

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL FORM 2000-2001

NON-GENERAL EDUCATION PROCESS A

***DEADLINES:** Deadline dates for 2000/2001 submissions: Regular proposals: October 20, 2000 to be implemented in Fall 2001; Short-Term proposals: December 8, 2000 to be implemented in Fall, 2001; Regular proposals February 16, 2001 to be implemented in Spring, 2002; March 23, 2000 for short-term courses to be implemented in Spring 2002.

10662-319

PROPOSAL TITLE: Media Ethics

SPONSOR(S): Carl Hausman

DEPARTMENT: Journalism and Creative Writing

COLLEGE: Communication

IF LAS CHECK ONE: History/Humanities Math/Sciences Social/Behavioral Sciences

Check one: Undergraduate Graduate

THE ATTACHED **NON-GEN-ED** PROPOSAL IS BEST DESCRIBED BY THE ITEM(S) CHECKED.

New non-gen-ed course

Short-term non-gen-ed course

Minor curricular changes (fewer than three) to:

- existing non-gen-ed course
- non-gen-ed degree requirements
- major
- minor, specialization, concentration, track, certificate program

DEPARTMENT
(Signature indicates approval)

Carl Hausman 10/19/2000
Dept. Curriculum Chair / Date

Carl Hausman 10/19/2000
Dept. Chairperson / Date

ACADEMIC DEAN

Approved Not Approved Comments:

Dean's Signature/Date *Whitson* 10/30/99

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date of open hearing (if necessary) 11/29/01 Approved _____ Not Approved _____

Comments: minor changes - in the [unclear]

Signature of College Chair/Date: [Signature] 11/29/01

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date Received/Processed 2/26/01

Comments: [scribble]

Curriculum Chair Signature [Signature] Date Announced At Senate 2-26-01

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST

Approved Not Approved If no, reasons are as follows:

Student Credit Hours _____ Faculty Load Hours _____ Equalized Credit Hours _____

Official Copy & Approval Sheet Filed (Date): _____ Executive VP/Provost Signature/Date [Signature] 3/5/01

REGISTRAR

Date Approved Course Description Received [Signature] Hegis Taxonomy & Course Number Assigned CCJ-314

Registrar Signature/Date [Signature]

NOTIFICATION FORWARD

_____ Senate Curriculum Committee Chairperson _____ Academic Dean(s)
_____ Department Chairpersons _____ Registrar _____ Sponsor(s)

Course Proposal

Media Ethics

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1. Details of the Proposed Course

This section lists and explains the *title, credit hours, course level, prerequisites, time and scale of implementation, curricular effect, adequacy of present resources, and recommended library resources* as they pertain to the proposed course.

Course Title:

Media Ethics

Sponsor:

Carl Hausman, Ph.D., associate professor of Journalism, Department of Journalism and Creative Writing, College of Communication. The proposal is sponsored by the Department of Journalism and Creative Writing in the College of Communication.

Credit Hours:

The course will carry 3 credit hours.

Course Level:

Media Ethics will be a 300-level course.

Prerequisites:

Mass Media and Their Influences (0601.203) or permission of instructor.

Suggested Time and Scale of Implementation

The course will first be offered in Fall, 2001. This course will be offered once per academic year.

Curricular Effect:

Media Ethics will not duplicate course content in other College of Communication courses or courses outside of the college. The course content is specifically focused on ethical decision-making in journalism and media, and while broader ethical frameworks are discussed, the course is designed for students who must learn to cope with issues related to day-to-day practice in media professions.

While discussions of ethics do take place in media skills courses, time does not permit extensive development of these themes. The Journalism Specialization's current capstone course, Problems In Contemporary Journalism, deals with current issues and by its nature discusses ethical problems – along with business issues, corporate structures, and many diverse current topics – but again, coupling a theoretical with a practical view is beyond the scope of Problems. The proposed media ethics course, in sum, would be complementary. In addition, the proposed course would complement existing discussions of ethics in such fields as advertising, public relations, and television production by providing an overall framework for understanding the issues.

Adequacy of the Present Staff, Resources, and Space Needs.

Staff: The course will be taught by faculty from the department of Journalism and Creative Writing. Carl Hausman, who developed the course, will teach it in Fall, 2001. Hausman is the author of two texts on media ethics, a mass-market book about ethics in news, politics, and advertising, edits a weekly publication about business ethics a quarterly magazine about ethics in international affairs, and has testified before Congress about ethics and new media technologies.

Resources: Facilities are currently adequate. No special facilities, other than a classroom equipped to show videotapes, are required.

Space: The department has adequate classroom space to accommodate the course.

Funds: The course will be taught in load by a faculty member of the Department of Journalism and Creative Writing. The department plans one new hire for Fall 2001, allowing almost all courses to be adequately staffed within budget.

Recommended Library Resources

The library currently has a reasonably large collection of books about journalism and media and ethics. The listing of current holdings is attached as Appendix A. However, the collection is dated in parts and we recommend the additional purchase of 8 books and three periodicals, at a cost of approximately \$600 for the books and \$150 yearly for the periodicals. The proposed additions are listed in Appendix B.

2. Rationale for the Course

Ethical lapses and blunders can ruin lives and careers. Even a freshly hired graduate working at a local news organization can face decisions with enormous consequences, both personal and professional.

The responsibilities that go along with any job in the media are magnified by the “leverage” of new technologies. News and images can now be spread virtually instantaneously via live broadcast and web-based transmission. New technologies, coupled with leaner media bureaucracies, mean that there are fewer editorial layers between originator and reader/viewer. As a result, young media professionals bear more responsibilities and must function with lighter supervision. They will inevitably encounter ethical questions dealing with:

- privacy (should we publish an individual’s campaign contribution record taken from a new web site that compiles these data?)
- technological manipulation (is it acceptable to alter this picture with new photoshop software to make the candidates look as if they are standing closer together?)
- business relationships (because this news organization has been acquired by a conglomerate, the corporate leaders want us to run stories plugging their products...what do we do?)

...along with many other ethical dilemmas.

One of the more eloquent endorsements of the need for media ethics education comes from a veteran journalist who has been for many years skeptical of the value of journalism-school education, and it is worth addressing here:

Writing in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Harry Rosenfeld, who directed Watergate coverage during his tenure as metro editor of the *Washington Post*, contends that “there is nothing new about making a profit. But today’s constantly shifting parameters of the world of communications offer previously unimaginable opportunities for scoring big bucks while also assuring these owners their stake in whatever the future brings. At the same time, they are scared to distraction by the potential of losing their once sure and secure place by the thundering pace of technological wizardry that is redefining communications. Their well-documented remedy has been to increasingly leverage the editorial mission to help out business interests -- most visibly lately at the Los Angeles Times, but commonplace to some degree throughout the media world...*This is the time, therefore, for journalism schools to step into the breach and do what needs doing: to prepare young people entering the field to understand those values that have brought credibility to the American press unequalled by any other nation.*” [Emphasis added.]

Rosenfeld’s remarks are taken from a recent article about media ethics included in this proposal

3. Essence of the Course

This section lists and explains the course's *objectives, content, and evaluation procedures*.

