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**MEDIA ETHICS**

(CRN 4593 NMDM 5308)

**Spring 2017**

**Instructor:** Charles Warner

**Units:** 3 credits

**Day:** Thursday

**Location:** Room 908, 6 East 16th Street

**Instructor’s E-mail :** [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu)

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday 12:00-6:00 PM by email or phone to set up a private meeting.

**Instructor’s Phone:** 917-797-3305

**Course Description**

This course provides students with a theoretical foundation that enables them to identify and analyze ethical issues in the media and in life. The course explores the scholarly literature on media ethics and recent research (both physiological and psychological) into how we make moral choices. In addition to a basic introduction to the fundamentals of morality, the course will focus on current ethical issues confronting those who work in print, broadcast, cable, and digital media (including social media).

Specific areas that the course covers include: telling the truth in a “post-truth era,” reconciling the profit motive with public service and art; journalism's larger mission and role in society; free speech; privacy; and how blogs, opinion-oriented media and social networks deal with ethical issues. Course work will include readings, in-depth discussions and a final project on a topic selected by the student and approved by the instructor.

## Course Objectives/Outcomes

At the end of this course, students should be able:

1. To understand the difference between morals and ethics
2. To use a rational, deliberative decision-making process to think through ethical and moral choices
3. To understand and value free speech and artistic freedom in our society
4. To understand the meaning of truth and how to distinguish the difference between what’s true, what’s verifiable and what is false and fake.
5. To understand the role of the media in distributing and conveying norms, values, principles and standards to audiences
6. To understand that their media consumption defines what their norms, values, principles, standards and loyalties are – in other words who they are
7. To make morally healthy media choices for themselves and to create morally uplifting media content

**The Case Study Method**  
Students of Media Ethics learn best by studying and analyzing real-life media ethical dilemmas and situations as described in cases and class discussions. During the course student will write an analysis of three cases using the guidelines as organized in Potter’s Box.

**The Contract**

Case discussion participants: 1) To prepare thoroughly for a case discussion, to read carefully the assigned material, to analyze cases using the elements in Potter’s Box and to make a judgment. 2) To participate in class discussions. You learn by participating and by discussing your opinions and judgments. You also learn how to present and defend your ideas.

**Instructor:** 1) To ask the right questions and to bring up the right issues for discussion. 2) To provide relevant knowledge and summarize the lessons learned from the discussions.

**The Right Answer:** In case analyses and discussions, there are not necessarily any right or wrong answers, but students will be judged based on thorough preparation clear, concise thinking and analysis and well-organized, logical, rational thinking.

**How to Write a Case Analysis:** Carefully read “How To Write a Media Ethics Case Analysis” available at <http://www.charleswarner.us/indexppr.html>.

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to keep up with the assigned podcasts and reading and to come to class prepared to discuss issues presented in the assigned listening and reading. Many classes might begin with a brief quiz on assigned listening and reading.

Class presentations are available at http://www.charleswarner.us/indexpresentations.html for review.

If you have any questions about assignments or what we have covered in class, you may contact me via e-mail or by phone any time.

Students will read assigned material, listen to “On The Media” podcasts and then discuss the material in groups in class. You will be expected to discuss how the theories, values, principles, issues, and concepts covered in the reading material and podcasts apply to current ethical situations in the media.

There will be three case analyses (write-ups) due during the semester. Case analyses should be e-mailed to me at [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu). Please cut and paste your case analyses into emails you send me, do not send attachments. Only your final presentation should be sent as an attachment.

Students will submit a final project at the end of the course that is a critical examination of a current ethical issue in the media, including taking a position on the issue and defending your position appropriately. You will present your final project in the form of a 15-minute PowerPoint (Keynote or Prezi) presentation in class. I must approve the topic for your final project.

**Digital Portfolio:** Make sure you include your final presentation in your Digital Portfolio for a MS degree or MPP certificate.

**Deadlines Are Important:** Be advised that the assignment deadlines are important because we discuss the assignments in class after they are due via e-mail. It would give students an unfair advantage to submit them after hearing them discussed.

**Laptops, Tablets, and Mobile Phones.** This course includes the instructor’s lectures/presentations and guest lectures/presentations and student group presentations and discussions posted in Canvas; therefore **laptops, mobile phones and tablets must be put away** so students can give their undivided attention to the instructor, their colleagues and guests.Devices should only be used for research conducted in discussion groups and should never be visible during instructor’s, colleagues or guests’ presentations or lectures. Here’s why: <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2014/09/why-clay-shirky-banned-laptops-tablets-and-phones-from-his-classroom/>.

