

# PHI 293: ETHICS AND THE MEDIA PROFESSIONS

Fall 2017

Lectures: Tues/Thurs 5:00-5:55pm,  
Discussion Sections: Weds 12:45-1:40, 2:15-3:10, 3:45-4:40, or 5:15-6:10pm

Teaching Assistant:

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Professor:

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## REQUIRED TEXTS

- David Sanford Horner, *Understanding Media Ethics* (Sage, 2015). ISBN: 1849207887
- Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford, 2018). ISBN: 0190631414
- Max Bazerman & Ann Tenbrunsel, *Blind Spots: Why We Fail to Do What's Right, and What to Do About It* (Princeton, 2012). ISBN: 0691156220

The required texts are available for purchase at the University Bookstore in the Schine Student Center. Additional readings will be made available for download on Blackboard.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*Ethics and the Media Professions* is an introduction to the ethical issues raised by the entertainment media, including television, radio, film, graphics, and photography. The goal of the course is to provide students with the resources and background required to recognize, navigate, and constructively respond to the ethical challenges faced by entertainment media professionals. Toward that end, the course focuses on three interrelated topics:

1. Ethical concepts and methods, including traditional views about ethical standards and how they should be determined.
2. Specific areas where ethical issues arise for the entertainment media: including the portrayal of sex and violence; the representation of race, class, and gender; and the ethical implications of the internet and digital technology.
3. Questions concerning personal, professional, and institutional responsibility, and the ethical challenges of professional life.

In addressing these topics, you will learn how to think clearly and carefully about difficult subjects. The skills and perspectives you develop will be useful in personal and professional life.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Exams** [midterm and final]: The exams will consist of true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions. The content covered by the final exam will be cumulative.

**Final Paper** [8 pages]: Topics and guidelines will be provided as the semester progresses.

**Participation:** *Regular preparation, attendance, and participation are expected.* There will be weekly online reading quizzes. A significant portion of your final grade (20%) will be based on reading comprehension and active participation in discussion sections.

## GRADING INFORMATION

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Midterm Exam:       | 25% |
| Final Exam:         | 25% |
| Final Paper:        | 30% |
| Reading Quizzes:    | 10% |
| Discussion Section: | 10% |

I use a standard grading scale:

|    |           |    |          |    |          |
|----|-----------|----|----------|----|----------|
| A  | = 94-100% | B  | = 84-87% | C  | = 74-77% |
| A- | = 90-94%  | B- | = 80-84% | C- | = 70-74% |
| B+ | = 87-90%  | C+ | = 77-80% | D  | = 60-70% |

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Digital Technology:** The use of laptops, tablets, cellphones, and other digital devices is prohibited while class is in session.

**Make-up Exams:** Illnesses, family emergencies, and legitimate academic conflicts are the only excuses for missed exams. To receive a make-up exam, you must provide documentation.

**Late Papers:** Late papers will be marked down by 2% per day late.

**Blackboard:** Course information, course materials, and reading quizzes will be available on Blackboard, SU's online learning system. To access the Blackboard website, go to <http://blackboard.syr.edu> and use your Syracuse NetID username and password to log in.

**Academic Integrity:** The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy will be enforced. The Syracuse policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete University policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

**Special Accommodations:** If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call 315-443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue “Accommodation Authorization Letters” to students with documented disabilities as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

## RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- José Luis Bermúdez & Sebastian Gardner (eds.). *Art and Morality*. Routledge, 2003.
- Raphael Cohen-Almagor. *Speech, Media, and Ethics: The Limits of Free Expression*. Palgrave Macmillian, 2005.
- Nick Couldry, Mirca Madianou, & Amit Pinchevski (eds.). *Ethics of Media*. Palgrave Macmillian, 2013.
- Brooke Gladstone. *The Influencing Machine*. Illus. Josh Neufeld. W. W. Norton, 2011.
- Howard Good & Sandra L. Borden (eds.). *Ethics and Entertainment: Essays on Media Culture and Media Morality*. McFarland, 2010.
- Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon, 2002.
- Matthew Kieran. *Media Ethics: A Philosophical Approach*. Praeger, 1997.
- Matthew Kieran (ed.). *Media Ethics*. Routledge, 1998.
- Jerrold Levinson (ed.). *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*. Cambridge, 1998.
- Ishani Maitra & Mary Kate McGowan (eds.) *Speech and Harm: Controversies over Free Speech*. Oxford, 2012.
- Marshall McLuhan. *Understanding Media* (Routledge Classics). Routledge, 2001.
- Lynda Obst. *Hello, He Lied – and Other Truths from the Hollywood Trenches*. Broadway, 1996.
- Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. Penguin, 2005.
- F. Miguel Valenti. *More Than a Movie: Ethics in Entertainment*. Westview, 2000.
- Bernard Williams (ed.). *Obscenity and Film Censorship: An Abridgement of the Williams Report*. Cambridge, 1981.
- Paul Woodruff. *The Necessity of Theater: The Art of Watching and Being Watched*. Oxford, 2008.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Week 1: Course Introduction**

Reading: Course Syllabus  
Horner: Introduction

### **Week 2: Social Contract Theory: Civilization and Morality**

Reading: Shafer-Landau: Introduction  
Shafer-Landau 13: The Social Contract Tradition: The Theory and Its Attractions  
Shafer-Landau 14: The Social Contract Tradition: Problems and Prospects

### **Week 3: Social Contract Theory: The Media as a Public Institution**

Reading: Horner 10: Privacy  
Horner 11: Security  
Onora O’Neill, “Media Freedoms & Media Standards”

### **Week 4: Consequentialism: Censorship and Liberty**

Reading: Shafer-Landau 9: Consequentialism, Its Nature and Attractions  
Horner 4: Liberty  
Anthony Ellis, “Censorship and the Media”

### **Week 5: Consequentialism: Violent Content**

Reading: Horner 5: Violence  
Stephen Prince, “Violence”  
Susan Hurley, “Bypassing Conscious Control: Media Violence, Unconscious Imitation, and Freedom of Speech”

### **Week 6: Consequentialism: Pornographic Content**

Reading: Horner 6: Pornography  
Susan J. Brison, “‘The Price We Pay?’ Pornography and Harm”  
A. W. Eaton, “A Sensible Antiporn Feminism”

Week 7: MIDTERM EXAM (Tues, 10/10)  
PAPER ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT (Thurs, 10/12)

**Week 8: Deontology: *Truth, Rationality, and Other Obligations***

Reading: Shafer-Landau 11: The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice  
Shafer-Landau 12: The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect  
Horner 7: Truth

**Week 9: Deontology: *The Ethics of Representation***

Reading: Horner 8: Images  
Horner 9: Stereotyping  
Lawrence Blum, "Stereotypes and Stereotyping"

**Week 10: Deontology: *Art and Morality***

Reading: Mary Devereaux, "Beauty and Evil: The Case of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*"  
Elisabeth Schellekens, "Taking A Moral Perspective: On Voyeurism in Art"

**Week 11: Virtue Ethics: *Character and Integrity***

Reading: Shafer-Landau 17: Virtue Ethics  
Bazerman & Tenbrunsel 1-2

Week 12: THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Week 13: Virtue Ethics: *Why We Fail to Do What's Right***

Reading: Bazerman & Tenbrunsel 3-4

**Week 14: Virtue Ethics: *How to Be More Ethical Than You Are***

Reading: Bazerman & Tenbrunsel 8

Week 15: FINAL PAPER DUE (Thurs, 12/7)  
FINAL EXAM (Tues, 12/12 @ 5:15pm)