



LNDN COMM 3321
Understanding Media Ethics:
Case studies from the US and UK perspective

CAPA LONDON

AUTUMN 2019

Faculty name	:	Dr Ceri Hughes
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Class times	:	Mondays 14:00-17:20
Classroom location	:	Kensington Room
Office Hours	:	After class or by appointment

Course Description

This course will address the principal ethical issues facing journalism, advertising, entertainment media, and online content. It will examine the moral obligations of the producers as well as the responsibilities borne by consumers. The course will provide an overview of the applicable ethical principles and philosophies then apply these to present day cases in the media and in many forms. Finally, students will learn to critically engage with the content in order to analyze for themselves the ethical issues that are present in the production and consumption of the media on an individual and societal level.

Course Aims

By the end of the course, students should have:

- An understanding of the historical and current ethical issues facing the media industry
- Insight into editorial decision-making and regulatory standards of media producers
- Comprehension of the institutional, societal, and individual pressures that contribute to ethical decisions and lapses
- Understand the impact of ethical versus unethical behavior on the part of the media as it relates to democracy, journalistic practice, and public trust
- Describe the roles that the public plays in ensuring and critiquing ethical standards in the media
- Be able to compare and contrast UK and US cases

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- a) Engage in critical thinking and evaluation;
- b) Master a body of knowledge;
- c) Communicate effectively both in writing and through oral presentations;
- d) Understand the impact of globalization on the creation of media content and the ethical issues facing journalists in a global community
- e) Describe the similarities and differences between UK and US cases
- f) Explain how political, institutional, corporate and other societal structures influence media practices with specific regard to issues surrounding ethical practices

Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, and appreciation of cultural differences.

Class Methodology

Lectures, discussions, weekly assignments, tests, student presentations, guest lectures, and out-of-class field visits. Laptops are permitted to be used in this class. Non-work use however is distracting for your fellow students and will inhibit your own learning. So please don't do it.

Field Components

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in field activities for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City in which you are currently living. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) are:

TBD

Final Exams

The final is comprised of numerous short essays (this is subject to change at the lecturer's discretion).

Grading Scheme

Descriptor	Alpha	UK	US	GPA
Excellent	A	75+	93+	4.0
	A-	70-74	90-92	3.7
Good	B+	66-69	87-89	3.3
	B	63-65	83-86	3.0
	B-	60-62	80-82	2.7
Average	C+	56-59	77-79	2.3
	C	53-55	73-76	2.0
Below Average / Poor	C-	50-52	70-72	1.7
	D+	46-49	67-69	1.3
	D	40-45	60-66	0.7 1.0
Fail	F	<40	<60	0

Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Assessment Task	Grade %	Learning Outcomes	Due Date
Class participation	20%	All	Weekly
Oral Presentation	20%	a,b,c	Weekly from Week 3
Weekly thoughts	10%	All	Weekly from Week 2
Midterm exam	20%	All	Week 7
Final exam (cumulative)	30%	All	Final week

Course Requirements

Weekly readings

Readings will be available as pdfs or links. All readings are required.

SUNY-Oswego On-line Library Resources

Students are advised to review assignments and readings. If you do not have access to sufficient additional resources from your home institution to complete the coursework for this class, you may request access to the on-line library resources of SUNY-Oswego: <http://libraryguides.oswego.edu/c.php?g=500670>. To access this resource, you must request access during the first week of the program.

Weekly thoughts

Each week prior to class, students will tweet about something media-ethics related (and ideally connects to the UK). This could be, for example, a news story you read (include a link), an ad you walked by (take a pic), a film or television show you watched (link to its imdb page). These are just examples – be creative and thoughtful. At the start of class, we will go through these tweets, so be prepared to share some brief thoughts on why you tweeted it and its ethical dimension. All tweets should include **@acerihughes** (my twitter handle) and the course hashtag **#COMM_3321**.

Class participation

Class participation, broadly defined, is the student's willingness to answer instructor questions and participate in class discussions. Class participation is very important; this is a discussion class, not a lecture. Most weeks we will have student-led presentations and team discussions of case studies. For this to work, we really need everyone to participate. Participation is worth 20% of the student's final grade.

Oral Presentations

Each student will be required to make one or two (dependent on class size) in-class presentations. A schedule and further details on the presentations will be provided in the first week of the course.

In-class midterm and final

The midterm will cover theoretical topics and readings from the first half of the course. The final is cumulative.

Dress Code

N/A

Readings and Weekly Academic Calendar:

- Unless otherwise noted, ALL classes will take place in the Kensington Room
- All readings will be sent to students electronically as a PDF file
- **READINGS MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH ADVANCE NOTICE**

Week 1: Ethics in the Media- What are ethics, why do we care? (Sep 9th)

Readings: <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/thinking-ethically/>

Ward, Stephen: <https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/resources/ethics-in-a-nutshell/>

Week 2: Truth-tellers? And other roles of the Media (Sep 16th)

Readings: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/03/world/middleeast/brutal-images-of-syrian-boy-drowned-off-turkey-must-be-seen-activists-say.html?_r=0

<https://web.stanford.edu/class/comm1a/readings/gilens-race-poverty.pdf>

Hawkins, Virgil (2002) The CNN Factor: the media and conflict. *Journalism Studies*, 3:2, 225-240.

Week 3: Private Companies, Capitalism, and the Marketplace (Sep 23rd)

Readings: Schwartz, M. (2001) The Nature and Relationship between Corporate Codes Of Ethics and Behavior, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 32:2, 247-262.

