

# SYLLABUS

## J-431 Sec. 02: Mass Media Ethics

<<updated August 19, 2016>>

Tuesday-Thursday 11-12:15  
LA4-105

**Instructor:** Christopher Knap (Chris.Knap@csulb.edu)

**Office hours:** M-W 9:00-10:50 a.m  
LA4 Room 206F  
562-985-5361

**Purpose of Course:** Modern jobs in media are complex and demanding, and professionals often face ambiguous situations and conflicting loyalties. Despite published codes of ethics in almost every media profession, situations still arise where well-meaning people make ethical blunders that embarrass them and their employer.

This course is designed to give you an understanding of what it means to act ethically; the tools to identify and analyze ethical issues in print and online journalism, broadcast, photojournalism, public relations, advertising, and marketing. We will see how unethical conduct can impact individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds in positive and negative ways.

By the end of the course, you will have the tools for making the right choice when faced with ethically troubling or ambiguous situations. Also, you will be able to distinguish reporting that recognizes issues of social justice and community from reporting that ignores it. Finally, you will see how much better journalism is when it goes beyond reporting facts truthfully and strives to report the truth about the facts.

**Required text:** We will use "Media Ethics, Issues and Cases," Eighth Edition, by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins, published by McGraw Hill, 2014. This book is readable and current and includes many examples from the past few years plus online links to additional cases. In addition to keeping up with the required reading, it is suggested that you bring this book to class.

**Course Objectives and Outcomes:** By successfully completing this course, students will develop the following:

- An understanding of what it means to act ethically

- The tools to identify and analyze ethical issues
- Knowledge of the ethical norms of print journalism, broadcast journalism, online journalism, photojournalism, public relations, and advertising
- An understanding of the history and role of philosophers and professional societies in shaping the ethical norms in communications
- Media ethics problem-solving skills and procedures
- An appreciation of the importance of ethical approaches to issues of diversity in today's global society
- An understanding of the need for increased sensitivity reporting on, communicating with, and marketing to diverse populations, including multi-ethnic groups, global societies, and other groups often marginalized by society
- An understanding of the differences between First Amendment "musts" and media ethics "shoulds"
- A clearer understanding of the scholarly, academic, and trade discussions of media ethics issues

**General guidance for this class:**

There is no magic formula for doing well in this class other than hard work. Students who attend all classes, finish assigned readings prior to class sessions, participate in class discussions, and apply themselves vigorously to preparing for class presentations, exams and essays will do very well.

**Grading structure for this course:**

<b>COMPONENT:</b>	<b>VALUE:</b>
Quizzes & Essays (2 scheduled quizzes + 2 assigned essays worth 25 points each)	100 points
Midterm exam (objective questions + short essays)	100 points
Class participation (may include pop quizzes; see rubric)	100 points
Class presentations (2x 50; see rubric)	100 points
Final Exam (objective questions plus short essays)	100 points
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE</b>	<b>500 points</b>

## Component descriptions and rubrics:

### Quizzes & Essays

There will be two scheduled quizzes plus two assigned essays, each worth 25 points. Essays may be assigned either as homework or as in-class work. Instructor reserves the right to schedule a third quiz in place of one of the essays.

### Class participation:

Students will be graded on their attendance, participation in class discussions, and overall contribution to the class. Instructor may conduct pop quizzes, at his discretion. These cannot be made up so it is important to attend all classes.

<b>GRADING RUBRIC: CLASS PARTICIPATION</b>	
A	Displays all of the following behaviors: Always on time and in class. Pays attention to lectures and class presentations. Asks thoughtful questions. Offers thoughtful answers. A delight to have in the class.
B	Displays most of the above behaviors but slips on one or more criteria, such as missing a few classes or reluctant participation in class discussions.
C	Often misses class or disrupts by arriving late. Does not participate in class discussions. Attention is poor, e.g. does not know the question when called upon during a lecture.
D	Frequently misses class or arrives late. Does not participate in class discussions. Never volunteers answers. When asked, cannot answer questions. May exhibit disruptive behaviors such as talking to friends or use of computer or phone during lectures.
F	Attendance behaviors are poor. Attentive behaviors are poor. Engages in disruptive behavior, such as use of computer or phone during class for purposes other than studying ethics, or talking with friends during class.

