.

POOR (69-60%) — Work contains a combination of flaws in writing mechanics, conceptualization, research, organization or format. Work does not answer the main question of the assignment. Writing merely mimics class lectures and contains no analysis.

FAILING — Weaknesses in thinking, writing or professionalism have resulted in a failure on this assignment. Work contains inaccuracies and other content errors.

0 pts – For missing assignments.

NOTE ON DUE DATES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

The deadline for all writing assignments is 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Assignments will be accepted in person, by email or via Blackboard. Do not leave assignments in my office when I am not there.

Assignments that miss the deadline will be accepted for one week after the due date at a reduced grade (the possible points available will be reduced by 30 percent). After one week, assignments will not be accepted. (The deadline can be extended in the event of a serious illness or emergency, if that situation is reported to me before the deadline.)

If you are absent from class when an assignment is made, it is your responsibility to find out what that assignment is.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:

This is primarily a discussion class, so class participation is necessary and will be counted into your final grade. I take roll. If you don't show up and you don't tell me why in advance (by phone or email), it's an unexcused absence. You are allowed three unexcused absences; after that a penalty of 1 percent of your total grade per absence may be applied. (A notification after the fact will be acceptable only in the case of a bona fide emergency.)

The fine print

This is an ethics course. I expect you to be ethical in your dealings with the class and with the instructor. I'll start off by being both ethical and transparent about the items in this section. I am not the primary author of the items in "the fine print," which contain policies of the school and university.

Academic misconduct

You are bound by the university rules on academic misconduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, please ask BEFORE your endeavor.

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you'll fail the course, and you may be expelled from or denied admission to the School of Journalism.

Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for the course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of the course.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.

Plagiarism: Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification: Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Disability accommodation

The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (V/TTY) , coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.

Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance

No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.

The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.

Financial Aid Policy

The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.”

Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.

Inclement weather

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 785-864-7669.

Students with Special Needs

The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, (785) 864-2620 coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact your professor privately in regard to this course.

Recording of classroom lectures

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited.

Pursuant to the University of Kansas' [Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures](#), commercial note-

taking is not permitted in J608. Lecture notes and course materials may be taken for personal use and may not be sold to any person or entity in any form. **However:** Note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is **not the same** as commercial note-taking and is allowed.

Other class policies:

Electronic equipment use

It is permissible in this class to take notes using electronic equipment and to use laptops and tablets and phones for research directly related to the content of that day's lecture. Using electronic equipment for other purposes during class (texting friends, doing puzzles, watching cat videos) is unprofessional. Those doing it will be warned and may be asked to leave class. Put phones in silent mode during class time.

Email

I check my email frequently on work days and at least daily on nonwork days. If you have to miss a class, need a clarification on an assignment or want to schedule a meeting, email is the best way to contact me.

Ground rules

Any discussion of ethics cannot be complete without a discussion of values. This class will be an open forum where students should feel free to disagree. If you disagree with me in class, I will not hold it against you. If you feel uncomfortable, or that your stand is being held against you, please talk to me about it. Debate will happen in this class and argument on all sides is welcome. But it is necessary that debate remain civil. Hate speech and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Class schedule

Subject to change; changes that affect due dates will be announced at least a week in advance.

Reflection topics and essay prompts will be posted in Blackboard.

WEEK	DATES	CLASS TOPIC	READINGS	WHAT'S DUE (DATE)
1	Jan. 22-24	Introduction: What is ethics, tools for decision making	Text, chapter 1	
2	Jan. 29-31	More tools; professional codes of ethics	Text chapter 2	Code essay (Jan. 31)
3	Feb. 5-7	Reporting unverified info BuzzFeed and the Trump dossier	Readings in Blackboard	
4	Feb. 12-14	Cigarette advertising dilemma Advertising ethics	Readings in Blackboard	Reflection 1 (Feb. 12)
5	Feb. 19-21	The phony teenager The pet party	Text, Chapter 6 Text, Chapter 16	Reflection 2 (Feb. 19)

6	Feb. 26-28	"A Fragile Trust" Plagiarism and fabrication	In-class movie Readings in Blackboard	Reflection 3 (Feb. 26)
7	March 5-7	The manipulated photo More on photo ethics	Text, Chapter 3	Reflection 4 (March 5)
8	March 12-14	SPRING BREAK		
9	March 19-21	The UVA rape story The case of the student death	Readings on BB Text, Chapter 12	TEST REVIEW 3/13 and 3/15
10	March 26-28	MIDTERM (March 19) Topic TBA		TEST 3/26
11	April 2-4	Requests to "unpublish" Off the record	Text, Chapter 18 Text, Chapter 24-25	Reflection 5 (April 2)
12	April 9-11	Fired for using social media The visiting student	Readings on BB Text, Chapter 15	
13	April 16-18	The focus group dilemma Following one's conscience	Text, Chapter 5 Text, Chapter 20	
14	April 23-25	The right to know vs. privacy In-class project presentations	Text, Chapter 14	
15	April 30- May 2	In-class project presentations In-class project presentations		Project paper Due April 30
16	May 7-9	Ethics in your job hunt Making solo judgments Class wrap up/discussion	Text, Chapter 27, Chapter 8	Code essay Due May 14