

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

NOTE: ANY CHANGES TO A CSD MUST GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RELEVANT APPROVAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING LTPC.

Academic School/Department:	Communications, Arts and Social Sciences
Programme:	International Journalism and Media
FHEQ Level:	6
Course Title:	Media Ethics and Law
Course Code:	JRN 6205
Course Leader:	Dr. Eunice Goes
Student Engagement Hours:	120
Lectures:	22.5
Seminar / Tutorials:	22.5
Independent / Guided Learning :	75
Semester:	SPRING
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

Media professionals, and in particular journalists, have a special role in democracies. This course examines the main legal and ethical issues which journalists of the digital age encounter in their working lives. Thus, the course will focus on the concepts of libel and defamation, copyright law, the public sphere, media ownership, objectivity and neutrality, freedom of the press, censorship, codes of conduct for journalists, privacy and public interest, reporting restrictions and national interest, propaganda, gender issues, and reporting in a multicultural society.

Pre-requisites and/or Co-requisites: COM 5205

Aims and Objectives:

This course aims to critically examine key legal and ethical questions raised by media and journalistic practices. What is the role of journalism in democratic societies? Why does media ownership matter? What are the limits to freedom of expression? Is there a right to privacy? Should the news media accept government regulations in war reporting? What is the meaning of media objectivity? Throughout the course we will engage in critiques and analyses of journalistic practices and media regulations with the aim of developing a detailed understanding of legal and ethical issues in media. By the end of this course successful students will have:

- A critical understanding of the public and social role of mass media;

- The ability to relate those roles to the social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of citizenship, democracy and globalization.
- The ability to critically understand the political and economic agendas of the media.
- To apply these insights to the study and production of news in relation to a variety of ethical and legal dilemmas.
- To examine the legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks that affect media and cultural production, manipulation and consumption.
- To understand how class, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexuality and other social divisions play key roles in terms of both access to the media and modes of representation in media texts.

Programme Outcomes:

6Ai
6Aiv
6Ci
6Civ
6Dii
6Div

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the Departmental/Schools page of the portal.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students should be able to demonstrate a critical understanding of the role of a free press in democratic societies.
- Students should be able to demonstrate a systematic understanding of how commercial and economic factors constrain media production and consumption.
- Students should be able to produce a detailed analysis and critical appraisal of questions about media objectivity, neutrality, public interest, privacy and censorship.
- Development of a detailed understanding of how different normative views and cultural commitments influence media ethical and legal standards around the world.
- Demonstrates the ability to produce detailed analyses of competing perspectives and concepts on media ethics, to make comparisons and connections and to identify the possibility of new concepts
- Demonstrates the ability to flexibly locate their own normative views and cultural commitments within the practice of research, with a level of autonomy

Indicative Content:

- The role of the media in democratic societies
- Implications of media ownership to freedom of the press.
- Media agendas
- Concept of Public Interest
- Concept of a right to privacy
- Censorship
- Propaganda

- Gender and Racial Ethical Guidelines for Reporting
- Digital media

Assessment

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Council on June 28, 2012.

Teaching Methodology:

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures, seminars, oral presentations and group work. Screening of films and documentaries and study materials will be used as appropriate. The general approach in the classes is informal and discussion is encouraged as an essential part of learning.

Bibliography:

Indicative Text(s):

Gene Foreman, *The Ethical Journalist*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010

Sanders, Karen, *Ethics & Journalism*, Sage Publications, 2008

Alterman, Eric (2003) *What Liberal Media?: The Truth About Bias and the News*, Basic Books.

Baker, Howard; Goldstein, Tom (2008) *Journalism and Truth: Strange Bedfellows*, Northwestern University Press.

Bagdikian, Ben (2004) *The New Media Monopoly*, Beacon Press

Smith, Ron (2008) *Ethics in Journalism* 6th Edition, Blackwells

Street, John (2001) *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*, Palgrave MacMillan

Journals

Journal of Mass Media Ethics

Journal of Media Law and Ethics

Journalism Studies

Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism

Web Sites

www.indexonensorship.org

www.ethics.journalism.wis.edu

www.englishpen.org

www.freedomhouse.org

www.mediaethicsmagazine.com

www.cimethics.org

www.savethemedia.com

www.journalismethics/info

www.guardian.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/news

www.bbc.co.uk/journalism

www.reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk

www.journalismfoundation.org

www.nytimes.com

www.poynter.org
<http://en.rsfsf.org>

Change Log for this CSD:

Major or Minor Change?	Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry