

Ethics in the Media

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: LNDN 3530

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Course Description

This course will address the principal ethical issues facing print and broadcast journalism. It will consider the practical dilemmas reporters and editors have to deal with and relate them to a moral framework. The focus will be on the real time arguments that arise almost daily in media coverage of matters of public controversy – crime, war, privacy and the like. The course objectives are to learn how to evaluate the performance of the media and to help students develop their own ethical philosophy. Problems of regulation and codes of practice will also be examined. Students will be able to take advantage of London's global importance as a media hub and the distinctive media culture of the UK through a program of case studies, visits and guest lectures by practitioners.

Course Objectives

- An understanding of the ethical issues facing journalists in print and broadcast
- Familiarity with salient moral doctrines as they impact on journalistic practice
- Insight into editorial decision-making and regulatory standards
- A personal ethical code to formulate critical positions on key issues

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students should be able to: identify, define, and solve problems; locate and critically evaluate information; master a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry;

communicate effectively; gain a deeper understanding of the host culture where they are studying.

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences. How to access and use critically printed and, where appropriate, electronic learning resources identified as useful by the course tutor; find independently and evaluate critically other relevant resources.

Methodology

Lectures, discussions, projects, visits, guest lectures by practitioners, case studies.

Required Reading / Materials

- Keeble, Richard, Ethics for Journalists, 2nd Ed., Routledge, 2009. REQUIRED.
- Kieran, Matthew, Media Ethics, Routledge, 1998.
- Stephens, Mitchell, History of the News, OUP, 1998.
- Curran, James and Jean Seaton, Power without Responsibility, Routledge, 2003
- Screenings: a number of programs which have created controversy and are about the news will be shown and discussed in class times. Students should regard these screenings as having the same status as prescribed readings and take notes accordingly.

Grading

CAPA Program and Instructor Policy

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. This means to gain full attendance you must attend all classes, you must not be late (unless with a valid reason) and you must be respectful of the professor and of other students by not talking/whispering in class when others are talking or presenting. Persistent lateness or lack of attention in class, i.e., reading materials other than the work assigned, may result in a low or zero grade for participation, and possible referral to the CAO. **No electronic equipment will be used in class**, including laptops, phones, ipods, cell phones, etc, unless you have written permission from the Chief Academic Officer prior to the course. If you are caught using any electronic equipment, you may receive a zero grade for participation.

Plagiarism will be dealt with very seriously, and will be referred to the Chief Academic Officer in London. You may receive an F for the course. If all work is not submitted by the end of the program, you will receive an F for the course.

Class Participation and Attendance

Attendance at all classes is mandated by CAPA; students who miss a class without permission from CAPA's Chief Academic Officer will have their grade for the course lowered. Informed participation is expected in every class, so students must have read the full assignment carefully before coming and be ready to discuss it if called upon. At any meeting there may be a brief, pass-fail two-minute quiz on some utterly obvious fact in the assigned reading. Students will also be asked to complete informal in-class writing assignments on a regular basis, which will require them to demonstrate their familiarity with the assigned materials. Students who repeatedly demonstrate unsatisfactory performance on these quizzes and exercises will be penalized in the participation grade.

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Oral Presentation	30%
Class Participation	10%
Set Paper	30%
Final Project	30%
Overall grade	100%

Course Content

Students are expected to read British newspapers regularly (not free sheets such as 'Metro') and to devote time to watching British News and Current Affairs television programming. They should think carefully and critically about the material they encounter and be prepared to share their perspectives during class time. Judgments will need to be argued rather than presented as personal 'opinion'. Further guidance will be given on the Set Paper and the Final Project. All primary and secondary sources must be identified to avoid the possibility of inadvertent plagiarism

Unit 1

A short comparative history of the British and US media

- Ethics and Media Responsibility
- Taxonomy of the British media today

Unit 2

Ethical Codes and Regulatory alternatives

- Government and the media
- Chapter One: The Ethical Challenge

Unit 3

The political spectrum

- Chapter Two: Ethical Controversies
- Today Diagnostic Paper

Unit 4

Social class and the media

- Chapter Three: Regulating the Mainstream Media

Unit 5

Guest Speaker

- Chapter Four: Sourcing Dilemmas

Unit 6

Set Paper due

- Chapter Five: The Ethics of Sleaze

Unit 7

Reading Week

Unit 8

Guest Speaker

- Chapter Seven: Race/anti-racism matters

Unit 9

Field Trip

Unit 10

- Chapter Eight: Getting the Representation Right

Unit 11

New media and citizen journalism

- Chapter Nine: Battling for News

Unit 12

Intercultural conflict and competing global perspectives

- Chapter Ten: Constraints on Journalists

Unit 13

Course summary

- Final Project due

Policies

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in order to earn full marks. The final grade will take into consideration preparation required for class (i.e. readings) and participation in class discussions. If you miss any meetings without an excused absence from the on-site director, your final grade will be dropped accordingly. In the case of absences, it is the student's responsibility to find out what information was given in class including any announcements made.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).