

Ethical Issues in Mass Communication ♦ COM 428

–Spring 2006 Syllabus –

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

- Patrick Kelsey, MBA, MFA, Instructor
- Daytime Telephone: (212) 255-0270
- E-Mail: patrick@patrickkelsey.com
- Online Course Materials:
- [patrickkelsey.com / select "Nyack"](http://patrickkelsey.com/select/Nyack)
- Office Hours Are By Appointment Only

COURSE INFORMATION:

- Friday's from 6 – 8:45 PM
 - 361 Broadway, NYC
 - Room 205
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A. Course Description:

“An examination of ethical questions related to human communication..” – Nyack College Catalog 2005-06

B. Prerequisites:

None

C. Required Text(s):

Patterson, Philip, and Wilkins, Lee. *Media Ethics*. McGraw Hill. 5th edition (ISBN:007302192X)

D. Supplemental Text(s)

None

E. Suggested Text(s)

Strunk, William, and E. B. White. (1999). *Elements of Style*. Pearson Education. (ISBN: 0-20-530902-X)

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (ISBN: 1-55-798790-4)

Lavington, Camille, and Stephanie Losee. (1998). *You've Only Got Three Seconds*. Main Street Books. (ISBN: 0-38-548455-0)

F. Learning Objectives:

1. Course:
 - a. Define the fundamentals of ethics in mass communication.
 - b. Define the ethical dilemmas facing mass communication.
 - c. Define the varying viewpoints regarding ethics in mass communication in order to think critically about decisions and issues facing businesses.

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2. General:
 - a. Exercise public speaking skills.
 - b. Exercise business writing skills.
 - c. Exercise critical thinking.
 - d. Exercise general business meeting and etiquette skills.

G. Course Requirements:

1. Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Absences are excused only with advance notification and approval. You are permitted one (1) absence from class without question. However, though your absence may be excused, you will not receive points for either attendance or class participation and this represents 75% of your grade.

In addition, the course schedule is set to begin at a regularly schedule time. Being late to a class diminishes the future business leaders' learning and ultimately disrupts the class.

2. Homework

Reading Assignments

Specific chapters are assigned to each class. It is imperative that these chapters are read, in advance, and the material thoroughly understood to the best of the individual's ability. Within each designated class, the material will be reviewed, discussed, and, if applicable, will be applied towards either case studies from the text or current topics. (The instructor reserves the right to conduct a quiz with, or without, advance notice and this quiz grade will be in lieu of class participation.)

Issue - Presentation(s)

Each individual will be assigned an one side of an issue from either the text or a current event. Each pair of individuals will then present the issue to the class. The presentation should answer the following questions clearly and concisely, independently of the other side of the issue:

- What is the topic?
- What is the connection to the subject?
- What position are you taking in regards to the issue?
- What is your case for your position?
- What is your final recommendation or conclusion?

Issue - Written Assignments and Presentations

A total of two (2) papers will be written presenting a current issue of the individual's choice. The first paper should be not less than five (5) pages in length. The second paper should be not less than (10) pages in length. Please note, that the length of the paper is based on content only and does not include title pages, contents, references, etc. Both papers should answer the following questions clearly and concisely:

- What is the topic?
- What is the connection to the subject?
- What position are you taking in regards to the issue?
- What is your case for your position?
- What is your final recommendation or conclusion?

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Papers will be evaluated for writing style, grammar, and the presentation and strength of your position. You may use as many outside references as you wish, but they must be listed as referenced. (Please note, your opinion carries no weight when supporting the issue, only outside references.) Both papers will be presented to the class and discussed.

3. Class Participation

An individual's active participation is vital to learning the course material and is of extreme importance in business. Only through discussion and/or presentation of the course materials, will the individual, and future business leader, fully comprehend. In addition to the previously outlined homework assignments, additional topics, issues, and/or case studies may be assigned in class. Such work and expectations will be outlined as needed and such work will be applied towards class participation. Please note that 75% of your grade is based on being in class *and* actively participating.

H. Course Structure & Quality of Work

Within each class, we will designate time to instruction, presentation, and discussion of the subject material.

In business, the quality of one's work, both orally and written, is paramount to one's success. It is expected that the individual's writing and presentation skills be of the highest quality reflecting one's desire to succeed in business. Papers shall be written in the APA 5th style and be of proper grammar and style, i.e., 1" margins, 12 point Times, etc. Visit http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796 or any other APA Style website for a summary of essentials pertaining to APA. Presentations shall be organized, thought through, and concise. Appearance in business is also of great importance.

I. Grading & Grade Proportions:

<u>Grading Scale</u>		<u>Composition of Grades</u>	
A	90 to 100	Attendance	15% (30 Points Total)
B	80 to 89	Homework	25% (50 Points Total)
C	70 to 79	Class Participation	60% (120 Points Total)
D	60 to 69		
F	< 59		

J. Class Policy:

In order to maximize our time together and to minimize distraction the following are prohibited which class is in session: all electronic devices capable of creating audible sounds (including and especially cell phones and pagers), eating (including gum), and drinking. Please respect your fellow classmates and help to maintain a healthy learning environment.

K. Plagiarism:

See the Nyack College Catalog 2005-2006 outlining the *Policy On Plagiarism*

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L. Reading and Homework Schedule (Subject to Change):

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>	<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Homework</u>	
1	1/13	Introduction to Ethical Issues in Mass Communication			
2	1/20	An Introduction to Ethical Decision Making	1		
3	1/27	Information Ethics: A Profession Seeks the Truth	2		
4	2/3	Advertising Ethics: From Let The Buyer Beware to Empowerment	3		
5	2/10	Loyalty: Choosing Between Competing Allegiances	4		
6	2/17	Public Relations: Advocate or Adversary?	5		
7	2/24	Privacy: Looking for Solitude in the Global Village	6		
8	3/3	The Mass Media In a Democratic Society: Keeping a Promise	7		
9	3/10			Mid-Term Paper / Presentations	
10	3/17	No Class – Spring Break			
11	3/24	Media Economics: The Deadline Meets the Bottom Line	8		
12	3/31	Picture This: The Ethics of Photo and Video Journalism	9		
13	4/7	Ethics in Cyberspace: New Questions and New Roles	10		
14	4/14	No Class – Easter Week			
15	4/21	The Ethical Dimensions of Art and Entertainment	11		
16	4/28	Becoming A Moral Adult Bibliography Index	12		
17	5/5			Final Presentations	
18	5/12			Final Paper	