

J-498 Journalism Ethics Tutorial
Fall 2009, Hill
Wednesday 1 - 1:50 p.m.

Office and Hours:

Journalism Dept. Main Office: Ext. 3135

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MZ332, Ext. 7241

Monday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., MZ 332

Wednesday, noon-1 p.m.

Course Purpose: To identify and discuss current issues in journalism ethics. Students will develop insights into their own code of professional ethics through classroom debates. Because this is an issue-driven course, there will often be no clearly defined right or wrong solutions to the problems presented. **Students are strongly encouraged to take firm positions on the issues and defend them.**

Course Methods: Students will discuss instructor-selected topics in class, and write brief position papers for the next class meeting. In the following weeks, each student will select a topic in journalism ethics, research the issue, and write a detailed paper. Each student will present their paper to the class and lead a discussion/debate. For the remaining weeks, two-student teams will then select topics, and present opposing viewpoints to initiate class debate.

Texts: A compilation of articles and op-ed pieces will be distributed to facilitate discussion and topic selection for student papers. Otherwise, there are no assigned texts for the class. Students are expected to research relevant material and cite it appropriately in their papers.

Grades: The final grade will be determined as follows: 70% on the content of your paper. 15% on the quality of the discussion you lead. 15% on your involvement in the discussions led by other students. Because class discussions are central to the course, **attendance is mandatory** for all class meetings.

Cultural Diversity: Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalism experience, with the instructor's help, by including in their work people and subjects such as racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and similar groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.

Plagiarism/Cheating: The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and will be reported to the University for further disciplinary action.

For a further explanation of the behavior defined as cheating, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 587-588 of the 2008-2010 CSUN catalog.

Please also remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy and carries the penalties outlined above.

Regarding classroom computers: Computers are for coursework only, and students are not to use them for any other purpose, such as e-mailing, facebooking or surfing the Internet. Students who violate this rule will be given a grade of F for any work done for that day. This rule also applies to use of students' personal computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. Do not use them in class, unless you have prior permission from the instructor.

Note: Journalism majors and faculty this semester will be part of a "reading community", centered on *Shaking the Foundation: 200 Years of Investigative Journalism in America*, edited by Bruce Shapiro. All students are required to read the book, and when applicable, it will be incorporated in the lessons of this course. Be prepared for class discussions, assignments and quizzes based on the book.

Schedule (Pending approval of furlough days for faculty)

Week 1: Overview of course and selection of topics for individual student presentations.

Week 2: First discussion issue. The topic will be chosen by the instructor, based on handout material. Students will write brief position papers for the next class meeting.

Week 3: Student position papers presented with debate/discussion. Second position paper assigned.

Week 4: Classroom debate, based on students' second position paper.

Week 5: First individual student paper presented and debated.

Week 6: Second student paper presented/debated.

Week 7: Third student paper.

Week 8: Fourth student paper.

Week 9: Fifth student paper.

Week 10: Sixth student paper.

Week 11: Evaluation.

Week 12: Seventh student paper.

Week 13: Eighth student paper.

Week 14: Possible team presentation.

Week 15: Review.

Week 16: Review.