

Jour 608: Ethics and Professional Practice

Spring 2017

11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday
ST-F 206

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Office hours: Wednesday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; other weekdays 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. except class time
Because I may be busy with University Daily Kansan meetings/business, it is best to email first.

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 500 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)
- 500 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%	

All assignments must be completed for a passing grade in the course. 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 a personal code of ethics. That code will be updated at the end of the semester to incorporate concepts discussed in class and to follow the standard format of code from professional organizations.

Reflections: Students will do five short reflections (5-paragraph minimum) on how they would handle a specific ethics dilemma. Reflection topics will be announced in class, one week in advance.

Midterm 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.

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 and accurate details. Writing mechanics and organizational 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 5 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 5 p.m. 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. The Academic Misconduct section was written by Lisa McLendon of the Bremner Editing Center.

Academic misconduct

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.

Here's some clarification:

If you use or attempt to use any unauthorized materials during a test, or if you give any unauthorized materials to someone else during a test, this is cheating. Unauthorized materials include written materials, such as notes, as well as nonverbal or electronic communication.

Plagiarism is stealing. It is taking someone else's ideas, thoughts, or words and presenting them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, broadcast sources, online sources or

work done by another student. Copying and pasting material directly from the Internet and presenting that work as if it were your own — that is, without quotation marks and proper attribution — is plagiarism. You will often need to incorporate another person's ideas, opinions and words into the stories you write, to make a point or provide background. When you do this, it is essential that you attribute that information: explain where it came from and give credit where credit is due.

Fabrication means that you made up information, sources, citations or quotes. This includes making up an entire interview or source or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. Don't do it. Ever. No matter how pressed you are for time, it's far better to risk the wrath of your boss than to risk your credibility as a journalist.

Content "recycling": The expectation in this class is that you've come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no "recycling" of your previous interviews, assignments, stories or work from other classes. The journalism school regards any efforts to recycle material from previous coursework as academic dishonesty.

Disability accommodation

If you have a special need that may affect your learning and for which you wish to request accommodation, contact KU Student Access Services in the Academic Achievement and Access Center (AAAC), which coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. Information about services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu/>, at the office in Strong Hall Room 22, or by calling 785-864-4064. Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course, and realize that you will likely need official documentation and requests from the AAAC before accommodations are made.

Journalism School and financial aid policy on classroom attendance

"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 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."

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 purposes directly related to the content of that day's lecture. Using electronic equipment for any other purpose during class (texting friends, doing puzzles, watching cat videos) is unprofessional and those doing it will be warned and may be asked to leave class. Cellphones must be 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.

WEEK	DATES	CLASS TOPIC	READINGS	WHAT'S DUE (DATE)
1	Jan. 17-19	Introduction: What is ethics, tools for decision making	Text, chapter 1	
2	Jan. 24-26	More tools; professional codes of ethics	Text chapter 2	Code essay (Jan. 24)
3	Jan. 31-Feb. 2	The BuzzFeed dossier dilemma	Readings in Blackboard	

4	Feb. 7-9	Cigarette advertising dilemma Advertising ethics	Readings in Blackboard	Reflection 1 (Feb. 7)
5	Feb. 14-16	The phony teenager The pet party	Text, Chapter 6 Text, Chapter 16	Reflection 2 (Feb. 14)
6	Feb. 21-23	The manipulated photo The focus group dilemma	Text, Chapter 3 Text, Chapter 5	Reflection 3 (Feb. 21)
7	Feb. 28- Mar. 2	Politics as usual The visiting student	Text, Chapter 4 Text, Chapter 15	Reflection 4 (Feb. 28)
8	March 7-9	The UVA rape story The murdered student	Readings on BB Text, Chapter 19	
9	March 14-16	Topic TBA (March 14) MIDTERM (March 16)		TEST (MARCH 16)
10	March 21-23	SPRING BREAK		
11	March 28-30	The right to know vs. privacy Requests to “unpublish”	Text, Chapter 14 Text, Chapter 18	Reflection 5 (March 30)
12	April 4-6	Off the record Talking for the voiceless	Text, Chapters 24-25; Chapter 26	
13	April 11-13	In-class project presentations		Project papers due April 13
14	April 18-20	In-class project presentations Job-hunting ethics	Text, Chapter 27	
15	April 25-27	Are there more ethics issues for the media today?	Reading TBA	
16	May 2-4	Making solo judgments Class wrap up/discussion	Text, Chapter 8	Code rewrite (May 4)