

## **COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

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

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the main legal and ethical issues which media practitioners of the digital age encounter in their working lives, whether in the fields of PR, journalism or advertising. 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 and PR practitioners, advertising regulation, 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 **the media** in democratic societies? Why does media ownership matter? What are the limits to freedom of expression? Is there a right to privacy? **What is the relationship between journalism, PR and advertising?** What is the meaning of media objectivity? Throughout the course we will engage in critiques and analyses of **media** practices and regulation with the aim of developing a detailed understanding of legal and

ethical issues in journalism, **PR and advertising**. 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:**

At the end of the course successful students must have:

- Demonstrated a critical understanding of the role of free media, PR and advertising in democratic societies.
- Demonstrated a systematic understanding of how commercial and economic factors constrain media production and consumption.
- Produced a detailed analysis and critical appraisal of questions about media objectivity, neutrality, public interest, privacy, the role of PR and advertising, and censorship.
- Developed a detailed understanding of how different views and cultural commitments influence media ethical and legal standards around the world.
- Demonstrated an 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.
- Demonstrated the ability flexibly to locate their own views and cultural commitments within the practice of research, within 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
- Ethical codes governing PR and journalism
- Concept of a right to privacy
- Censorship
- Propaganda
- Media and advertising regulation
- Digital media

**Assessment**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

**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):**

- Alterman, Eric (2003) *What Liberal Media?: The Truth About Bias and the News*, Basic Books.
- Bagdikian, Ben (2004) *The New Media Monopoly*, Beacon Press
- Baker, Howard; Goldstein, Tom (2008) *Journalism and Truth: Strange Bedfellows*, Northwestern University Press.
- Gene Foreman, *The Ethical Journalist*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010
- Sanders, Karen, *Ethics & Journalism*, Sage Publications, 2008
- Morris, Trevor and Goldsworthy, Simon (2016) *PR Today: The Authoritative Guide to Public Relations*, Palgrave**
- Smith, Ron (2008) *Ethics in Journalism* 6<sup>th</sup> 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.indexoncensorship.org](http://www.indexoncensorship.org)
- [www.ethics.journalism.wis.edu](http://www.ethics.journalism.wis.edu)

- [www.englishpen.org](http://www.englishpen.org)
  - [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)
  - [www.mediaethicsmagazine.com](http://www.mediaethicsmagazine.com)
  - [www.cimethics.org](http://www.cimethics.org)
  - [www.savethemedia.com](http://www.savethemedia.com)
  - [www.journalismethics/info](http://www.journalismethics/info)
  - [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)
  - [www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)
  - [www.bbc.co.uk/journalism](http://www.bbc.co.uk/journalism)
  - [www.reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk](http://www.reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk)
  - [www.journalismfoundation.org](http://www.journalismfoundation.org)
  - [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
  - [www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org)
  - <http://en.rsf.org>
  - [www.prca.org.uk](http://www.prca.org.uk)
  - [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk)
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Change Log for this CSD:

Major or Minor Change?	Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
	Changed course description, some other wording, and prereq	January 2017 AB	13/06/17