### Class presentations

To encourage student engagement in this class we will form teams of three students each who will present to the class two of the ethics cases listed elsewhere in this syllabus. These presentations are intended to spark class discussion and encourage all students to exercise their ethical thinking. There is typically no wrong answers to these ethical problems: Well-meaning people will make different choices based on their own ethical hierarchy.

## Researching and presenting an ethics case:

Each case will begin with a scenario, often a real life dilemma presented to a media professional or organization. The instructor allows broad discretion in presentations, but as a guide they should include the following, at a minimum:

1. Description of the factual situation that presented an ethical conundrum.
2. Description of how the actor(s) handled the situation
3. Presentation and discussion of 3-5 ethical questions that surround the facts. The following is a generic guide to some of those discussion questions; you are free to develop your own:
  - a) Was/were the choice(s) by the actor(s) ethical?
  - b) Where did his/her loyalties lie? Where do yours?
  - c) Would you make the same choices? Why or why not?
  - d) What communities were best served by his/her choices?
  - e) Is there an alternative way of acting that serves more/broader interests?
  - f) Is there an alternative way of acting that avoids the ethical conundrum?
4. It is expected that the group will present its own answers to these ethical questions. That can be done at the beginning, to spark discussion, or at the end, to close it out.
5. Remember to be respectful to all points of view. Ethical individuals likely will make different choices when faced with ambiguous situations.

<b>GRADING RUBRIC: CLASS PRESENTATIONS</b>	
A	Meets all of the following criteria: Ready for on-time presentation (start of class). Presentation and delivery are clear and easy to understand. Clearly delineates ethical issues and sparks an engaging discussion with class members. Presents a thoughtful solution to the questions but is open to alternative solutions. Respectful of all viewpoints. Displays ethical questions on the projector to keep discussion focused.
B	Meets most of the criteria for an A but may stumble slightly on one or more aspect of the presentation. Presentation may be a little weak or group may miss a key ethical point. Discussion may stumble a bit, forcing instructor to step in.
C	Presentation had one or more of the following problems: Presenters were not ready at start of class. Presentation was weak and uninspired. Presenters missed key ethical points or failed to spark class discussion.
D	Problems seen in C are multiplied. Presenters asked for a postponement, gave a muddled or unclear presentation, and/or were unclear on the ethical points. Treated class members rudely. Instructor had to take over class discussion.
F	Serious problems with preparation and presentation, such as presenters forgot about presentation, could not delineate ethical points, make their own choices, or lead a proper class discussion.

## About your instructor:

Chris Knap is an investigative reporter and editor with 30 years of experience writing and editing stories about public and consumer affairs, business, legal issues, and health. His byline has been published in more than a dozen newspapers, magazines and online news sites including The Orange County Register, The San Francisco Chronicle, The Washington Post, Cosmopolitan Magazine and Southern California Public Radio.

Knap was part of a three-man health-reporting team at the Orange County Register that was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in Explanatory Reporting in 2004. He was the 2002 recipient of the National Association of Consumer Advocates reporting award for an expose of a lease fraud scheme by two Southern California Toyota dealers who targeted immigrant buyers. His story sparked an Attorney General's task force that took the license of the two dealers and returned some \$2 million to defrauded consumers.

From 2006 to 2014 Knap was the Investigations Editor at the Orange County Register, where he ran a team of investigative reporters who won awards and accolades from IRE, CNPA, APNEC, SABEW and Columbia Journalism Review.

As Investigations Editor, Knap was the newsroom liaison to the Register's First Amendment counsel, Levine Sullivan Koch and Schulz LLP, and spearheaded pre-publication legal reviews of investigative stories as well as demands for correction and retraction.

