MASS MEDIA ETHICS
Instructor: Dr. Peter Przytula
Office hours to be announced in class

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Academic Aims:

1. To offer review of ethical and moral considerations relevant to mass communication practice i.e. photojournalism, news gathering and dissemination, advertising, public relations, media research and media management.

2. To study metaethics, normative ethics as well as applied ethics. A considerable amount of time shall be devoted to the discussion of classical ethical theories -- both deontological and teleological -- and the examination of their strengths and weakness, as well as their applications. Alternative ethical approaches, principles and rules, such as situation ethics or relativism, will also be covered in detail. Above all, however, we will be involved in discussions/analysis of numerous cases in mass communications.

In the fast-paced media world, important decisions have to be made in a very short time, frequently, in just a few minutes or, on occasion, in just a few seconds. More often than is commonly recognized, let alone admitted, moral aspects are involved in majority of those decisions. It is crucial that -- while making such decisions -- we keep in mind their ethical/moral dimensions and that the final determinations are made NOT by reflex, or on impulse, but by reflection, no matter how short it may be. This course shall assist you in recognizing the presence and the significance of the aforementioned ethical dimension involved in "doing' mass communication.

Objective/Learning Outcomes
1. To gain basic formal knowledge regarding major ethical theories/principles and their application to mass communication.

2. To acquire the ability to analyze ethical cases in a systematic, well argued fashion based on logic, factual knowledge and familiarity with case analysis structure.

About the instructor:

Peter Przytula has studied in England, Sweden, United States, Israel, and Poland. He holds two Mater's degrees, one from Lodz University and another one from the University of Minnesota where he also earned his Ph.D. Peter Przytula works as a Full Professor of mass communication at St. Cloud State University (Minnesota). He has lectured all over Central Europe (conducting well over forty workshops and seminars in mass communication) and is the author of "Introduction to Public Relations". Professor Przytula has worked with Polish branches of American public relations agencies both as an educator and a consultant. He has also worked with The Warsaw School of Economics, Szkola Bankowości, Telewizja Lodzka, Orkla Media Polska, Grey Warszawa, Burson-Marsteller.

Professor Przytula is a co-author of a three hour documentary "Without Pity Or Mercy", and a Fulbright scholar, as well as United States Information Agency researcher.

MAIN TEXTS


Course requirements:

1. Participation in all class discussions (not just attendance)

2. A paper.
3. Two case presentations

If you are unable to come to class, or your scheduled case presentation, you need to inform the instructor ahead of time (minimum 24 hours). The acceptable absences -- all of which have to be documented -- include: death in the family, serious illness, or another very serious event/development beyond your control.

Case presentations

Each student will be assigned to do two case presentations. These will be delivered on two separate occasions together with another class member. (Please, make an effort to present with a different person each time.) Each presenter gets an independent grade. You are free to choose the two dates of presentations and with whom you wish to present your cases.

Case presentations must include presentation of all relevant facts of the case, potter's Box analysis, application of different ethics theories, and an extensive class discussion of the case. Presentations should be not shorter than 20 minutes and not longer than 30 minutes. Each pair of presenters needs to make sure that TWO COMPLETELY opposite views are expressed. This may mean that one of you will present not his/her real views but those of a devil's advocate. That is OK as long as you manage to present both arguments for and against.

APPROXIMATE COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Classes 1-2  Orientation. Ethical foundations and perspectives. Values, theories, principles.  Klaidman 1
Classes 3-4  Privacy: ethical obligations versus what the law allows. Relationship between reporters and sources. Klaidman 4

Classes 5-6  Ethical issues in photojournalism. Gross 4, 6, 7.

First test

Classes 7-8  Loyalties in mass communication ethics: your employer versus your viewers/listeners/readers/clients. Organizational pressures in media ethics; codes of conduct in media organizations. Klaidman 5,6,8.

Classes 9-10  Ethical considerations in covering politicians, the government, and large corporations. Ethical issues in government-media relations. Gross 8.

Second test

Classes 11-12  Ethical considerations in new mass media technologies. Gross 10; Klaidman 7.

Classes 13-14  Ethics in advertising and public relations. Klaidman 2,3.

Class 15  Ethical dimensions in the entertainment industry. Calls for censorship. Gross 11.

Third test

APPROXIMATE OUTLINE OF ADDITIONAL READING ASSIGNMENTS

Readings from several different sources will be used throughout the course. Here is the list of the principle sources:
Black, Jay, Bob Steele, Ralph Barney, Doing Ethics in Journalism, Allyn and Beacon, Boston, 1999.


**Classes 1-2**

Readings:


Classes 3-4

1. Privacy (chap.10)

2. Privacy: Looking for Solitude in the Global Village

3. Tabloid Temptations (chap.4)

Classes 5-6

Readings:

1. Photojournalism (chap. 8)

2. Picture This: The Ethics of Photo and Video Journalism

Classes 7-8

Readings:

1. Conflict of Interest (chap.5)

2. Conflicting Interests (chap.2) and Tricks of the Trade (chap.4) in Seib, Philip, Kathy Fitzpatrick, Journalism Ethics, Harcourt Brace, 1997.


**Classes 9-10**

Readings:


**Classes 11-12**

Readings:
1. High Tech Ethics

2. Ethics in Cyberspace (chap.9)

**Classes 13-14**

Readings:

1. Persuasion Ethics: What's Fair in Advertising and Public Relations (chap.3)

2. Influencing the News (chap.3)

3. Advertising Practices and Ethics (chap.8)

**Class 15**

Readings:

1. The Ethical Dimensions of Art and Entertainment (chap.10)

2. The Changing Newsroom (chap.9)

3. Radio Programming and Values (chap.5) Television Programming and Values (chap.6)

All students are expected to be familiar with all of the content of this syllabus.