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

Week 4: Ethics of Using Sources (Sep 30th)

Readings: Ward, Vicky (2007) "Double Exposure." *Vanity Fair*, October 23, 2007.
<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2004/01/plame200401>

Joyce, Daniel (2007) *The Judith Miller Case and Relationship between Reporter and Source: Competing Visions of the Media's Role and Function*. Fordham Intellectual Property, Media, and Entertainment Law Journal. 17:3
http://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1377&context=iplj&sei-redir=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fscholar.google.co.uk%2Fscholar%3Fhl%3Den%26q%3Dvalerie%2BPlame%2BWilson%26btnG%3D%26as_sdt%3D1%252C5%26as_sdt%3D#search=%22valerie%20Plame%20Wilson%22

Week 5: Individual journalistic practice (October 7th)

Readings: Down, Ann (1998) "The Great Pretender," *Columbia Journalism Review*, July/August, pp. 14-15

Jones, Maggie and Steve Urbanski, "What Jayson Blair and Janet Cooke Say About the Press and The Erosion of Trust," *Journalism Studies*, 7:6, pp. 828-850

Shapiro, Ivor (2006) "Why They Lie: Probing Explanation for Journalistic Cheating," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 31, pp. 261-266.

Week 6: IN-CLASS MIDTERM (October 14th)

Week 7: CAPA BREAK (October 21st) Have fun! Take a trip. Relax.

Week 8: Commercialization (October 28th)

Readings: Blair, Jessica Dawn, et al., "Ethics in Advertising: Sex Sells, But Should It?" *Journal of Legal, Ethical, And Regulatory Issues*. 9:2, p 109.

<http://adage.com/article/global-news/u-k-watchdog-bans-beach-body-ready-ad/299291/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/jun/03/yves-saint-laurent-ad-ban-underweight-model>

Week 9: Privacy (November 4th)

Readings: Morrow, Lance, "Journalism After Diana," *Columbia Journalism Review*, 36:4, p. 38.

Carlson, Matt and Berkowitz, Dan "The emperor lost his clothes: Rupert Murdoch New of the World, and journalist's boundary work in the UK and the USA" (2014) *Journalism*. 15:4, pp. 389-406

Week 10: Fieldtrip to Superawesome. (November 11th)

Address: 4th Floor, Golden Cross House
8 Duncannon St. London. WC2N 4JF

Week 11: Social Media Ethics (November 18th)

Visit from, Campbell Paton (Commercial Director of Spin Brands)

Readings: Isaac, Mike, "Nude photos of Jennifer Lawrence are latest front in Online Privacy Debate." *The New York Times*, 09/02/2014
<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/03/technology/trove-of-nude-photos-sparks-debate-over-online-behavior.html>

Farhadd, Manjoo, "Hacking victims deserve empathy, not ridicule. *Times*, 09/03/2015
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/03/technology/personaltech/hacking-victims-deserve-empathy-not-ridicule.html>

Ward, Stephen. "Digital Media Ethics"
<https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/resources/digital-media-ethics/>

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/all-about-ethics/why-facebook-left-up-the-drunk-pelosi-video-but-youtube-took-it-down/>

Week 12: Politics (November 25th)

Readings: McNair, Brian. (2004) "PR must die: spin, anti-spin and political public relations in the UK, 1997-2004." *Journalism studies* 5, no. 3: 325-338.

Bennett, W. Lance. (1990) "Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States." *Journal of communication* 40, no. 2: 103-127.

Holan, Angie (2018) The Principles of the Truth-O-Meter: PolitiFact's methodology for independent fact-checking. <https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2018/feb/12/principles-truth-o-meter-politifact-methodology-i/>

Week 13: Freedom of expression and censorship (December 2nd)

Watson, Mary Ann (2004) Ethics in Entertainment Television. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*. 31-4, 146-148.

Hitchens, Christopher (2006) Free Speech:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z2uzEMOugY>

Week 14: In-class Final (December 9th)

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance: CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class.

The first time a student has an unexcused absence for a class, his/her grade will not be impacted. The second time a student has an unexcused absence in that class, it will result in a 3 percent reduction of the final grade (for example: an A- [92] will become an B+ [89]). The student will be placed on academic probation at this time. Three unexcused absences per class will result in failure of the course. A pattern of three absences in more than one course will result in dismissal from the program.

Excused Absences: Absences are only excused for medical reasons, for a family emergency or for a religious holiday. To request an excused absence, students must contact excused.absence@capa.org ahead of time and provide evidence (e.g. a doctor's note) of the reason for his/her absence, otherwise the absence will not be excused. Even if the student knows the absence will not be excused, the student should still contact CAPA to inform CAPA they will not be in class.

In addition to contacting excused.absence@capa.org, it is the responsibility of the student to contact his/her instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability should contact the instructor and/or the director of academic affairs privately to discuss your specific needs.

Academic Integrity: A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. 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 demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and cheating can result in dismissal from the program.

Self-plagiarism, copying an assignment entirely or partially to submit to a different class in an attempt to receive credit twice for one piece of work is unacceptable and considered cheating by duplication. Students risk receiving an "0" for any assignments in which they have duplicated their own work.

All substantial writing assignments (typically anything worth 20% or more of the final course grade) will be run through the plagiarism checking software Turnitin when submitted via CANVAS. See CAPA's Academic Standards and Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Use of electronic equipment in class: All devices such as laptops, i-pods, i-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Associate Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of Term.

Use of Electronic Translators: In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

Late Submission: Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behaviour during Examinations: During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.