Objectives of the Course

When students complete this course, they will be able to:

- Understand how ethical decision-making processes work.
- Apply reasoning standards that have been developed over centuries to problems with new technologies that may have developed *last month*.
- Compare test cases to past instances involving serious ethical questions and dilemmas.
- Understand the nature of conflicting obligations, and develop a framework for determining where the media practitioner's obligations lie, and in what proportion.
- Cite law, ethical writings, and results of previous cases to justify their decisions.

Topical Outline and Content

Media Ethics can meet twice-weekly during the day or once-weekly at night. Once-a-week sessions are often useful for this type of course because they allow for extended discussion time.

During a typical semester, the course content would be broken down this way:

Week 1 Introduction; course requirements.

Week 2 Freedom of the Press: The Profit and the Price. An historical overview of the struggle between expression and repression.

Week 3 What is Ethics? How does this field of ethics relate to real-world media? How is ethics different from law? Ethics in journalism, advertising, and public relations – the similarities and differences.

Week 4 Accuracy and Objectivity. Is objectivity possible? What's a "fact"? Epistemology. The World Outside and the Pictures in Our

Heads. More discussion of mediated reality and the problems of objectivity, fairness and accuracy.

Week 5: Social Responsibility. To whom does the media "owe" responsibility? Theories of the press..."right to know" arguments. Fairness. How does one report "fairly"? How fairness backfires. The mechanics of journalism and the effect on perceived fairness.

Week 6: Research About the Mass Media. An examination of media theory and effects; the impact and consequences of mass communication. Mass Media's Research About their Audience. Ratings, demographics and psychographics; program directors, graphic designers and news doctors. New media technology and its effect on decision-making. Ethics of the hygienic relationship between advertising and editorial content.

Week 7: Professional Conduct. What's OK, what's not, and the problem with "professions"—do professional strictures inhibit free speech? Conflicts of interest, sensationalism, and the strictures both legal and ethical on news, PR, and advertising. The ethical obligations involved in using new technologies.

Week 8 . Privacy. Who owns the right to details about private lives? Historical changes. Some case histories. Legal and philosophical bases of privacy.

Week 9: How we know what we (think) we know; propaganda and censorship; the common will. The link between news coverage and the way decisions are made. Also, Do Ends Justify Means? Is extremism in pursuit of a good story a vice? Some case histories. The philosophical background to this argument.

Week 10: The Profit Motive. Does money corrupt? Relating this to economic theory and other theories of responsibility. New media, new profit centers, and new ethical dilemmas. Also, The Medium versus the Message. How media shape ideas. Living in a house that media and language built.

Week 11: Codes of Ethics. The major codes -- strengths, weaknesses, and omissions. Some problem with ethics codes. Methods of Review. Enforcing accountability. Ombudsmen, news councils, internal discipline, and public censure.

Week 12: Critical Self-Evaluation. The media can dish it out. Can the media take it? How can we solve the ethics issue? Or can we? Or should we try?

Weeks 13-14: The future of ethics, the latest writing about how media professionals can be part of the solution rather than the problem, how new genres are changing the rules. Review, final exam.

A sample syllabus is included in Appendix C.

Evaluation and Grading Procedure of Students

Students will be graded on their performance in class discussions, including five brief position papers written during the semester, a formal presentation, a research paper, and a final exam.

The paper will be worth 30 percent of the grade. It is based on the following premise:

The idea that "history repeats itself" is a cliché, but like many clichés it represents an essentially valid idea. For example: In one of our early lectures we will discuss how ostensibly "objective" reports from the battlefields of World War I were written by the generals themselves in ways carefully calculated for maximum public relations impact. CBS charged General William Westmoreland with masterminding roughly the same scheme during the Vietnam War -- about fifty years later.

Your assignment is to identify an issue in media ethics and trace the way it has resurfaced. Use examples from at least three periods in history. Compare the ways in which the issue was reincarnated, and do your best to answer the fundamental question: Did we learn anything from the past when the issue arose again?

Some possible issues are listed below:

- Ethics codes
- Decency and violence
- Hiding or revealing information during a crisis
- Privacy
- Stereotypes
- The changing nature of "private" information on the Web
- Relationship of sources and reporters
- Sensationalism
- Cooperating with the government

Wartime security
Misrepresentation
Profit versus Responsibility
Advertising that is targeted using banners and cookies
Obligations of public relations personnel to disclose damaging information

The Presentation: The assignment is to present a 20-minute (approximately) lecture relating the works of a "classical" ethicist to modern-day media practice. Present a summary of what that philosopher wrote and how it applies to current dilemmas. Handouts, including bibliographies and sample sections, will be appreciated. The goal is to make this information comprehensible and important to the class. I suggest you use one of the philosophers discussed in the Appendix to Crisis. The presentation is worth 25 percent of the grade.

Course Evaluation

Standard student evaluations will be administered during the final weeks of the course. Also, members of the departmental curriculum committee will be invited to view the process and the product.

4. Consultation

Letters from interested parties are attached in Appendix E.

5. Additional Information and Comments.

Please see the article attached as Appendix D. It details many of the issues we hope to deal with in the course.

6. Catalog Description

Media Ethics: Media Ethics examines decision-making in media professions. The course explores the moral aspects of media conduct, and helps the student develop a more complete understanding of not only the historical background of ethics, but how the interplay of politics, science, economics, law, philosophy, and other disciplines have influenced the way we view right and wrong. The course also strengthens analytical skills as they relate to ethical decisions, cultivating a perception of how media professionals come to a decision and the many factors that influence that decision.

propose 0601-203

Appendix A

Current Library Holdings

Books About Electronic News Reporting and Writing

Broussard, E. Joseph, Writing and reporting broadcast news. New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1982.

Fang, Irving E., Television news, radio news. 4th ed., rev. St. Paul: Rada Press. 1985.

The Functions of mass communications [videorecording]. Maumee, Ohio: Instructional Video. 1989.

Mayeux, Peter E., Broadcast news: writing & reporting. 2nd ed [rev.]. Madison [Wis.]: Brown & Benchmark. 1996.

Books about “Authorship” of Television News

Bliss, Edward, Writing news for broadcast. New York: Columbia University Press. 1971.

Block, Mervin, Writing broadcast news: shorter, sharper, stronger : a professional handbook. Chicago: Bonus Books. 1987.

Broussard, E. Joseph, Writing and reporting broadcast news. New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan. 1982.

Hall, Mark W., Broadcast journalism: an introduction to news writing. [1st ed.]. New York, Hastings House. 1971.

MacDonald, R. H., A broadcast news manual of style, 2nd ed. New York: Longman. 1994.

Smeyak, G. Paul, Broadcast news writing. 2nd ed. New York: Macmillan. 1986.

Zousmer, Steven, TV news off-camera: an insider's guide to newswriting and newspeople. 1987.

Books About “Authorship” of Radio News

Brooks, William F. , Radio news writing. 1st ed. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1948.

Howe, Quincy, The news and how to understand it in spite of the newspapers, in spite of the magazines, in spite of the radio. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.