**Notebooks.** Because digital devices are not allowed to be open during presentations or lectures, I highly recommend that students take hand-written notes on a spiral-bound or other type notebook. Research on note taking, as detailed in *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age* (see Recommended Reading below), indicates that taking handwritten notes is much more effective for remembering material than taking notes by typing on a laptop computer.

**Student Disability Services.** In keeping with the university’s policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS) at <http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/student-disability-services/> SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course.

**The University Learning Center.** The ULC provides individual tutoring sessions in writing, ESL, math and economics. Sessions are interactive, with tutor and student participating equally. Appointments can be scheduled on [Starfish](https://thenewschool.starfishsolutions.com/starfish-ops/support/login.html) or stop by for a walk-in session, available every hour from 10:00am to 7:00pm. The ULC is located on the 6th floor of 66 West 12th Street. For more information, please visit the website at <http://www.newschool.edu/learning-center/>.

**Academic Honesty.** Students are expected to adhere to The New School’s academic honesty policies, which can be found at [www.newschool.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=81698](http://www.newschool.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=81698).

**Attendance.** Students who have more than three unexcused absences cannot pass the course. If you cannot make a class, it is imperative that you let me know via email beforehand.

**Grading**  
Please read the article ["Student Expectations Seen As Causing Grade Disputes."](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/18/education/18college.html) Please note in the article the phrase that "students often confuse the level of effort with the quality of work." In my courses I reward both effort and the quality of work, although I give much more weight to the quality of the work. In order to earn an A in this course, a student must: 1) Demonstrate excellent effort (completing all assignments thoroughly and on time and participating in all discussions) and 2) consistently produce excellent, high-quality work on a relative basis (relative to other students in the course, as opposed to an absolute standard that I might set across all courses and all students). I do not grade on a curve, which means there is not a required percentage of a range of grades, such as only 40 percent As.

Class participation and discussion 10%

Feedback Assignment 5%

Three case analysis papers (20% each) 60%

Final essay/presentation 25%

**Required Reading**

*The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble To Get Inside Our Heads.* Tim Wu. Alfred Knopf, New York, 2016. (Recommend renting at CourseSmart.com or on Amazon.com or buying as an EBook on Amazon.com.)

*Justice: What’s the Right Thing To Do?,* Michael J. Sandel. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2009. (Recommend renting at CourseSmart.com or on Amazon.com or buying as an EBook on Amazon.com.)

*Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning, (9th Edition),* Clifford G. Christians, Mark Fackler, Kathy Brittain Richardson and Peggy J. Kreshel. Pearson, New York, 2011. (Recommend buying used paperback on Amazon.com.)

**Required Podcast**

“On The Media” Podcast. (Required listening weekly). Subscribe to podcast via iTunes or listen online at <http://www.onthemedia.org/>.

**Recommended Reading**

*Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business,* Neil Postman. Penguin Books, New York, 1985.

*The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, Steven Pinker. Viking, New York, 2011.

*Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age,* Clay Shirky. Penguin Books, 2010.

*The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communication,* Paul Starr. Basic Books, New York, 2004.

*The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and What the Public Should Expect*, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. Crown Publishers, New York, 2001.

*Going to Extremes: How Like Minds Unite and Divide*, Cass R. Sunstein. Oxford University Press, New York, 2009.

*The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom,* Jonathan Haidt. Basic Books, New York, 2006.

*Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, Sissela Bok. Vintage Books, New York, 1999.

*The Liar’s Tale: A History of Falsehood*, Jeremy Campbell. W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2001.

*The Moral Animal: Why We Are the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology*, Robert Wright. Vintage Books, New York, 1994.

*The Moral Judgment of the Child*, Jean Piaget. Free Press Paperbacks, New York, 1997.

*Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age.* Sherry Turkle. New York: Penguin Books. 2015.

*The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion,* Jonathan Haidt. Vintage, New York. 2012.

*Sapiens: A Brief History of Human Kind*. Yuval Noah Harari. New York: Harpers. 2014.

*Sound & Fury: The making of the Punditocracy.* Eric Alterman. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. 1999.

*The Cause:* *The Fight For American Liberalism from Fanklin Roosevelt to Barack Obama.* Eric Alterman and Kevin Mattson. Penguin Books, London. 2012

*Thinking, Fast and Slow,* Daniel Kahneman. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2011.

*What Liberal Media?: The Truth About Bias in the News.* Eric Alterman. Basic Books, New York, 2002.

