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**MEDIA ETHICS**

(CRN 4593 NMDM 5308)

**Spring 2016**

**Instructor:** Charles Warner

**Units:** 3 credits

**Day:** Thursday

**Location:** Room 602, 66 West 12th Street

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

**Instructor’s Phone:** 917-797-3305

**Course Description and Objectives**

**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: 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.

**THE CASE STUDY METHOD**  
Students of Media Ethics learn best by studying and analyzing real-life 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:** Read a case at your normal speed without stopping to take notes, then carefully read the entire case again, taking notes as you read. You are trying to identify values, principles, and loyalties (Potter’s Box) in the case and make a judgment. When you have identified the values, principles, and loyalties, write an analysis with the following four headings:

“Situation”

"Values”

"Principles"

"Loyalties"

“Judgment”

**Writing:** As you write your case analysis, you must include appropriate references to the assigned reading and class presentations. Your references should be in the following format for books (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996, P. 126); the following for lectures, (Warner, class lecture, Feb 21, 2016); and the following for online references (“How to Develop a Winning Strategy,” http://www.charleswarner.us/indexppr.html. February, 2016). The date in the reference is the month you accessed the website. *Do not include a bibliography at the end of a case analysis unless you refer to books or articles that are not required or recommended reading.*

Begin your case write-up with a brief definition of the facts presented in the case under the heading “Situation,” which should be a brief summary of the facts in the case. In the next section, under the heading “Values,” you should state which values you will base your judgment on and why you chose those values as opposed to other values. A list of possible values to use will be discussed thoroughly in class and in reading assignments. Next, under the heading of “Principles,” identify the principles you will use to make your judgment and why you chose those principles. The five principles to choose from will be covered in the required reading. In the next section, under the heading “Loyalties,” you should state your loyalties and why those loyalties, as opposed to other loyalties, are appropriate in the situation. Finally, in the “Judgment” section state what decision you would make in the situation and *support your decisions with references to the assigned reading and in-class discussions and presentations*. Your grade will depend, to a large degree, on how many appropriate, relevant references to the lectures and reading you include in your write-up (referring to recommended reading is worth a ton of brownie points).

See the “Case Analysis Grading Rubric” in the Assignments section of Canvas or in the Courses section of my [website.](mailto:http://www.charleswarner.us)

Even though this is not an English course, I expect you to write in clear, concise, well-organized English. Be particularly watchful for spelling errors such as spelling “judgment” with an extra “e.”

**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/lectures will be posted on Canvas 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 read the NY Times’s Public Editor column and then discuss the material in groups in class. You will be expected to discuss how the theories, 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. Write-ups 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. 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 features the instructor’s lectures/presentations and guest lectures/presentations. The instructor’s and the guests’ presentations are posted on Canvas; therefore, there is little need for taking notes on digital devices. **Laptops, mobile phones and tablets must be put away.** Devices should only be used for research conducted in discussion groups and should never be visible during instructor’s 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/>.

**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" posted in the Library section of my website.  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**

*Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business,* Neil Postman. Penguin Books, New York, 1985. (Recommend buying Used 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/>.

**REQUIRED WEEKLY READING**

Public Editor (Margaret Sullivan), <http://www.nytimes.com/>

**RECOMMENDED READING**

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

*Beyond Human Nature: How Culture and Experience Shape Our Lives,* Jesse Prinz. Penguin, New York, 2012.

*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.

*Digital Dilemmas: Ethical Issues for Online Media Professionals,* Robert I. Berkman and Christopher A. Shumway. Wiley-Blackwell, New York, 2003.

*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.

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

*Sex At Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What It Means For Modern Relationships*, Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha. Harper Perennial, New York, 2012.

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

*Top Dog: The Science of Wining and Losing*, Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman. Hachette Book Group, New York, 2013.

*Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed: Educating for the Virtues in the Twenty-First Century*, Howard Gardner. Basic Books, New York, 2011. (Recommend buying used on Amazon.com.)

*What Technology Wants*, Kevin Kelly. Penguin Press, New York, 2010.

**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 28)**

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| **IN CLASS:** Personal introductions and course overview. Review syllabus and “The Future of College” excerpts. **Presentation/Lecture:** What Is News? and Piaget’s “The Moral Development of the Child I.” |

**WEEK 2 (February 4)**

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| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and in the article “The Morality of Advertising.” **Group discussions** on some of the issues in the podcast and assigned reading. **Presentation/Lecture:** 1) “The Moral Development of the Child II, “Lying Part 1 and 2.” |
| **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) and “Raising a Moral Child” at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/12/opinion/sunday/raising-a-moral-child.html> |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** [“On The Media” podcast](mailto:http:www.onthemedia.org/). **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column. |

**WEEK 3 (February 11)**

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| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and on the assigned articles “We May Be Born With an Urge to Help” and “The Moral Life of Babies.” **Group Discussion:** Be prepared to give examples of unethical advertising using Potter’s Box. (30 minutes)  **GUEST:** Author Eric Alterman will discuss the media and social change. (80 Minutes) |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Media Ethics,* Part 2, “We May Be Born With an Urge to Help” and “The Moral Life of Babies” in the [Library section of my website](http://www.charleswarner.us/articles/artindex.html). **VIEW:** “How to Write a Media Ethics Case Analysis” in the Assignments section of Canvas.  **VIEW BEFORE 3/3:** “The Imitation Game.” Be prepared to answer the following questions: 1) What was the movie about (the theme)? 2) When did the Germans know the British had cracked their code? 3) What ethical principle was involved in M6 making the decision about when the Germans should know? |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column.  **ASSIGNMENT #1:** To be sent to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste) before class 2/25. |

