

Course Last Updated 4/02/2024



Ethics in the Media

Section I: Course Overview

Course Code: COM332

Subject Area(s): Communication

Prerequisites: None

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Credits: 3

Course Fees: N/A

Course Description

This course addresses the principal ethical issues facing journalism, advertising, entertainment media, and online content. It examines the moral obligations of the producers and creators of media and the responsibilities borne by consumers. The course provides an overview of ethical dilemmas, principles and philosophies then applies these to present day cases in the media. Field studies, lectures and classroom activities are designed to create the space for critical engagement, debate and discussions of content and case studies in order to tackle ethical issues that are present in the production and consumption of the media on an individual and societal level. Beyond the ethical debates about the production and consumption of media the course looks at important technical aspects such as journalistic accuracy, right to privacy and bias.

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate the ethical issues facing journalists and media content creators in an ethnically and religiously diverse community through the lens of US and UK perspectives.
- Explain how political, institutional, corporate and other societal structures influence media practices with specific regard to issues surrounding ethical practices.
- Evaluate the ethical frameworks that affect critical decision-making in media and cultural production and consumption.

Section II: Instructor & Course Details

Instructor Details

Name: TBC

Contact Information: TBC

Term: TBC

Course Day and Time: TBC

Office Hours: By appointment

Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

Engagement - 20%

Oral presentation - 20%

Online discussion threads - 10%

Mid-term exam - 20%

Final Exam - 30%

Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, to have read the [CEA CAPA Engagement Policy](#), and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded. Most weeks we will have student-led presentations and team discussions of case studies.

Oral Presentation (20%): Each student will choose a topic for class discussion which will relate to an ethical issue covered by the media or is instrumental in how the media covers a media story. The story must be relevant to the UK media in some way but could originate in another country. Class members are expected to join in the class discussions over the semester. The assignment is marked after the final student presentation.

On-line thread discussion (10%): Each student will choose a topic for class discussion which applies ethical theory to a practical issue or story covered in the media. The key ideas are outlined in a posting on the module discussion board. Each student is expected to add to the threads of another student's submission, researching the student's theoretical or applied content and adding to the narrative. Comments should be respectful of student stances and ideologies. Students can disagree with ideas and interpretations but in a positive way leading to fruitful online discussions. The assignment is marked in week 13.

Mid-term exam (20%): consists of a three-hour paper given to class a week before submission. Students are expected to research the background to the question during this week. The paper

must be written and submitted during week 6 class time. The question will relate to class content discussed during the first five weeks of the semester.

The final exam (30%): consists of a three-hour paper given to class a week before submission. Students are expected to research the background to the question during this week. The paper must be written and submitted during week 14 class time. The question will relate to class content discussed during the semester.

Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

- News bureau visit

Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

Required Readings

Patching, R. & Hirst, M. (2022) *Journalism Ethics at the Crossroads: Democracy, Fake News, and the News Crisis*. London: Routledge

Selected Readings

Baudrillard, J. (2023) *Simulations*. Boston: MIT Press

Bruggemann, M, Engesser, S. et al. (2014) Hallin and Mancini Revisited: Four Empirical Types of Western Media Systems. *Journal of Communication* pp 1037 – 1065.

Chernow, S. (2015) Protecting the People Behind the Stories Keeping Journalism Alive. *Ethical Journalism Network*. 10 June. Available at: [Protecting the People Behind the Stories That Keep Journalism Alive - Ethical Journalism Network](#)

Crown Prosecution Service (2019) *Media: Prosecuting Cases Where Public Servants Have Disclosed Confidential Information to Journalists*. 11 November.

Frost, C. (2018) *Ethics for Social Media Journalism*. Available at: [Chris Frost: Ethics for social media journalism - Journalism News from HoldtheFrontPage](#)

Gray, F. (2015) The Strange World of Evgeny Lebedev. *The Spectator*. 26 September. Available at: [The strange world of Evgeny Lebedev | The Spectator](#).

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2017). Ten years after comparing media systems: What have we learned? *Political Communication*, 34(2), 155-171.

Jamal, U. (2020) What's At Stake: The Ethics of War and Conflict Journalism in the Digital Era.

Leveson Inquiry (2012). An Inquiry Into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press.

