

Spring 2005

State University of West Georgia  
Department of Mass Communications and Theatre Arts

**COMM 2254 Media Ethics T – Th 9:30-10:45 & 11:00 - 12:15**

Instructor: Gail G. Reid

Office: Humanities 149, 678-839-4936

Spring 2005 Office Hours: M & W 3:15 – 4:00 PM and T & Th 1:45 – 3:00

Or by appointment

E-mail: [Greid@westga.edu](mailto:Greid@westga.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This class is an examination of ethical decision –making models and their application to media issues, particularly freedom of speech, explicit content, invasion of privacy, and the public's rights.

LEARNER OUTCOMES

1. To experience a variety of communications situations.
2. To be able to demonstrate ability to analyze case studies and employ appropriate creative problem solving skills to ethical problems
3. To demonstrate knowledge of the manner in which different publics including industry, business and society in general are affected by media decision-makers..
4. To learn to become a more effective listener.
5. To improve critical thinking skills.

TEXT AND SUPPLIES

**Note: assigned readings are to be completed prior to class**

Text: Day, L.A. (2003). Ethics in Media Communications: Cases and Controversies (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Additional materials will be required from selected textbooks, newspapers, magazines and Web sites throughout the semester as well as listening to various radio and television broadcasts.

Visual Aid Materials

Writing Paper / Pen

(3) Scantron #229629

COURSE POLICIES

- A. Attendance/Participation**- Attendance at all classes is mandatory and will be noted every day. Communication is an interactive process that requires personal commitment and involvement. Class time will be very experiential so come prepared to participate having both read the assignment and done the homework. Your level of participation will be extremely important and will be considered when determining your final grade.
- B. Absences/Make-ups** – You are allowed two (2) absences without penalty except on test days group presentation days. Any classes missed (after the allowance) without appropriate written documentation will result in the deduction of **10 points from your class participation grade (equals 1 point from FINAL grade) for every absence after the allowance**. There are no exceptions.

Each student is expected to participate in class activities, take quizzes and exams on the assigned day. There will be no make-ups for pop quizzes. No make-up for presentations or exams will be allowed unless:

1. The instructor is notified before the absence or, if an emergency arises which totally precludes a phone call prior to class time, the student must contact the teacher within 24 hours of the emergency.
2. Written verification is provided for the emergency situations that result in a student missing a project or exam
3. There is sufficient time to allow a make-up.

**Special opportunity:** Zero absences will ADD **3 BONUS POINTS TO YOUR FINAL GRADE**. Tardiness on (3) days will count as an absence. You are responsible for making sure you are marked in attendance if you arrive after roll call.

**C. Late Arrivals/Early Departures**- Students who arrive late or depart early are a disruption to the instructor and other students. If you are not present when roll is taken, an absence will be recorded.

**D. Class Etiquette-**

- Cellular phone are to be turned **off** during class. Pagers shall be turned off or set to vibrate during class. You have been warned.
- There are many of us in this classroom. Please try to be considerate of everyone and keep focus. Talking, reading the paper, sleeping, doing homework for another class, balancing your checkbook, etc. are all distracting behaviors that will not be tolerated.
- There is reading assigned for every class, and sometimes written homework. Failure to read the assigned material or complete the assigned homework will have a damaging effect on your grade.

**E. Originality**- All work you turn in or present **MUST** be your own work. All outside source material must be given credit or referenced verbally within the context of your speech. Any non-original work is subject to one or more of the following actions: “0” for the assignment in question; and “F” for the Course; and /or severe disciplinary action from the University.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

During the semester there will be in-class assignments, pop quizzes, and homework, (1) Case Study Analysis, (1) Presentation of Case Study Analysis and(3) three exams. You must complete ALL the assignments to pass the course

<b>Activity</b>	<b># of Points</b>
Major Test # 1	100
Major Test # 2	100
Major Test # 3	100
Case Study Analysis (SAD)	75
Case Study Analysis Presentation	75
Attendance/Class Participation	50
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>500</b>

### Written Assignments:

- All assigned papers must be TYPED double-spaced and STAPLED.
- All bibliographies must use Modern Language Association (MLA) format—this includes all internet sources, books, periodicals, interviews.
- All papers should be carefully edited. This means reading your outline several times to check all aspects of grammar and spelling (spell check will not correct the wrong word).
- Your name, the title of your paper and my name should be typed, in that order, in the upper left corner of the first page. Each page should have a footer or header with your last name and the page number.
- If you are having trouble writing your paper, you should consider using the resources of the Writing Center. This does not mean I am not available to help you – it is a great resource that is free and at your disposal. To make appointment call 770-836-6513.