**WEEK #4 (February 18)**

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| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and on the assigned articles. **Group discussions** issues in the podcast, assigned reading and on ethical issues in current events  **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/>. |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column.  **ASSIGNMENT #2:** To be sent to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste) before class 3/17. |

**WEEK 5 (February 25)**

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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).  **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in this week’s and last week’s “On The Media” podcast and on the Walter Williams Creed, and discuss Assignment #1 in groups. Use Potter’s Box on the blackboard for Assignment #1. **Presentation/Lecture:** 1) Lying II – Sissela Bok’s view and 2) Jeremy Campbell’s alternative view on the Ethics of Entertainment. As art and fiction have increasingly come to dominate our culture, are we dissatisfied with the thinness, the inadequacy of literal truth?  **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>. **VIEW:** “Moral Hazard” in the Assignments section of Canvas. |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column. **VIEW FOR NEXT WEEK:** “The Imitation Game” and be prepared to answer the questions: 1) What was the movie about (the theme)? 2) When did the Germans know the British had cracked their code? 3) What ethical principle was involved in M6 making the decision about when the Germans should know? |

**WEEK 6 (March 3)**

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| **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and in the reading. **Group discussions** about current ethical issues and answer the questions about “The Imitation Game.” **Presentation/Lecture:** “Game Theory: Playing the Business Game.” |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Justice*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 “Objectivity and the decades-long shift from ‘just the facts’ to ‘what does it mean’” at <http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/05/objectivity-and-the-decades-long-shift-from-just-the-facts-to-what-does-it-mean/>, “So Which Ad-Blocking Parasite Are You Going to Go After” at <http://adage.com/article/ken-wheaton/ad-blocking-parasite/300342/>, “Yes, There Is A War On Advertising. Now What?” at <http://adage.com/article/print-edition/a-war-advertising/300336/> and “Final Assignment” in the Assignments section of Canvas.  **VIEW BEFORE CLASS:** “The Imitation Game.”  **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:** 1) Present in class two topic ideas for your final presentation. |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column. |

**WEEK 7 (March 10)**

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| **DUE BEFORE CLASS:** Email me two ideas for your final presentation and why you want to write about them.  **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and assigned reading. Present ideas for final paper. **Group discussions** about issues in the news and assigned reading. (30 minutes)  **GUEST:** Zack Greenberg, 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) |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** *Justice* Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 and “Evolving Ethical Standards,” “Fortune Contently Study,”  “Jack Shafer – A Word Against Our Sponsor” in the Media Ethics subsection of the Library section of my website. |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column. |

**WEEK 8 (March 17)**

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| **DUE BEFORE 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).  **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 assigned reading. |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** Justice, Chapters 8, 9 and 10. |
| **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 3/31. |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media” podcast. **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column. |
| **ASSIGNMENT #3:** (See Courses link): To be sent to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste) before class 4/14. |

**WEEK 9 (March 24) NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

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| **READ:** *Amusing…* Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4. |
| **LISTEN TO:** [“On The Media” podcast](mailto:http:www.onthemedia.org/). **READ:** NY Times Public Editor column. |

**WEEK 10 (March 31)**

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| **DUE BEOFRE CLASS;** Feedback Assignment via email to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste).  **IN CLASS:** Discuss in groups Assignment #2. (30 Minutes)  **GUEST:** Byron Calame, former Public Editor of The New York Times. (80 minutes) |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** Amusing… Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8. |
| **LISTEN TO BEFORE CLASS:** “On The Media“ podcast and the Freakonomics podcast “Should Kids Pay Back Their Parents for Raising Them?” at <http://freakonomics.com/2015/10/08/should-kids-pay-back-their-parents-for-raising-them-a-new-freakonomics-radio-episode/> |

**WEEK 11 (April 7)**

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| **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 film industry and the importance of improving the portrayal of women in the entertainment media. (110 minutes) |
| READ BEFORE CLASS: Amusing…Chapters 9, 10, 11, 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. **READ BEFORE CLASS:** NY Times Public Editor column. |

**WEEK 12 (April 14)**

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| **DUE BEFORE CLASS:** ASSIGNMENT #3 via e-mail to [warnerc@newschool.edu](mailto:warnerc@newschool.edu) (cut and paste into the email, do not send as an attachment).  **IN CLASS:** Quiz on issues presented in the current “On The Media” podcast and in assigned reading. **Discuss in groups** Assignment #3 and current ethical issues. |
| **READ BEFORE CLASS:** "People Believe a 'Fact' That Fits Their Views Even if It's Clearly False" in the Library section of my website. **VIEW BEFORE CLASS:** Jonathan Haidt’s talk at Google about “hivish behavior” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2APK3tlPL_0&feature=youtu.be>. |

**WEEK 13 (April 21)**

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| **IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS:** Final project presentations. (See schedule in the Assignments section in Canvas). |

**WEEK 14 (April 28)**

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| **IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS:** Final project presentations. (See schedule in Assignments section in Canvas). |

**WEEK 15 (May 5)**

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

**WEEK 16 (May 12)**

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| **IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS: Final** project presentations. (See schedule in Assignments section in Canvas). |