Books About the General Study of Broadcast News

Carroll, Marie, A study examining the effectiveness of elementary students using commercial television. New York: Perigee, 1993.

Carter, Jimmy, 1924. We are prepared to meet confrontation or cooperation [Sound recording]. 1978.

Efron, Edith, The news twisters. Los Angeles: Nash Pub. 1971.

Green, Maury, Television news; anatomy and process. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Pub. Co. 1969.

Gunter, Barrie, Poor reception: misunderstanding and forgetting broadcast news. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates. 1987.

Neuman, Johanna, Lights, camera, war: is media technology driving international politics? 1st ed. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1996.

Singer, Eleanor. Reporting on risk: how the mass media portray accidents, diseases, disasters, and other hazards. New York: Random House, 1985.

Skornia, Harry Jay, Television and the news: a critical appraisal. Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books. 1968.

Tyrrell, Robert, The work of the television journalist. New York, Hastings House 1972.

Wood, William Almon, Electronic journalism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

Yorke, Ivor, The technique of television news. 2nd ed. Boston: Focal Press. 1987.

Zousmer, Steven, 1942. TV news off-camera: an insider's guide to Newswriting and newspeople. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987.

Books About Political Aspects of Television News

Barrett, Marvin, The politics of broadcasting. New York, Crowell. 1973.

Graham, Fred P., Happy talk: confessions of a TV journalist. New York: Norton. 1990.

Hosley, David H., Hard news: women in broadcast journalism. New York: Greenwood Press. 1987.

Iyengar, Shanto, Is anyone responsible?: how television frames political issues. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1991.

Iyengar, Shanto. News that matters: television and American opinion. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Keirstead, Phillip O., Journalist's notebook of live radio-TV news. Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: G/L Tab Books. 1976.

Books About Print Journalism and Journalism in General

Barnhart, Thomas Frederick, Weekly newspaper writing and editing. New York, Dryden Press. 1949.

Bernstein, Theodore Menline, More language that needs watching: second aid for writers and editors, emanating from the news room, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1962.

Berry, Thomas Elliott, Journalism in America: an introduction to the news media. New York: Hastings House, 1976.

Brennecke, Ernest, Magazine article writing. New York, Macmillan, 1930.

Campbell, Laurence Randolph, 1903. Newsmen at work: reporting and writing the news. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1949.

Cirino, Robert, Power to persuade: mass media and the news. New York: Bantam Pathfinder Editions. 1974.

Click, J. W. , Magazine editing and production. Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown Co. 1974.

Coblentz, Edmond D., comp., Newsmen speak: journalists on their craft. Freeport, N.Y., Books for Libraries Press. 1968.

Copple, Neale, Depth reporting: an approach to journalism. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 1964.

Cunliffe, John Williams, ed., Writing of today: models of journalistic prose. 4th and rev. ed. New York: The Century Co., 1925.

Dana, Charles A, The art of newspaper making. New York, Arno. 1970.

Doig, Ivan, News, a consumer's guide. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

English, Earl, Scholastic journalism. Ames: Iowa State University Press. 1962.

Ferguson, Rowena, Editing the small magazine. New York: Columbia University Press 1963.

Gerald, J. Edward, The social responsibility of the press. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963.

Hohenberg, John, Concise Newswriting. New York: Hastings House, 1987.

Hohenberg, John. The professional journalist: a guide to the practices and principles of the news media. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969.

How a magazine is published [videorecording]. Maumee, Ohio: Instructional Video. 1989.

Hudson, Frederic, Journalism in the United States, from 1690-1872. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873.

Hughes, Helen, News and the human interest story. New York: Greenwood Press. 1968.

Improving Newswriting: the best of The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. New York, American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1982.

Journalism and popular culture. London: Sage Publications. 1992.

Kennedy, Bruce M., Community journalism; a way of life. [1st ed.]. Ames:Iowa State University Press. 1974.

Kobre, Sidney, Backgrounding the news. Oakland, Calif.: Acme Books. 1969.

LeRoy, David J., Mass news: practices, controversies, and alternatives. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 1973.

Liberating the media: the new journalism. Washington: Acropolis Books, 1974.

MacDougall, Curtis Daniel. Interpretative reporting. 5th ed. New

York: Macmillan, 1968.

Mayer, Martin, Making news. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1987.

Mayer, Martin, Making news. Rev. and updated [ed.]. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1993.

Mayeux, Peter E., Broadcast news: writing & reporting. 2nd ed [rev.]. Madison [Wis.]: Brown & Benchmark, 1996.

McClendon, Sarah, Reporting from the White House [sound recording]. 1982.

Media, myths, and narratives: television and the press. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1988.

Meyer, Philip, Precision journalism: a reporter's introduction to social science methods. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

Moyers, Bill D., The human responsibility of journalism [sound recording]. 1982.

Neal, Robert Miller, News gathering and news writing. New York, Prentice-Hall, 1940.

The News media in national and international conflict. Boulder: Westview Press. 1984.

Newsmen's holiday. Nieman essays, first series. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press. 1969.

Patterson, Helen Marguerite, Writing and selling feature articles, 3d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 1956.

Peacocke, Emilie Hawkes, Writing for women. London, A. & C. Black, 1956.

Pesmen, Sandra, Writing for the media. Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Business Books, 1983.

Plain talk about the word business. Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1970.

Pray, Isaac Clarke, Memoirs of James Gordon Bennett and his

times. New York: Arno. 1970.

Presson, Hazel, The student journalist and interviewing. Rev. ed. New York: R. Rosen Press, 1989.

Reid, Whitelaw, American and English studies. Freeport, N.Y., Books for Libraries Press, 1968.

Rucker, Frank Warren, Newspaper organization and management, 3d ed. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1969.

Waldrop, Arthur Gayle, Editor and editorial writer, 3d ed. Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown Co. , 1967.

Walker, Stanley, City editor. New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1967.

Westley, Bruce H., News editing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Wilhelm, Donald George, . Writing for profit. New York: McGraw-Hill. 1930.

Journalism Periodicals

The Author's & writer's who's who. London: Burke's Peerage, Ltd.

Columbia journalism review.

Editor & publisher.

Journalism & mass communication quarterly.

The Journalism quarterly.

Nieman reports.

Appendix B: Suggested Additions to the Library's Holdings

Books

Black, Jay, Bob Steele, and Ralph Barney, Doing ethics In journalism. A handbook with case studies. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2nd edition, 1995.

Fuller, Jack, News Values : Ideas for an Information Age. University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Goodwin, Eugene, Groping for Ethics in Journalism. Iowa State University Press; 1999.

Hausman, Carl, Crisis of conscience: Perspectives on media ethics. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Hausman, Carl, The Decision-Making Process in Journalism. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

David Hemmings Pritchard, Holding the Media Accountable : Citizens, Ethics, and the Law. Indiana University Press, 2000

Matthew R. Kerbel, If It Bleeds, It Leads : An Anatomy of Television News. Westview, 2000.

Philip Seib, Journalism Ethics. Hacourt, 1999.

William Serrin (ed.) The Business of Journalism: Ten Leading Reporters and Editors on the Perils and Pitfalls of the Press. New Press, 2000.