### Additional Tips:

- ❖ **Read your syllabus** - it is extremely important to know when due dates are. Also, it is subject to change. We will retain some flexibility to accommodate guest speakers, current events as well as reinforce course material. You are responsible for getting any changes made in class.
- ❖ **Read your textbook** – read each chapter prior to the class discussion of it. If there are additional readings or viewings, be sure they are done before the class.
- ❖ **Examinations** – there will be three (3) major tests based on lectures, lectures, class discussions and assigned readings and viewings. The format of the exams will be a combination of objective (multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, listing) and subjective (short answer and essay) questions.
- ❖ **Case Study Analysis** – you will select a case study from certain chapters in the textbook and write a 3-4 page critical analysis following the SAD Model of Reasoning.
- ❖ **Case Study Presentation** is an important opportunity to teach the class. You will be assigned to a group and conduct a panel discussion of a media ethics issue. I will give a choice of cases. Your group will be required to write up a 1-2 page summary of your ethical analysis of your case and turn it in the day of the presentation. I will give further instructions

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*Calendar of Events Media Ethics- Spring Term 2005*

Tu Jan 11	Introduction to Course Student Questionnaire
Th Jan 13	Chapter 1 Ethics and Moral Development
Tu Jan 18	Chapter 2 Ethics and Society
Th Jan 20	Chapter 2 (cont.)
Tu Jan 25	Chapter 3 Ethics and Moral Reasoning
Th Jan 27	Fieldwork—no formal class today
Tu Feb 1	Chapter 3 (cont) Potter Box
Th Feb 3	Chapter 4 Truth and Honesty in Media Relations
Tu Feb 8	Chapter 4 (cont.) (last day to withdraw with “W” & Festival of Majors is today!)
Th Feb 10	<b>Major Test #1</b> (Chapter 1 – 4, lecture notes, additional readings/viewings)
Tu Feb 15	Chapter 5 The Media and Privacy: A Delicate Balance
Th Feb 17	Chapter 5 (cont.)
Tu Feb 22	Chapter 6 Confidentiality and the Public Interest
Th Feb 24	Chapter 6 (cont.)
Tu March 1	Chapter 7 Conflicts of Interest
Th March 3	Chapter 7 (cont.)
Tu March 8	Chapter 7 / <b>Case Study Analysis Due</b>
Th March 10	Chapter 8 Economic Pressures and Social Responsibility

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- Tu March 15 Chapter 8 (cont.)
- Th March 17 Chapter 9  
The Media and Antisocial Behavior
- Tu March 22 Spring Break – no class!
- Th March 24 Spring Break – no class!
- Tu March 29 Chapter 9 (cont.)
- Th March 31 **Major Test # 2** (Chapters 5-9, lecture notes, additional readings,  
viewings)
- Tu April 5 Chapter 10  
Morally Offensive Content: Freedom and Responsibility
- Th April 7 Chapter 13  
Stereotypes in Media Communications
- Tu April 12 Work on Class Presentations
- Th April 14 Assigned Panel Discussions Day One
- Tu April 19 Assigned Panel Discussions Day Two
- Th April 21 Assigned Panel Discussions Day Three
- Tu April 26 TBA
- Th April 28 **Last Major Test # 3** (Cumulative)

***Be sure you have your scantron for both the Midterm and Final Exams***

I wish to gratefully acknowledge Dr. Bradford Yates for allowing me to use parts of his syllabi to design this one. His material and advice are greatly appreciated!

Gail G. Reid