From 2014 to 2015 Knap worked as a regional editor at Southern California Public Radio, where he edited radio and web stories on public affairs. You can read more about him on the Department of Journalism's faculty profile page at <http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/journalism/people/faculty/>

## J-431 CLASS SCHEDULE FALL 2016 (preliminary and subject to change)

WK	NOTES	LECTURE TOPICS (Preliminary)	READING	CLASS PRESENT- ATIONS
WEEK 1	Week begins August 21 First week of instruction	Introduction to this course, course syllabus, student introductions. Introduction to ethical decision making. Form groups and sign up for class presentations.	Chapter 1: Intro to Ethical Decision Making	CP-1 Fire escape collapse

WEEK 2	August 28	Decision-making tools: Philosophy of Truth through history; The elements of journalism.	Chapter 2: A profession that seeks the truth: Reporters and confidential sources	CP-2 Reporters and confidential sources; Judith Miller and the NYT; CP-3 NPR and transparency; retracting Mr. Daisey
WEEK 3	September 4 Campus Closed Monday Sept. 05 for Labor Day	Strategic Communication; Ethics and Advertising; the TARES test	Chapter 3: Strategic Communication	CP-4: Susan Komen; CP-5 Oregon Lottery; CP-6: University of Phoenix
WEEK 4	September 11	Sorting through competing loyalties; the Potter Box. The role of journalists in community.	Chapter 4: Choosing between competing allegiances	CP-7: The Pimps and the Preacher; CP-8 Colorado Springs Gazette; CP-9 Romance in a small market
WEEK 5	September 18	QUIZ #1: Privacy vs. Secrecy. Raul's Veil	Chapter 5: Privacy, Secrecy and Society	CP-10: Suzy Favor Hamilton; CP-11: Bollea vs. Gawker. CP-12: naming Kobe Bryant's accuser
WEEK 6	September 25	Historical views of U.S. press; relevance and responsibility; privacy and politics	Chapter 6: Mass Media in a Democratic Society	CP-13: Candidacy of David Duke CP-14: Sarah Palin's daughter is pregnant; CP-15 Mayor Jim West's gay cruising; CP-16 Wikileaks
WEEK 7	October 2	Competing loyalties redux; Hyper-competition and its consequences	Chapter 7: Media Economics	CP-17: LA TIMES and the Staples Center; CP-18: Journatic; CP-19: The radio sales person

WEEK 8	October 9	<b>Mid-Term Exam;</b> Ethics of photography and editing.	Chapter 8: Picture this: Ethics of Photo and Video Journalism	none
WEEK 9	October 16	Photography & Ethics (continued). Video and video editing. To shoot or not to shoot?	Chapter 8: Picture this: Ethics of Photo and Video Journalism	CP-20: Tony Scott and the bridge; CP-21: The baby in the dumpster at U.Florida CP-22: The baby above fold;
WEEK 10	October 23	Final photography cases; New media problems: Online ethics. NYT model vs. Gawker	Chapter 9: New Media: New roles and new problems	CP-23: Murder in Soweto; CP-24: The body in the bayou after Katrina
WEEK 11	October 30	First informers and information verifiers, Online ethics.	Chapter 9: New Media: New roles and new problems	CP-25: SCOTUS and the Obamacare decision; CP-26: Handling online comments; CP-27: Anuak genocide; CP-28: Walmart blogs
WEEK 12	November 6 Veteran's Day Observed Friday Nov. 11 Campus Closed	QUIZ #2; Ethical issues in tabloids, satirical news, infotainment	Chapter 10: Art & Entertainment	none
WEEK 13	November 13	Infotainment ethics, cont.: Ethical issues in reality shows; documentaries	Chapter 10: Art & Entertainment	CP-29: Kitchen Nightmares; CP-30: Bob Costas and Jerry Sandusky; CP-31: Celebrities and Privacy; CP-32: Hate radio
WEEK 14	Week beginning Sunday November	no classes/no lectures		

	20. FALL BREAK: No classes 21-25			
WEEK 15	November 27	Piaget's stages of moral development; Kohlberg's six moral stages; Gilligan's ethics of care.	Chapter 11: Becoming a Moral Adult	CP-33: TBA
WEEK 16	December 04 Last week of classes	FINAL REVIEW: What constitutes good journalism?		
WEEK 17	December 11 Finals Week Dec. 12-17	<b>Final for this class: Thursday, Dec. 15 10:15AM - 12:15PM</b>		
WEEK 18	December 18	Grades posted by Dec. 22		

### *Addendum 1 to Course Syllabus:*

## **Department of Journalism Policies on Grading, Conduct of Classes, Drops, Absences and Cheating**

**Grading:** The grading policies and practices in this class are explained elsewhere in the syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to read them and to seek clarification if necessary. The student should be fully aware of what is required for success in the course, such as group participation, writing, speaking, completing assigned.