Norman Solomon, The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media : Decoding Spin and Lies in Mainstream News. Common Courage Press, 1999.

Colin Sparks, Global Debates over Media Standards. Rowman, 2000.

Periodicals

American Journalism Review
Journalism and Mass Communication Educator.
Journal of Mass Media Ethics
Television Quarterly

- Cooperating with the government
- Wartime security
- Misrepresentation
- Profit versus
- Responsibility
- Advertising that is targeted using banners and cookies
- Obligations of public relations personnel to disclose damaging information

The paper should be about 2,500 words, and all references must be cited.

Papers will be graded on style and clarity -- and yes, this includes spelling and grammar -- as well as their overall point of view and narrative thrust. A good paper is more than a collection of facts. A good paper links events and ideas and moves toward a general conclusion. Don't just repeat facts...use them to illustrate your basic idea. Always cite the source of your facts within the text of the paper and demonstrate, briefly, why the author or speaker's contribution is important. Just because something is in a book does not indicate that it "proves" anything.

Again, remember that you must be cautious about grammar and usage. Of particular import: A paper with apostrophe errors will automatically be lowered a half grade.

Presentation: One. Due date TBA. Your assignment is to present a 20-minute (approximately) lecture relating the works of a "classical" ethicist to modern-day media practice. Present a summary of what that philosopher wrote and how it applies to current dilemmas. Handouts, including bibliographies and sample sections, will be appreciated. Your goal is to make this information comprehensible and important to the class. I suggest you use one of the philosophers discussed in the Appendix to Crisis. The presentation is worth 25 percent of your grade.

Lecture Topics and Readings

The topics listed are the main subjects for the day. We will sometimes have guest speakers or videotapes which may or may not be directly related to the main topic. Readings must be completed by the day they are listed. I'll give assignments from the reading packet as we go along. Be sure to keep current. It is expected that you will attend class regularly, join in discussions, and answer questions based on the reading. Failure to meet these basic responsibilities will affect your grade.

I will announce my office hours during the first and second sessions of class.

Please note that I must reserve the right to make changes in the schedule should circumstances dictate. Readings will be posted the week before they are due.

Week 1 Introduction; course requirements.

Week 2 Freedom of the Press: The Profit and the Price. An historical overview of the struggle between expression and repression.

Week 3 What is Ethics? How does this field of philosophy relate to real-world media? How is ethics different from law? Ethics in journalism, advertising, and public relations.

Week 4 Accuracy and Objectivity. Is objectivity possible? What's a "fact"? Epistemology. The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads. More discussion of mediated reality and the problems of objectivity, fairness and accuracy.

Week 5: Social Responsibility. To whom does the press "owe" responsibility? Theories of the press..."right to know" arguments. Fairness. How does one report "fairly"? How fairness backfires. The mechanics of journalism and the effect on perceived fairness.

Week 6: Research About the Mass Media. An examination of media theory and effects; the impact and consequences of mass communication. Mass Media's Research About their Audience. Ratings, demographics and psychographics; program directors, graphic designers and news doctors. New media technology and its effect on decision-making. Ethics of the hygienic relationship between advertising and editorial content.

Week 7: Professional Conduct. What's OK, what's not, and the problem with "professions." Conflicts of interest, sensationalism.

Week 8 Privacy. Who owns the right to details about private lives? Historical changes. Some case histories. Legal and philosophical bases of privacy.

Week 9: How we know what we (think) we know; propaganda and censorship; the common will. The link between news coverage and the way decisions are made. Also, Do Ends Justify Means? Is extremism in pursuit of a good story a vice? Some case histories. The philosophical background to this argument.

Week 10: The Profit Motive. Does money corrupt? Relating this to economic theory and other theories of responsibility. New media, new profit centers, and new ethical dilemmas. Also, The Medium versus the

Message. How media shape ideas. Living in a house that media and language built.

Week 11: Codes of Ethics. The major codes -- strengths, weaknesses, and omissions. Some problem with ethics codes. Methods of Review. Enforcing accountability. Ombudsmen, news councils, internal discipline, and public censure.

Week 12: Critical Self-Evaluation. The media can dish it out. Can the media take it? How can we solve the ethics issue? Or can we? Or should we try?

Weeks 13-14: The future of ethics, the latest writing about how media professionals can be part of the solution rather than the problem, how new genres are changing the rules. Review, final exam.

Appendix D: A Relevant Article

This article, while specific to journalism, deals with some of the emerging issues faced in the media, and discusses educators' approaches to ethics about media and morals.

Journalism Ethics in the Digital Age

How Technology Changes the Medium, the Message, and the Moral Issues

by Carl Hausman

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- In Madison, Wisconsin, public relations and admissions officials of the University of Wisconsin decide that their new admissions publication does not reflect the diversity of the campus -- so they order their staffs to use high-tech photo-imaging software to edit the face of a black student into a cover photo showing white students cheering at a football game.
- In Washington, the FBI releases a report detailing the agency's plans to review the propriety of a software program that can intercept email communications. The names, addresses, and security clearances of panel members who will review the software are digitally blanked out on the document -- but an Internet publication is able to digitally recover the names and publish all the details on a web site.
- In Los Angeles, reporters for the Los Angeles Times attend a staff meeting and boo their publisher after it is disclosed that the executive -- who had no experience in newspapers and was transferred from another arm of the corporation that owns the paper -- had split the profits from a special issue of the paper's magazine, covering a new sports arena, with the owners of the arena. Publisher Kathryn M. Downing admits to a "fundamental misunderstanding" of news ethics.
- In Cedar Grove, New Jersey, federal officials file a civil fraud lawsuit against a teenager, claiming that the youth used web sites and mass e-mailings to tout stocks he personally owned, driving up the price and selling the stocks within 24 hours of the bogus reports.

All four cases raise ethical issues hinging on the changing nature of journalism in the digital information age. The photo-manipulation incident -- which led to a public

apology by the University after a sharp-eyed reporter for a student newspaper noted that shadows on the black man's face did not match the lighting on the students surrounding him -- was triggered by the availability of software that was powerful but inexpensive and easy to use.

The digital redaction of the FBI documents demonstrated that the digital sword cuts both ways: What can be accomplished by someone adept at digital technology may be undone by someone who is more clever.

What proved to be a ghastly blunder for the Los Angeles Times seemed on its face to be a low-tech debacle that could have happened a hundred years ago. But it was a thoroughly modern incident, with pressure from a conglomerated corporation ravenous for profit, merged with non-journalistic units.

Was the alleged teen stock manipulator a "journalist?" By most definitions of the term, the answer must be yes. He reached thousands of readers with information upon which they acted. In the process he leveraged a technology far beyond his ethical capability to anticipate the possible consequences -- perhaps not a surprise given that the New York Times quoted the youth's father as being proud of his son's prowess.

In this special edition of *Insights on Global Ethics* we will examine the implications of new technologies and related business structures on journalism ethics -- examining the race between technology and our moral awareness of how to use and regulate that technology. We'll examine the fundamental changes in media and the perception of the role of the journalist, questions of privacy, manipulation, international issues, the profit motive, and the role of ethics in reigning in potential abuses of an evolving media technology.

