

JOUR 608, Fall 2017

Ethics and Professional Practice

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- Your boss at a P.R. firm wants you to promote a hip-hop act by going online pretending to be a teenager.
- A graduate of your university wants you to remove an old story from the student newspaper's online archive because it's hurting her job prospects.
- A bar owner says he might finally buy an ad in your publication if you'll just come back tonight and hang out at the bar.
- A source tells you something important but then calls you and asks you to leave the information out of your story.

These are the kinds of ethical pressures that confront early career professionals working in media. In this class, you'll practice how to make decisions in difficult situations like these as well as learn how professional decision-makers grappled with ethical issues in famous and high stakes cases such as the New York Times publication of the Pentagon Papers about the Vietnam War. We'll also be discussing ethical issues in the news.

Course goals:

This course is designed to give you tools to help you in the early stages of your media career, and perhaps later too. Specifically, students completing this course should be able to:

- **Recognize and define ethical issues and dilemmas in the media workplace.**
- **Employ rational and defensible ethical decision-making processes.**
- **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.**
- **Develop a sense of their own moral and ethical values.**

Course text:

The course text is: *Media Ethics at Work: True Stories from Young Professionals, Second edition* By Lee Anne Peck, University of Northern Colorado Guy S. Reel, Winthrop University. It is available online and at the bookstore in the Union.

Additional readings will be assigned in class per the attached schedule.

Grading, Assignments and Policies

LATE HOMEWORK POLICY: Given the large number of students in the class, late homework **WILL NOT** be accepted except in cases in which you show proof that you were ill or injured. I would recommend you find a classmate who will share his or her class notes with you if needed. If you are absent when homework assignments are scheduled to be handed out, please arrange to get the assignment from that person or me as soon as possible so you don't miss the due date deadline. Also, there will be no make-up quizzes. Please check the schedule for quiz dates (schedule revisions which will be announced in advance.)

Each student's final grade in this course will be based on the following assessments worth a total of 100 points:

- **6 Homework Assignments (Worth up to 5 points each for total of 30 points) Rubric** for Homework Assignments: (I have adopted the following 5-point scale for homework. Given the pace of the assignments and the number of students in this class, I expect to be able to make only brief comments on your homework. If you have questions about a grade on an assignment, please ask me about it.)

5 pts. Excellent -- Highly informative and/or deeply reflective. Information supporting the analysis is complete and accurate. Wording is precise. The writing explores the topic at different levels and does not simply make the same point from different perspectives. Outstanding content, organization and mechanics.

4 pts. Good-- Competent, functional. Clean analysis that makes a significant point efficiently in support of the analysis. Details are thorough and accurate. Writing mechanics and organizational technique are of a high order.

3 pts. Acceptable -- Average, run-of-the-mill work. Undistinguished. Properly written, but the analysis is average quality. Content is adequate to identify the subject, but poorly organized. Other mechanics are good.

2 pts. Fair -- A combination of flaws in conceptualizing, researching, organizing and writing rendering the work not quite passable.

1 pt. Poor-- Weaknesses in thinking, writing technique, and/or professionalism have resulted in a failure on this assignment. Inaccuracies and other content errors, poor mechanics, bad organization.

0 pts – For late or missing assignments.

➤ **Group Case Study Report/Presentation (Worth up to 40 points)**

Students will be formed into small groups and will be assigned to analyze case studies. Students will also present their findings and recommendations to the class. Members of the class will be asked to evaluate their fellow students. Every student is expected to fully participate in its group's assignment. Specific details of this assignment will be discussed in class.

➤ **4 Quick Quizzes (Worth up to 5 points each for total of 20 points)**

These are in-class quizzes based on the assigned readings.

➤ **Personal Code (10 points)**

Students will finish the term writing a personal code of conduct. Assignment specifics will be outlined as noted in the class schedule.

Participation/Attendance

Classroom discussion. Filling a seat isn't enough. Each student is expected to participate in classroom discussions. And that means completing the assigned reading and homework so we can have good discussions.

Attendance. If you are not here, you cannot participate. **You will be allowed a total of ONLY one "free" absence from class. I would recommend you "save" this in case of a significant need such as death in your family. You will lose 5 points for each additional absence unless you can show proof of illness or emergency from a medical provider.**

Grade Scale :

A = 93.34%-100%
A- = 90.0%-93.33%
B+ = 86.67%-89.99%
B = 83.34%-86.66%
B- = 80.0%-83.33%
C+ = 76.67%-79.99%
C = 73.34%-76.66%
C- = 70.0%-73.33%
D+ = 66.67%-69.99%
D = 63.34%-66.66%
D- = 60.0%-63.33%
F = 59.99% and below

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 this 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 this 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.

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.

"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 and/or icy conditions or have canceled classes, please call 8647669 (864-SNOW).

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.

Concealed Weapons

Individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns **are solely responsible to do so in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with [state and federal laws](#) and [KU weapons policy](#)**. Safety measures outlined in the KU weapons policy specify that a concealed handgun:

- Must be under the constant control of the carrier.
- Must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse, or bag that remains under the carrier's custody and control.
- Must be in a holster that covers the trigger area and secures any external hammer in an un-cocked position
- Must have the safety on, and have no round in the chamber.