**Course Schedule**

The following schedule is subject to minor changes because class discussions may go off on interesting, instructive directions that pursue a current ethical issue and because of guests’ schedules.

**WEEK 1 (January 26)**

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| **IN CLASS:** Personal introductions and course overview. Review syllabus and “The Future of College” excerpts. **Presentation:** Introduction to Ethics, Morals and Piaget’s Moral Development of the Child. |

**WEEK 2 (February 2)**

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| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Media Ethics*, Introduction, and Part I, “The Morality of Advertising” in the Library section of my [website](http://www.charleswarner.us/articles/artindex.html), “Raising a Moral Child” at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/12/opinion/sunday/raising-a-moral-child.html>, Margaret Sullivan, Washington Post <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/now-theres-one-more-reason-to-be-a-journalist--you-can-help-save-journalism/2016/05/22/1a2ead1c-1d39-11e6-b6e0-c53b7ef63b45_story.html> and “Ethics In The News: Introduction” at <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/ethics-in-the-news/introduction>.  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** [“On The Media” podcast](mailto:http:www.onthemedia.org/).  **READ BEFORE CLASS:** “Live From the White House, It’s Trump TV” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/28/opinion/sunday/live-from-the-white-house-its-trump-tv.html> |
| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and in the article “The Morality of Advertising.” **Presentation:** Piaget and Justice. **Group discussions** issues in the podcast, assigned reading and on ethical issues in current events.  **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:** Be prepare to give an example of unethical advertising using Potter’s Box. |

**WEEK 3 (February 9)**

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| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Media Ethics,* Part 2, “We May Be Born With an Urge to Help,” “The Moral Life of Babies” in the [Library section of my website](http://www.charleswarner.us/articles/artindex.html), “Ethics In The News: Trumped” at <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/ethics-in-the-news/trumped>, “Pravda On The Checkout Line” at http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/01/tabloid-newspapers-trump-media-propaganda-214627 and “How to Write a Media Ethics Case Analysis” in the Papers by CW section of [my website.](http://www.charleswarner.us/artindex.html)  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast and CNN podcast The Axe Files #108, “President Barak Obama” at<http://politics.uchicago.edu/pages/axefiles>. |
| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and on the assigned articles. **Group Discussion:** Be prepared to give examples of unethical advertising using Potter’s Box and on issues in the podcast, assigned reading and on ethical issues in current events. |
| **ASSIGNMENT #1:** To be sent to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste) before class 2/23. |

**WEEK #4 (February 16)**

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| **READ:** *Media Ethics*, Part 3, “Hutchins Commission Report,” “RTNDA Code of Ethics,” “SPJ Code of Ethics,” “Walter Williams’s Journalist’s Creed,” and “Joseph Pulitzer’s Journalism Principles” in the Media Ethics subsection in the [Library section on my website](http://www.charleswarner.us/articles/artindex.html). Also, read “Do Liars Make Better Artists?” at <http://bigthink.com/Picture-This/do-liars-make-better-artists> and “Creator or Buyer: Who Really Owns Art?” at <http://artlawjournal.com/visual-art-ownership/>.  **VIEW:** In Courses section of my website “Re-thinking Objectivity.”  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. |
| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The  Media” podcast and on the assigned articles. **Presentation:** Lying and Art. **Group discussions** issues in the podcast, assigned reading and “Re-thinking Objectivity.” |

**WEEK 5 (February 23)**

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| **READ:** *Media Ethics,* Part 4 and “The Child in the Basement” at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/13/opinion/david-brooks-the-child-in-the-basement.html> and “Moral Hazard: A Tempest-Tossed Idea” at  <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/26/business/moral-hazard-as-the-flip-side-of-self-reliance.html>.  **V**I**EW:** “Moral Hazard” in the [Courses section of my website](http://www.charleswarner.us/indexcourses.html).  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast and “Hidden Brain” Podcast #56, ”Getting Unstuck” at <http://www.npr.org/podcasts/510308/hidden-brain>. |
| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in this week’s and last week’s “On The Media” podcast and on the Walter Williams Creed. **Presentation:** The Ethics of Entertainment. |
| **ASSIGNMENT #2:** To be sent to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste) before class 3/30. |

