

## **Journalism 308**

### **Ethics in a Wired World**

#### **Spring Semester, 2016**

January 20 to May 4, 2016, MW, 11:00 am to 12:15 pm, 2048 Malott

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: four 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) arising out of an ethical issue the student has faced. I will be available to discuss proposed topics, and you must obtain my approval of your topic.

### **Grading:**

Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	40%
Ethics Paper	40%

## **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, 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, but 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**

January 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>		
January 25 and 27	Aristotle	Blackboard  Excerpt from Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
February 1 and 3	Immanuel Kant	Blackboard  Excerpt from Kant's <i>Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>
February 8 and 10	John Stuart Mill	Blackboard  Excerpt from Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i>
February 15 and 17	John Rawls	Blackboard  Excerpt from Rawls' <i>A</i>

		<i>Theory of Justice</i>
<b>II. MODELS FOR ANALYZING ETHICAL PROBLEMS</b>		
February 22 and 24	The Potter Model	Blackboard  PowerPoint on Potter Model
February 29 and March 3	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>		
March 7 and 9	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 March 9</b>		
March 21 and 23	Case Study: Media Ethics  Ethical Reporting and Photography	Materials of Blackboard
March 23	Review Session for Mid-Term Exam	
<b>March 28: Mid-Term Exam</b>		
April 4, 11, and 13	Case Study: Social Media, Privacy and Ethics  What Justifies Invading Another Person's Privacy?  How do we use Social Media ethically?	Materials on Blackboard

April 18 and 20	Case Study: The Ethics of Lying  Are there "Good Lies?"	Materials on Blackboard
<b>Personal Ethics Paper due April 20</b>		
May 2 and 4	Case Study: Ethics in Sports  Where contemporary sports seem to be governed by rules, does ethics have a role in how games are played?	Materials on Blackboard
<b>FINAL EXAM, WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 10:30 am to 1:00 pm</b>		