The Changing Media Landscape

Media technology, incidentally, has always driven content and coverage. For example, the inverse-pyramid style of newspaper writing taught in journalism schools today evolved around the time of the U.S. Civil War, when a new invention -- the telegraph -- forced reporters to write their stories with the essential facts jammed in the first paragraph. They did this because of the technological nature of the device: the telegraph was unreliable, overburdened, and subject to sabotage. As a result, editors demanded the gist of the story be put up top in case the rest was lost. The fact that stories in this morning's newspaper cling to a style that evolved to accommodate wires strung a century ago is eloquent testimony to Marshall McLuhan's aphorism that the medium is indeed the message (see sidebar).

Today, the lightning pace of new media technologies are bringing change at an undreamed-of rate, changing both the medium and the message in ways we're not always anticipating.

"Speed -- the ability to move information around the world in a blink of an eye -- raises enormous ethical implications," says Katherine Fanning, former editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* and a former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. "Decisions are often made in haste, and the rush to publish causes mistakes."

Western Michigan University ethicist Sandra L. Borden concurs, noting that new technologies not only "contribute to the temptation to cut corners in order to be first to feed the 24-hour news cycle, but also produce the risk that "'customized' news may

further eat into America's public sphere by further privatizing civil life and taking away some of our common agenda."

The Changing Perception of the Journalist: "Just Another Content Provider"

Borden says another ethical side-effect of the avalanche of media technologies is what she refers to as "the so-called postmodern consciousness of our times. In an age when nothing seems certain and nothing sacred and all boundaries seem to be artificial contrivances, convergence just contributes to the morphing of journalists into just another kind of 'content provider with no more authority than Oprah or Matt Drudge.

"When journalists can no longer command a significant measure of cultural authority," Borden says, "their ability to serve their civic functions is crippled."

And when reporters become mere content providers, the result is a cheapening of the perceived value of news itself, according to Karen Jurgensen, editor of *USA Today*. Jurgensen, replying to a survey conducted by the *American Journalism Review*, contended that the greatest ethical and professional challenge in the 21st century will be to "preserve the concept of news as something that has value because it has been through a series of filters before distribution. Ours is a time when instant news is the norm. While 'live' reporting on the Web, television, and radio is a wonderful development, it often lacks the depth and balance that distinguishes it from entertainment...there is a difference between deliberate, measured, and supported judgment and off-the-cuff, unsupported opinion masquerading as news."

Privacy in Peril

Another factor diminishing the perceived value of news is the perception that the converging, churning media use new technologies to produce profit at any price, including the erosion of privacy. In some cases, a new scenario blindsides us when an existing technology is suddenly put to an unexpected use, such as when a Denver television station aired cell phone calls from students inside Columbine High School during the shooting spree. In other cases, the technology itself may be so new that there's no established reasoning on what's allowable when it's used by the news or entertainment media.

"We have generally found that privacy is not protected when the information is 'news,'" says attorney and former journalist James H. Bennett. "But at the moment, everything is potentially 'news,' and there is no time to determine whether the news is 'ethical' news."

Bennett notes that exploding digital technologies raise questions so new that "we've not staked out a position as to what's proper in the circumstances. For example, every time I accept a cookie [a small tracking file implanted on the hard drive of a computer user who visits a web site] I am at risk of exposure to behavior that I would assume is unethical, but which, I would assume, has no agreed standards attached to it."

Cookies are one manifestation of a medium that can move information in both directions, looking back at the user and tracking his or her viewing habits. On one hand, cookie technology offers enormous convenience: a user at a news site can develop a profile based on story selection preferences. If he clicks on many stories about vacations,

for example, the site can keep track of the cookies on the user's hard drive, discern his viewing trends, and feed him more stories -- and ads -- about vacation options.

But convenience comes with a price, according to Christopher Harper, the Roy H. Park Distinguished Professor of Communications at Ithaca College, the author of several books and articles about new media. "The new technologies allow companies to glean personal data rather easily," he says. "The government can also obtain information easily about individuals, including anything from previous health problems to purchasing patterns of goods like cigarettes and alcohol from scanning devices at supermarkets."

Where can your personal data go, and who benefits from using it? The answer, in basic terms, is everywhere and everyone. Digital data is so easily stored, reproduced and manipulated that any collaboration of institutions with something to sell -- or something to find out -- can use it profitably. For example, there is no technical barrier to information gleaned from your clicks on web sites dealing with health issues finding its way to potential employers. Similarly, there is no particular challenge in sifting information you have provided to marketers or the government, believing it was a one-to-one transfer of information, and placing it in one web site accessible to a mass audience.

One particularly unsettling example of this capability is a popular web site that lists contributions to political candidates, sorted by ZIP code. In essence, notes New York University Law Professor Fred Bernstein, the site is a "treasury of neighborhood gossip."

Writing in the *New York Times*, Bernstein noted that entering his ZIP code on the home page took him to a list, compiled from election commission records, of every person in the neighborhood who had contributed to a national candidate since 1980. "There it was," he recalled, "donor, recipient and amount (and with a few more clicks, the donor's address, phone number and employer)...scrolling down the list, I saw one familiar name after another. The woman downstairs, the one who admonished me for throwing away perfectly good plastic bags, had given away more to her favorite candidates than I thought she made in a year."

What happens in this and many other ethical test-cases is that the availability of a new technology -- as if often does -- altered the character of the information. Before the Internet, Bernstein notes, "donor records were publicly available only at Federal Election Commission offices. And who would bother going there to see them? Now, like a lot of other data, including real estate records and court filings, they've gone from public in theory to public in fact."

Reading the lists, he concludes, was fun, "but it also felt creepy. I wasn't peering into my neighbors' closets; it was more like peering inside the voting booth, the sanctum sanctorum of democratic freedom."

Cause, Effect, and Ethics

A ubiquitous, fast, and intrusive technology changes concepts such as privacy in a manner media critic Neil Postman calls "ecological": we don't have the same system with media added to it, we have an entirely new, interdependent, interconnected environment.

The ecological power of digital media has raised profound questions about the meaning of reality. As a college public relations official noted in reference to the case of the black student inserted into the football photo, there is a case to be made that there is no fundamental ethical difference between inserting the student digitally and asking him to move into the picture if the photo-shoot were staged in advance.

Such questions over manipulation of reality have a long pedigree in journalism. For example, a half-century ago there was debate over whether recorded programs were unethical because they distorted reality by implying that past events were occurring in the present. Five years ago the discovery that some television news anchors pre-taped chatty dialogue with reporters in the field to make it appear that a recorded segment was live raised ethical red flags.

Journalism professor Byung Lee, who teaches ethics at Elon College in North Carolina, predicts that the dispute over the nature of “trustworthy evidence of events” will evolve into a “struggle between two groups: the absolutist group that believes that a photograph should represent what a human being actually saw, and the moderate group that does not necessarily oppose all the alteration as long as it is done within bounds and with disclosure to the readers. The latter would even believe the alteration could even be desirable for some “useful” purposes.”

