

**Journalism 308-1200 (No. 2.163)**

**Ethics in a Wired World**

**Fall Semester, 2018**

August 20 to December 5, 2018; MW, 11:00 am to 12:15 pm, Summerfield 427

Instructor: Mark Johnson

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Office Hours: MW, 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm

and by appointment

To ensure success in reaching me, please use both email addresses.

**The Course:**

Recognizing why and how to act ethically is crucial to being a productive member of society. In this course we will consider the sources of our concepts of ethics and apply the lessons from those sources to contemporary situations. We will also consider the similarities and differences between the systems of law and ethics, one system that requires a certain set of behaviors and a second system that recommends another set of behaviors.

The course will have three basic modules: three weeks on the writings of major philosophers on ethics, two weeks on the two principal approaches to analyzing ethical problems, and the balance on practical ethical issues faced in contemporary society.

**Requirements:**

There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam. The final exam will be comprehensive, covering all material in the course. The mid-term will include multiple-choice and true-false questions, while the final will be essay-based.

Each student will also prepare a 5-page paper (exclusive of bibliography) addressing an ethical issue the student has faced. I will be available to discuss proposed topics, and you must obtain my approval of your topic.

Once we reach the part of the semester on practical ethical issues, each student will be expected to participate in one panel during a class session. Each panel will consist of five students (panels will be posted during the course of the term) and the panel

members will be responsible for discussion of the material to be covered in the class session.

**Grading:**

Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%
Ethics Paper	40%
Panel Participation	10%

Students who participate in class discussions (ask questions and respond to questions posed by the instructor, demonstrating an understanding of the subject material) will be given credit for their participation.

**Civility and Respect:**

Civility and respect for the opinions of others are very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. Courteous behavior and responses are expected at all times. When you disagree with someone, be sure that you make a distinction between criticizing an idea and criticizing the person. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity/expression, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or marital, parental, or veteran status are contrary to the mission of this course and will not be tolerated.

**Use of Electronics:**

You may use laptops for note-taking. However, use of phones/smartphones/tablets is not allowed (my experience is that such devices are used to consult email, texts, social media, and the Internet, but not to take notes). If I see you using one of the forbidden devices, I will politely ask you to turn it over to me and I will return it to you at the end of class.

You may audio-record my lectures.

**Misconduct:**

You are bound by the University rules on academic misconduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, please ask BEFORE your endeavor.

## **Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification**

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence, and falsification of evidence.

Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification can include a failing grade for the course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification, please consult the professor of the course.

*The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.*

### **Plagiarism**

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

### **Fabrication and Falsification**

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

### **Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance:**

No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.

Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.

I do not take attendance at every class, but I will do so at random times during the semester, and I notice when students who have enrolled either never attend or stop attending class.

**Inclement Weather and Special Needs** - In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW). The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (v/tty), coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.

**Course Schedule** (Subject to change as announced in class):

Readings should be completed BEFORE the assigned date. Readings will be posted in Course Documents on the class Blackboard website at least one class period before they are discussed.

**CONTENT**

**READING**

August 20	Introduction to the Course  What is (are?) Ethics?  What is ethical behavior?  What are the differences between laws, rules, guidelines, and values?	
<b>I. THE BIG FOUR: PHILOSOPHERS AND THEIR APPROACHES TO ETHICS</b>		
August 22	Aristotle	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
August 27 and 29	Immanuel Kant	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Kant's <i>Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>
September 5	John Stuart Mill	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i>
September 10 and 12	John Rawls  September 12: exercise demonstrating the Veil of Ignorance and its	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Rawls' <i>A Theory of Justice</i>

	application to KU issues	
<b>II. MODELS FOR ANALYZING ETHICAL PROBLEMS</b>		
September 17 and 24	The Potter Model	Blackboard  PowerPoint on Potter Model
September 24 and 26	The Ginn Model	Blackboard  PowerPoint on The Ginn Model
<b>III. ETHICS IN THE WIRED WORLD: ETHICAL PROBLEMS WE EXPERIENCE AND HOW TO RESOLVE THEM</b>		
October 1 and 3	Ethical Behavior in the Strangest Places: Crime  Honor Among Thieves	Materials on Blackboard
<b>Topics for Papers on Personal Ethical Issues must be approved by October 8 -- use email to submit topics and obtain instructor approval</b>		
October 8 and 10	Case Study on Social Media: the Cautionary Tale of the Rise and Fall of Yik Yak	Materials on Blackboard
<b><u>NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 15 -- FALL BREAK</u></b>		
<b>October 17: Mid-Term Exam</b>		
October 22 and 24	Case Study on Social Media: the Use and Misuse	Materials on Blackboard

	of Twitter	
October 29 and 31	Case Study on the Ethics of Instagram (not just whether you use Instagram ethically, but how Instagram uses you)	Materials on Blackboard
November 5	Case Study: the Ethics of Election Campaigns -- do we have a right to expect candidates to be honest?	Materials on Blackboard
November 7	Social Media and its Role in the Invasion of Privacy	Materials on Blackboard
<b>Personal Ethics Paper due November 12 at 5 p.m. -- submit to instructor's Dentons email</b>		
November 12 and 14	Case Study: The Ethics of Lying  Are there "Good Lies?"	Materials on Blackboard
November 19	Case Study: Michael Cohen and his ethical problems	Materials on Blackboard
November 26 and 28	Case Study: Ethics in business (the Merck, Citicorp, and Volkswagen stories)  To whom do businesses owe loyalty? When do people trump profits?	Materials on Blackboard
December 3 and 5	What have we learned?	

	Why should/must we act ethically?  Review session for final exam	
<b>FINAL EXAM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 12</b>		