Moravec, P et al, (2018) Fake News on Social Media: People Believe What They Want to Believe When it Makes No Sense at All. Kelley School of Business Research Paper No. 18-87

Newman, N. (2022) Digital News Report 2022. Reuters Institute / University of Oxford

Course Calendar

Session 1	
Topics	ETHICS IN THE MEDIA – ETHICS, MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE NAMING OF A CAT.
Activity	An introduction to the module, students and lecturer. Lecture content: the nature of truth, and the role of trust in UK media institutions such as the BBC. We find out how democracy is endangered if a cat is given the wrong name.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Ward, S.: https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/resources/ethics-in-a-nutshell/

Session 2	
Topics	TRUTH: REALLY?
Activity	Truth-tellers and the role of the media. Conceptualising truth in relation to the role of the news and entertainment media.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Baudrillard, J. (2023) Simulations. Boston: MIT Press Newman, N. (2022) Digital News Report 2022. Reuters Institute / University of Oxford

Session 3	
Topics	MEDIA STRUCTURES – THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS OR PRESSING FREEDOMS?
Activity	The changing role of journalists and the democratic structures that underpin the UK in the light of the nature of the population belief systems across the four countries in the Union.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Bruggemann, M, Engesser, S. et al. (2014) Hallin and Mancini Revisited: Four Empirical Types of Western Media Systems. Journal of Communication pp 1037 – 1065. Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2017). Ten years after comparing media systems: What have we learned? Political Communication, 34(2), 155-171. Patching, R. & Hirst, M. (2022) Journalism Ethics at the Crossroads: Democracy, Fake News, and the News Crisis. London: Routledge pp203-220

Session 4	
Topics	PROTECTING SOURCES
Activity	The duty of journalists to protect sources and the legal position in undermining this stance in the UK.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Chernow, S. (2015) Protecting the People Behind the Stories Keeping Journalism Alive. Ethical Journalism Network. 10 June.

	Available at: Protecting the People Behind the Stories That Keep Journalism Alive - Ethical Journalism Network Crown Prosecution Service (2019) Media: Prosecuting Cases Where Public Servants Have Disclosed Confidential Information to Journalists. 11 November. Available at: https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/media-prosecuting-cases-where-public-servants-have-disclosed-confidential Patching, R. & Hirst, M. (2022) Journalism Ethics at the Crossroads: Democracy, Fake News, and the News Crisis. London: Routledge pp203-220
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Session 5	
Topics	ETHICS: LIFE HACKS
Activity	Trust in the fairness and accuracy of journalistic practice, illegality in chasing stories for profit, the Levison Inquiry and its impact on contemporary journalism.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Leveson Inquiry (2012). An Inquiry Into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press. Available at: http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/about .

Session 6	
Topics	IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM
Activity	
Readings and Assignments	

Session 7	
Topics	MIDTERM BREAK

Session 8	
Topics	COMMERCIALIZATION
Activity	An overview of the UK media, its ownership and its wider context.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Gray, F. (2015) The Strange World of Evgeny Lebedev. The Spectator. 26 September. Available at: The strange world of Evgeny Lebedev The Spectator.

Session 9	
Topics	PRIVACY
Activity	The impact of journalistic privacy on the privacy of celebrities in the UK and the defences that celebrities can count on to protect them from the glare of publicity.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Council of Europe (nd) Guidelines of Safeguarding Privacy in the Media. Available at www.coe.int Patching, R. & Hirst, M. (2022) Journalism Ethics at the Crossroads: Democracy, Fake News, and the News Crisis. London: Routledge pp203-220

Session 10	
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Topics	ACTIVIST JOURNALISM: HOW FAR SHOULD A JOURNALIST GO TO ENLIGHTEN A PUBLIC DELIBERATELY KEPT IN THE DARK?
Activity	Guest Speaker: Zoe Broughton Channel 4 undercover journalist and activist
Readings and Assignments	

Session 11	
Topics	FAKE NEWS
Activity	Fact checking, fact fakery and the impact of fake news on UK journalism. Is seeing believing?
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Moravec, P et al, (2018) Fake News on Social Media: People Believe What They Want to Believe When it Makes No Sense at All. Kelley School of Business Research Paper No. 18-87, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3269541 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3269541 Patching, R. & Hirst, M. (2022) Journalism Ethics at the Crossroads: Democracy, Fake News, and the News Crisis. London: Routledge pp203-220:

Session 12	
Topics	SOCIAL MEDIA ETHICS
Activity	The ethics of the internet, navigating social media and internet research for stories.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Frost, C. (2018) Ethics for Social Media Journalism. Available at: Chris Frost: Ethics for social media journalism - Journalism News from HoldtheFrontPage IPSO (nd) Social Media Guidance. Social media guidance (ipso.co.uk) Patching, R. & Hirst, M. (2022) Journalism Ethics at the Crossroads: Democracy, Fake News, and the News Crisis. London: Routledge pp203-220

Session 13	
Topics	Field Study
Activity	Visit to local news bureau – details TBC
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Prepare questions for Field Study host

Session 14	
Topics	War Correspondents
Activity	The ethics of war reporting in the light of the conflict in Ukraine. Free speech and the necessity to protect civilians by not reporting all the facts to the public.
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Jamal, U. (2020) What's At Stake: The Ethics of War and Conflict Journalism in the Digital Era. Available at: What's at Stake: the Ethics of War and Conflict Journalism in the Digital Era by Urooba Jamal Reporting From the Rubble Medium

Session 15	
Topics	IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM

Activity	
Readings and Assignments	

Section III: Academic Policies and Standards

Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration.

These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.