**Seat in Class:** An enrolled student may lose his/her seat in class if he/she misses the first class meeting without notifying the instructor. At the instructor's discretion, a student who attends the first class but not subsequent classes may also be dropped from the course.

**Withdrawal from Class:** Students may withdraw from a class from the third to the 12<sup>th</sup> week for "serious and compelling reasons." Normally these are defined as anything of importance that is beyond the control of the student. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, death or serious illness in a student's immediate family or a documented change in a student's work schedule. Poor performance, tardiness and unexcused absences are not considered serious or compelling



reasons beyond the student's control for purposes of withdrawing.

Absences from Class: Grades in a course may be adversely affected by absences, and students should seek clarification from the instructor regarding the course absence policy. Make-ups usually are granted in strict accordance with CSULB policy, which defines excused absences as (1) illness or injury to the student; (2) death, injury or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; (3) religious reasons; (4) jury duty or government obligation; (5) CSULB-sanctioned or approved activities [2002-03 Catalog, p.75]. *These and any other requests for an excused absence must be documented.*

CSULB Cheating/Plagiarism/Fabrication Policy: CSULB takes issues of academic dishonesty very seriously. If you use any deceptive or dishonest method to complete an assignment, take an exam, or gain credit in a course in any other way, or if you help someone else to do so, you are guilty of cheating. Making something up constitutes fabrication. If you use someone else's ideas or work and represent it as your own without giving credit to the source, you are guilty of plagiarism. This does not apply if the ideas are recognized as common knowledge, or if you can show that you honestly developed the ideas through your own work.

Any instructor can show you the correct ways of citing your sources, and you should use quotation marks, footnotes or endnotes and bibliographic references to give credit to your sources according to the format recommended by your instructor. The Department of Journalism has a zero-tolerance policy in these areas, and any instance of academic dishonesty -- cheating, plagiarism and/or fabrication -- may result in your failing of the assignment, immediate removal from class with a failing grade, removal from the College of Liberal Arts, expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as the instructor deems appropriate.

Responses, Penalties and Student Rights: Students should consult the appropriate sections of the Catalog for examples of cheating, fabrication and plagiarism, and instructor and/or CSULB response options in such circumstances. The Catalog also outlines student rights.

#### **Accommodation of students with disabilities in journalism courses:**

Students with disabilities who need assistance or accommodation to participate in or benefit from university programs, services, and/or activities should inform the instructor and then contact Disabled Student Services. Students needing support services or accommodations should contact the instructor of the course within the first week of class. In addition, students should establish their eligibility for assistance by contacting the Disabled Student Services Office (Brotman Hall 270) at 562-985-5401.

Students are to provide to the instructor verification of their disability from Disabled Student Services. Typical accommodations available from Disabled Student Services, working with the journalism instructor, includes extended time for tests, test proctoring, private test rooms, note taking, Braille transcriptions, and referral for tutoring.

If the service offered is insufficient or inadequate, the student should confer with the instructor and the director of Disabled Student Services. If these efforts are unsuccessful, students have the option of directing their concerns to the Office of Equity and Diversity (University Student Union 301) at 562-985-8256. Responsibility for oversight and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act has been delegated to the campus director for disability support and accommodation.

## *Addendum 2 to Course Syllabus:*

### ***Important information about CSULB's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication***

**Advising:** If you are a journalism or public relations student (major or minor), the department recommends that you see one of our advisers at least once a year. We have two experienced advisers – Professor Jennifer Fleming ([Jennifer.Fleming@csulb.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Fleming@csulb.edu)) and Professor Danny Paskin ([Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu](mailto:Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu)) – to assist you with your course selection, answer questions about requirements, help you stay focused on your chosen path to graduation, and offer other relevant advice. Their information and advising hours are posted around the department and available in the department office (LA4-106).