**WEEK 6 (March 2)**

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| **DUE BEFORE CLASS:** ASSIGNMENT #1 via e-mail to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste into the email, do not send as an attachment).  **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Justice*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3.  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast.  **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:** 1) Present in class two topic ideas for your final presentation. |
| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and assigned reading. Present ideas for final paper.(30 minutes)  **GUEST:** Zack Greenburg, Senior Editor for FORBES magazine and author of *Empire State of Mind: How Jay Z Went From Street Corner to Corner Office* and *Michael Jackson, Inc: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of a Billion-Dollar Empire.* Mr. Greenberg will talk about his books and the ethical challenges of covering the music industry for his books and Forbes. (80 minutes) |
| **FINAL ASSIGNMENT:** See “Final Assignment” in the . |

**WEEK 7 (March 9)**

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| **DUE BEFORE CLASS:** Email me two ideas for your final presentation and why you want to write about them. |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Justice* Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 and “Jack Shafer – A Word Against Our Sponsor” in the Library section of my website.  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. |
| **CLASS MEETS AT THE OFFICES OF THE HUFFINGTON POST, 770 Broadway, 4th Floor.** |

**WEEK 8 (March 16)**

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| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Justice*, Chapters 8, 9 and 10 and “Why the press should call out politicians when they lie” at <http://www.economist.com/news/books-and-arts/21717019-and-why-lying-isnt-same-talking-nonsense-why-press-should-call-out-politicians> and “The Dangerous Safety of College” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/11/opinion/sunday/the-dangerous-safety-of-college.html>.  **VIEW:** Summary of Sandel’s *Justice* in the Courses section of my website.  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. |
| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and assigned reading. **Group discussions**: Discuss Assignment #2 and discussions about issues in the news and in assigned reading.  **FEEDBACK ASSIGNMENT:** See “Feedback Guidelines” in the Assignment section of Canvas and send an email to me at [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste) containing feedback before class on 3/30.  **ASSIGNMENT #3:** To be sent to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) before class 4/13. |

**WEEK 9 (March 23) NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

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| **READ:** *The Attention…* Chapters 1-6. **LISTEN TO:** [“On The Media” podcast](mailto:http:www.onthemedia.org/) |

**WEEK 10 (March 30)**

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| **DUE BEOFRE CLASS:** Assignment #2 via e-mail to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste into the email, do not send as an attachment) and Feedback Assignment via email to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste; no attachments). |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *The Attention…* Chapters 7-11.  **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media“ podcast and “Should Art That Infuriates Be Removed?” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/27/arts/design/should-art-that-infuriates-be-removed.html> |
| **IN CLASS: Group Discussions** on Assignment #2 issues in the podcast, assigned reading and on ethical issues in current events. |

**WEEK 11 (April 6)**

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| READ BEFORE CLASS: *The Attention…* Chapters 12-16, DGA Report at <http://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2014/140917-Episodic-Director-Diversity-Report.aspx>.LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS: The True Story of the Gender Pay Gap” at <http://freakonomics.com/2016/01/07/the-true-story-of-the-gender-pay-gap-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/>.LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS: “On The Media“ podcast. |
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| **IN CLASS: GUESTS -** Alison Rowe, Speechwriter and Communications Adviser at UN Women and Ella Rowe will discuss the importance of women being in leadership positions in the media and film industries and the importance of improving the portrayal of women in the entertainment media. |

**WEEK 12 (April 13)**

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| **DUE BEFORE CLASS:** ASSIGNMENT #3 via e-mail to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu).  **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *The Attention…* Chapters 17-19, "People Believe a 'Fact' That Fits Their Views Even if It's Clearly False" in the Library section of my website and “Brands Need to Fire Ad Teach” at <https://artplusmarketing.com/brands-need-to-fire-adtech-f9d18edd2f9a>. |
| **IN CLASS: GUESTS –** Eric Alterman, media critic and journalist. |

**WEEK 13 (April 20)**

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| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *The Attention…* Chapters 20-24. |
| **IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS:** Final project presentations. (See schedule in the Assignments section in Canvas). |

**WEEK 14 (April 27)**

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| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *The Attention…* Chapters 25-28 and Epilogue. At the end of the class |
| **IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS:** Final project presentations. (See schedule in Assignments section in Canvas). |

**WEEK 15 (May 4)**

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| **ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS WEEK:** Download Canvas by Instructure app and complete course evaluations using the app. |
| **IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS:** Final project presentations. (See schedule in Assignments section in Canvas). |

**WEEK 16 (May 11)**

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| **IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS: Final** project presentations. (See schedule in Assignments section in Canvas). At the end of the presentations, read to the class William Faulkner’s Speech accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature (in the Courses section of my website). |