Philip Palombo, associate professor of media at Rhode Island College and the author of two books dealing with new media technologies, says that the issue is a critical one because new media can create their own reality -- not figuratively, but literally, and in an instant. He points to the cause-and-effect linkage between news on the Internet and volatile stock. “How are my investments affected when a large investor or an employee initiates spirited discussion on the Internet regarding a new product they have an interest in, or an earnings report for a stock they own?”

As examples, Palombo points to recent highly visible cases, such as the New Jersey teenager who touted stocks on the internet, and an incident in which a former employee of web-based information firm circulated a false press release about a company and then profited from the stock swing resulting from the bogus news. “In a stock market such as we’ve been experiencing in the U.S.,” he asks, “how can I be assured that a press release that’s driving up a company’s activity is legit? We’ve seen entire market segments driven or broken based on the rants and postings of a teenager.

“How vulnerable is that?”

The New Media Break Old Borders

The cause-and-effect dilemma of instant media has led to an abundance of proposed regulations, enacted regulations, and defeated regulations. In the United States, prohibition of publication in advance is an action of great gravity, often requiring extensive court action and numerous appeals. And the U.S. justice system is allergic to the process: even articles detailing construction of a hydrogen bomb have escaped court injunction. In keeping with the basic approach that we will tolerate almost anything to guarantee First Amendment freedoms, a proposed U.S. law, backed by the Clinton administration, to censor sexually oriented material on the Internet was struck down by a federal court.

But other nations do not necessarily share U.S. views on media. In Great Britain, for example, web-based publications covering stocks are required to be licensed by the government. In China, new regulations announced in early October hold Internet providers legally responsible for vaguely defined “illegal content” that is “subversive” or harms the “reputation” of the nation. Chinese Internet content and service providers must keep detailed records of everything published for 60 days and turn that information over to police on demand.

Such regulations raise vast ethical issues about cross-border control of information. Should a nation be allowed to control information from somewhere else that flows across its borders? Conversely, does a nation have a moral obligation to control such content? A Chinese on-line journalist, who asked to remain anonymous, points out that there are genuine differences of opinion on this matter. “You must remember that each nation sets its own priorities. While the United States seems to want totally open borders for the Internet, many Americans wring their hands about Internet gambling sites that are based in other countries -- primarily because governments in the U.S. want to control gambling and lotteries. Does this concern stem from the fact that state governments in the United States profit so handsomely from gambling?”

The Real Price of Profit

The profit motive is both the promise and the problem of journalism: Producing media is stunningly expensive and in most national systems journalism must be essentially self-supporting. But many critics argue that when news organizations become part of conglomerated profit-centered corporations, and are expected to provide a return on investment as high or higher than other units of the corporation, quality and ethics must take a back seat to packaging and profit.

Journalist and former State Department Spokesman Hodding Carter, now the head of the Knight Foundation, warns that all the good intentions of journalists can come to naught if those who control the purse strings are consumed with the quest for profit. In an interview with Rush Kidder, which is excerpted in the accompanying sidebar, Carter contends that “those who own the institutions for which [journalists] work are increasingly people who wouldn’t know a newsroom from a meatpacking plant, and whose sense of product is just that. It’s a product, which has to meet certain market tests first and foremost.”

While media conglomeration is a fairly old-fashioned trend driven by financial exigency, technological development increasingly propels such re-alignment. As ethicist Sandra Borden explains, “The media convergence we’re witnessing is due at least in part to the increase in corporate mergers in order to take advantage of technological synergies. While this may be pushing technology forward, it has the effect of further distancing those who own newspapers, television stations, and so forth from the role of journalism as a profession and public service -- as opposed to being simply a brand or a money-maker.”

Or, as Katherine Fanning puts it, “the emphasis on making money outweighing excellence in journalism is an ethical issue that cuts right to the whole issue of credibility of the press.”

Enter Ethics

Can ethics evolve in tandem with technologies and rescue journalism from its current crisis of confidence? The historical long view would tend to indicate that ethics, law, and regulation always struggle to play catch-up but eventually do make an appearance, and at least partially remedy the problem. But as Rhode Island College's Palombo notes, "technology is a gazelle and regulation is an elephant. The only thing that can hope to keep pace with technology is the ethics and judgment of the individual. That's why I put an ethical angle on every technological subject I teach, from the Web to live TV coverage."

Some veteran journalists say that the time is right for an expansion of the ethics curriculum in journalism schools. Harry Rosenfeld, who as metro editor of the Washington Post directed the paper's Watergate coverage, admits that he has been a critic of the value of a journalism school education but now argues that "journalism schools may be the only places to consistently inculcate basic values in a world of troubling change."

Writing in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Rosenfeld contends that "there is nothing new about making a profit. But today's constantly shifting parameters of the world of communications offer previously unimaginable opportunities for scoring big bucks while also assuring these owners their stake in whatever the future brings. At the same time, they are scared to distraction by the potential of losing their once sure and secure place by the thundering pace of technological wizardry that is redefining communications. Their well-documented remedy has been to increasingly leverage the editorial mission to help out business interests -- most visibly lately at the Los Angeles Times, but commonplace to some degree throughout the media world..."

Rosenfeld concludes that, "This is the time, therefore, for journalism schools to step into the breach and do what needs doing: to prepare young people entering the field to understand those values that have brought credibility to the American press unequalled by any other nation."

Regardless of whether ethics is discussed on the job, in the classroom, or both, many concur that in an age of cascading technological change, the subject must not be forgotten. Virginia Whitehouse, associate professor at Whitworth College and an official of several ethics and journalism and ethics panels, says it is critical that those who develop new media think about ethics and refrain from making excuses. Some, she warns, will assume that because they are working with new methods of communication they can ignore ethical standards from earlier forms of technology. "This assumes that the ethical wheel must be reinvented every time a new version of software comes out. Obviously, this doesn't work."

Another popular excuse is to shrug the ethical question off by saying "there is nothing new under the sun." That approach also skirts the issue, Whitehouse says, because some things do change dramatically, such as privacy concerns "when that many people can share that much information about you."

In sum, she cautions that “the greatest threat is not that a specific ethical question will be overlooked, but that ethics as a whole will be overlooked in the race for the newest, best, and fastest.”

Whitehouse urges that those who develop new technologies create ethical decision-making models that will help them evaluate ethical impact in a rapidly changing market -- and at the same time, not try to duck the hard questions.

“Anyone can assuage their ethical angst,” she says, “simply by coming up with excuses to avoid asking the ethical questions.”

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Sidebar

The Medium Really *is* the Message

How Technology has Changed Media, Ethics, and Society

The word “media” is from the same root as “median,” meaning “middle.” The assumption implicit in the word is that a “medium” is a neutral conveyance, a method or technology that simply moves information down a path.

That’s a popular assumption, but it’s clearly not the case: media technologies strongly influence content as well as the ethical implications attached to that content. Here are some examples, placed on a historical time-line, of how evolving technology has shaped the content of the message and affected the ethics of journalism:

c. 1450: The printing press is made workable by a German silversmith. Its almost-immediate effect is to make written material accessible to many more layers of society. Up until the time of moveable type, printed materials had to be laboriously hand-copied by scribes, whose ranks were decimated by various plagues and were therefore in short supply and commanded high prices. The plagues had also indirectly fueled the paper industry, because so much of Europe’s population died that there were many unused scraps of clothing that could be made into high-quality paper.