**Internships:** The department recommends that you pursue internships, service-learning experiences, and extra-curricular activities to enhance your career preparedness and marketability when you graduate. Employers will expect to see examples of your work; they prefer applicants with experience. Therefore, you will find all internships and job opportunities that come to the department posted on the department's BeachBoard site. A binder with hard copies of all internships is also kept in the department office for your review. In addition, internship postings are available online through the CSULB Career Development Center. Students pursuing opportunities through our BeachBoard or CDC sites should be aware that the department and CDC do not screen these opportunities for JOUR 498 credit. If you are seeking JOUR 498 credit, you must attend one of the mandatory orientations conducted the semester prior to your enrollment in JOUR 498. Students enrolled in a section of JOUR 498 will also receive advance notice of the orientations from their instructor.

**Student Media:** The department is home to the *Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine* and closely tied to *KBeach Radio* and *College Beat TV*. Getting involved in student media will help you hone your skills and give you real-life experiences. Stop by the *Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine* offices in LA4-201 and talk to the staff. Introduce yourself to the faculty advisers – Professor Barbara Kingsley-Wilson (*Daily 49er*, [Barbara.Kingsley-Wilson@csulb.edu](mailto:Barbara.Kingsley-Wilson@csulb.edu)), Professor Gary Metzker (*Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine*, [Gary.Metzker@csulb.edu](mailto:Gary.Metzker@csulb.edu)), Robin Jones (*Dig Magazine*, [Robin.Jones@csulb.edu](mailto:Robin.Jones@csulb.edu)) and Professor John Shrader (*KBeach Radio* and *College Beat TV*, [John.Shrader@csulb.edu](mailto:John.Shrader@csulb.edu)) – who can answer any questions you may have.

**Bateman Case Study Competition:** Consider joining the *Bateman Case Study Competition Team*. The *Bateman Competition* ([http://prssa.prsa.org/scholarships\\_competitions/bateman/](http://prssa.prsa.org/scholarships_competitions/bateman/)) is a prestigious inter-collegiate contest, often called the Super Bowl of collegiate public relations competitions. It is one of the most intense and rewarding experiences for our students. Participants on the *Bateman Team* receive JOUR 485 credit. See Professor Joni Ramirez ([Joni.Ramirez@csulb.edu](mailto:Joni.Ramirez@csulb.edu)), our *Bateman* coach, for more information.

**Student Organizations:** The department is home to three active student organizations – the *National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)*, *National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)*, *Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)*, and *Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)*. Each group has its own leaders and sponsors a variety of activities, including esteemed professionals as guest speakers. These three groups also work closely with the department to co-sponsor special events, such as Journalism and Public Relations Day. Get involved and have a blast with your classmates! Contact the respective faculty advisers for more information: Professor Todd Henneman ([Todd.Henneman@csulb.edu](mailto:Todd.Henneman@csulb.edu)) for **NABJ**, Professor Danny Paskin ([Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu](mailto:Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu)) for **NAHJ**, Professor Soumitro Sen ([Soumitro.Sen@csulb.edu](mailto:Soumitro.Sen@csulb.edu)) for **PRSSA**, and Professor Chris Karadjov ([Chris.Karadjov@csulb.edu](mailto:Chris.Karadjov@csulb.edu) or [Chris.Knap@csulb.edu](mailto:Chris.Knap@csulb.edu)) for **SPJ**.

**Social Media:** Be sure to get connected to the department's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CSULBJournalism>) and website (<http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/journalism/>) for photos and information about department happenings.

**Office Hours:** Each faculty member holds office hours to help you perform well in your classes, answer any of your questions, and offer advice. Take advantage of office hours and get to know your faculty.

**Accreditation:** The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at California State University, Long Beach is accredited by the *Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC)*, (<https://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/>). Accreditation by ACEJMC is an assurance of quality in professional education in journalism and mass communication. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, good facilities, and a competent faculty.

ACEJMC lists 12 **professional values and competencies** that must be part of the education of all journalism, public relations, and mass communication students. Each one of your required courses in the journalism major addresses at least one of the 12 professional competencies. Therefore, graduates who majored in journalism and public relations should be able to do the following:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in the United States, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent,

to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;

- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

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