These factors combined to produce an explosion of print in the late 1400s, and the first high-profile application of the printing press is propaganda: Christopher Columbus prints up glowing (and hugely exaggerated) accounts of riches to be found in the New World. He uses what amount to the world’s first press releases to drum up financial support for his voyages.

The power of this new medium is instantly noted by royalty of the era, who don’t like it at all. They begin the first series of controversies in journalism ethics through various campaigns to squelch the new voices of the press by licensing printing presses, censoring publications, and intimidating, torturing, and murdering those who publish material that would threaten the power structure.

1700-1776: During this era, the printing press accomplishes everything its foes dreaded: It fuels increasing literacy, provides people with ideas from beyond their immediate environment, and circulates a great deal of writing about ethics -- especially the

philosophy of natural rights, a concept much admired by Jefferson, who appropriates some of what he's read into the Declaration of Independence.

1833-1865: New developments in printing technology revolutionize the character and content of the newspaper. High-speed presses make it possible for a newspaper to be produced for a penny -- a fraction of what papers and magazines cost during the colonial era, when publications were still mainly for the elite. Because the papers are now geared toward mass audiences, their *content* changes: they now carry classified ads and often feature lurid stories about crime and sex.

1865-1900: Increasingly sophisticated telegraphic transmission now allows news to travel over long distances faster than a man on horseback -- a sweeping change in the very nature of information, because news can now reach the entire nation at pretty much the same time.

By the end of the Civil War, the technology had ingrained the concept of "objectivity" and neutrality into the language of news. Editors of wire services realized that information reaching readers of differing political orientations regarding slavery, free land in the west, tariffs, and a national banking system -- the flashpoints for the conflict -- would object to slanted news.

Refinement of rotary-powered steam presses, the presence of mass audiences clustered in burgeoning urban areas, and a booming post-war market made newspapers stunningly profitable. Too profitable, in the eyes of many who criticized the sensationalistic "yellow journalism" of the era and the concentration of power among small portions of society -- including media barons.

The excesses of the economic boom produced an ethical backlash around 1900. Many newspapers, such as *The New York Times*, swore off Yellow Journalism. The Times, as an example, vowed to carry only news that was "fit to print" and set about printing full texts of speeches and treaties in an effort to become a more respectable newspaper of record.

1910 - 1945. The development of broadcasting changes media and media ethics forever. Among the early ethical issues was a lively debate over what we now call intellectual property: the emerging medium of radio struggled with the concept of playing music over the airwaves because there was no consensus over the propriety of using someone else's music, and no mechanism to recompense authors and publishers.

In 1927, the federal government shook of the evolving electronic media by borrowing some words from public utility law, saying that radio, and later television, must operate in the "public interest, convenience, and necessity." Broadcasting would play by different ethical rules than print media, because as a limited resource -- there was a limited spectrum space available -- broadcasters had to be licensed by the public to act in the public interest in much the same way as electric and gas companies.

During this era, the immediate nature of radio quite literally changed the course of history. The United States, essentially committed to staying out of the war in Europe, changed its collective mind due in part to Edward R. Murrow's broadcasts from war-ravaged London. For the first time, war came into people's living rooms. And Murrow

coped with new ethical issues tied to the immediate nature of the medium: he delivers some broadcasts with a censor holding his sleeve, tugging if Murrow strays into dangerous journalistic territory, such as describing the locations where he sees bombs landing. The Germans are monitoring his broadcasts and have tried to use them as “rangefinder” reports. The Allies, meanwhile, monitor French radio, noting the progress of the Nazis by tracking which French radio stations play German, rather than French, popular songs.

1960: Postwar war-weary but cash-flush America retreats to the living rooms with a new technological marvel: television, the “cool fire” that becomes the de facto family hearth. Television captures the national eye like no medium before, but we begin to see that this new medium changes the way we think -- especially about politics. A tanned, handsome and well-rested John F. Kennedy trounces a sweating, poorly shaved Richard Nixon in the TV debate.

People who view the debate mostly say Kennedy won. But most people who heard the debate on radio thought *Nixon* won. There’s suddenly a new visual dynamic in politics, and as Don Hewitt, the director of the debate, puts it, that was when we learned “something was wrong with the mixture of television and politics.”

1980: Ted Turner launches CNN. Turner’s empire is built on the brilliant exploitation of a relatively new technology: satellites. Turner is among the first to realize that satellite transmission makes media borderless and its point of origination largely irrelevant. He becomes a media titan by building his small Atlanta television outlet into a “superstation” which supplies programming to content-hungry cable stations via satellite downlink. CNN, despite the sneers of major networks who sometimes call it the “Chicken Noodle Network,” will become ubiquitous and omnipresent and the first truly global news network.

1991-present. Advancing technology makes live, omnipresent television the media standard. The Persian Gulf War is played out on live TV during prime-time in the U.S.; some speculate that the coverage of the hostilities looks suspiciously like a video game. Jay Leno remarks that this is the first war with its own theme song. Car chases, sometimes with gruesome results, become a daily staple of live television. News crews with live miniature cameras cover SWAT team assaults on crime scenes, with everyone watching including the criminals, who now have a better idea where to shoot. Television news executives struggle to balance the audience-producing power of the technology with the ethical issues inherent in live coverage.

1995 -- present. Disney buys ABC, Westinghouse purchases CBS, Time Warner purchases CNN and the combined firm is eventually sought by upstart Internet firm America OnLine -- an unthinkable eventuality at the start of the decade. Led by hunger for larger, vertically-integrated structures, new media ventures seek a slice of a demanding, media-saturated audience.

Technology again re-writes the rules and changes the playing field.

Carl Hausman, editor of Insights, is chair of the Department of Journalism at Rowan University. He has written two books on media ethics and has testified before Congress on ethical issues relating to new media technologies.

Appendix E

Letters of Consultation

Copies of the proposal were sent to all department chairs in the College of Communication, all members of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, and to Abraham Witonsky of the Department of Philosophy and Religion.

Letters from those who responded are attached.

Two minor alterations to this proposal were made, based upon consultations: more short writing assignments were included, and more emphasis was added on the over-arching relationships among ethics issues in various communication disciplines.



*College of Communication
Office of the Dean*

TO: Carl Hausman, Chair, Journalism & Creative Writing
FROM: Toni Libro, ^{JD} Dean, College of Communication
DATE: October 16, 2000
RE: New Media Ethics Course

I have read the new Media Ethics course proposal with keen interest and I am pleased to offer you my enthusiastic endorsement. As you know, we have discussed the need for a stand-alone ethics course for quite some time in the College of Communication. The time seems right to move ahead with plans to implement this course now.

The proposal is carefully planned and comprehensive. I can see a course like this serving all of our majors, not just those in journalism. Indeed, I believe the strength of a media ethics course such as this one would derive from its broadbased appeal.

The course should be an upper level offering, in keeping with your suggestion that it be a 300 level course. I think that second-semester juniors could take the course, but that it would have the most meaning for those who are about to graduate and may find themselves in fairly deep water when it comes to ethical questions in the digital age.

I appreciate your chairing the committee to create this course and we are all fortunate that the subject of ethics falls into your expertise to the degree that it does. As the author of two texts on journalism ethics, a mass-market book about ethics in the news, politics, and advertising, and many other accomplishments, you are ideally suited to teach the course.

I look forward to the day when the course will be taught and hope that the Fall 2001 date of implementation turns out to be a successful one. Thank you for leading the way in the creation of the long-overdue Media Ethics course.



Department of Communication Studies

October 18, 2000

To: Dr. Carl Hausman, Chair, Journalism and Creative Writing

From: Dr. Cindy Corison, Chair, Communication Studies

Re: Media Ethics Course Proposal

Having reviewed your Media Ethics proposal, paying special attention to the rationale and the syllabus, the Communication Studies department believes the course would provide an important background for future media professionals. Current debates on journalistic practices surely suggest the importance of serious and in-depth discussion of media ethics, and you are certainly well qualified for such a task. Moreover, we highly encourage the continued educational stress on the ethical responsibilities of communicators in various arenas.

As presented in the proposal, this Media Ethics course would not duplicate course content in other departments. Given its specific focus on journalism and media, this course would appropriately compliment journalism, advertising, and public relations (as well as RTF and Communication Studies students depending on student specialization.) Since the Communication Ethics course currently under discussion in the Communication Studies department would address very different issues (ethical considerations in interpersonal, organizational, and public address contexts, with a brief discussion of basic mass media ethics), the Media Ethics course proposal would not overlap with our goals in content or audience. We recognize and applaud a rigorous and specialized approach to ethics that would give detailed attention to the unique concerns of the different professional goals of Communication students. This Media Ethics course offers such a specialized course for the journalism and mass media students in the College of Communication.



Department of Journalism and Creative Writing

October 16, 2000

Dr. Carl Hausman, Chair
Department of Journalism and Creative Writing
College of Communication
Rowan University
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Dear Carl:

Please accept my strong and enthusiastic support for the proposed course in Media Ethics. Students clearly need the course, in my estimation, and your plan for it seems to be well developed.

In general, people seem to be unaware of the influence media have over their lives and their decisions, and our students are no different from others in this respect. My beginning newswriting students have trouble even recognizing obvious editorializing and don't seem to have considered basic ethical questions such as fairness in reporting the news. Even the master's degree students in public relations whose theses I advised a couple of years ago were aware of legal considerations but seemed to be unconcerned about ethical situations that arose in connection with their research. Any explicit examination of ethical considerations would sensitize our students to important issues in their work.

Your conception of the course seems carefully considered, and I am particularly impressed with your examination of the issues in emerging technologies. Ethical considerations in a typical university philosophy course don't necessarily prepare students to deal with issues in terms of advanced technology, which is where they are most critical.

If I can contribute to the work needed for approval of this course, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Estelle P. Resnik

Janice Rowan
Chair, College Writing
College of Communication
Rowan University

November 25, 2000

Dr. Carl Hausman, Chair
Journalism/Creative Writing
Rowan University

Dear Dr. Hausman:

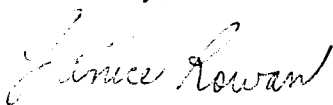
Every day we are reminded of the urgent need for ethical behavior among media practitioners. I can think of no more vital course than Media Ethics for Communication majors, especially at the junior/senior level of study.

The course emphases—including understanding ethical decision-making processes, learning the relationship between new technologies and ethics, weighing conflicting obligations, and knowing the legal precedents which influence ethical decisions—are all key ingredients in such a course. Topics such as social responsibility, professionalism in the field, and privacy will prepare our students well to deal with the challenges of their chosen field.

I would like to suggest that more writing be included in the course. I have noted that you require a research paper, a presentation, ongoing class discussion, and a final, but multiple short writing assignments or a series of papers might also enhance learning.

I fully support your proposal for an undergraduate Media Ethics course.

Sincerely,



Janice Rowan

Appendix C: Sample Syllabus

Course Requirements and Lecture/Reading Schedule

MEDIA ETHICS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Media is a detailed exploration of ethics in the news and communications business. We'll consider "classical" and modern-day interpretations of ethics, deal with case histories, and evaluate current problems and controversies in journalism.

This course has three primary goals:

- To develop a more complete understanding of not only the historical background of ethics, but how the interplay of politics, science, economics, law, philosophy, and other disciplines have influenced the way we view right and wrong.
- To strengthen analytical skills as they relate to ethical decisions, cultivating a perception of how people come to a decision and the many factors that influence that decision.
- To help you create a personal view of journalism ethics and defend that view in written and oral presentations.

READINGS

There are two required paperbacks:

1. Hausman, Carl. Crisis of Conscience. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992). Crisis evaluates how decisions in journalism are made, and discusses how other areas of knowledge -- such as ethics, political philosophy, and epistemology -- can be used to understand and evaluate journalism.

2. Christians, C., et al., Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning, 6th ed.. (New York: Longman, 2000). Cases looks not only at news but advertising and public relations. Recently revised chapters provide insight into advancing technologies.

A schedule of lecture topics, is included at the conclusion of this syllabus.

TESTS, PARTICIPATION, PAPERS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Tests: There will be a final. It will be worth 25 percent of your grade.

Participation: Attendance is mandatory, as is participation in class discussions. I do realize that all of us encounter various health, transportation, and family problems, so two unexcused absences are allowed. Further absences will affect your grade. I also understand that people have varying degrees of comfort relating to participation in public discussion. It is truly essential that you participate; if you are reluctant, feel you have language difficulties, or experience any other problem meeting this requirement please see me and we will work something out. As part of your class participation obligation I will ask you to write about five brief position papers on a media ethics issue. I will read and comment on these papers and occasionally distribute them to the class for comment. Class participation is worth 20 percent of your grade.

Paper: One. The paper is worth 30 percent of your grade. Unless you have a written medical excuse, any late paper will receive no more than a C. The paper is due _____.

Paper guidelines:

The idea that "history repeats itself" is a cliché, but like many clichés it represents an essentially valid idea. For example: In one of our early lectures we will discuss how ostensibly "objective" reports from the battlefields of World War I were written by the generals themselves in ways carefully calculated for maximum public relations impact. CBS charged General William Westmoreland with masterminding roughly the same scheme during the Vietnam War -- about fifty years later. Decision-Making briefly addresses the role of propaganda in the early days of World War II.

Your assignment is to identify an issue in press ethics and trace the way it has resurfaced. Use examples from at least three periods in American history. Compare the ways in which the issue was reincarnated, and do your best to answer the fundamental question: Did we learn anything from the past when the issue arose again?

Some possible issues are listed below:

- Ethics codes
- Decency and violence
- Privacy
- Crisis intervention; releasing or holding details
- Stereotypes
- The changing nature of "private" information on the Web
- Relationship of sources and reporters
- Sensationalism