Course Name: JOUR 4470 Ethics, Law and Diversity in Strategic Communications
Section Information: Section 001 (Spring 2010)
Class Meetings: Monday & Wednesday, 2:00 pm – 3:20 pm GAB 114

Course Instructor: Samra Bufkins, MJ, APR
Office: GAB 463
Office phone: 940-565-2167
Cell phone: 214-708-5653 (text anytime, call only if emergency)
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 3:30-4:30 pm, Tuesday 12:30 – 1:30 pm or by appointment. I tend to be on campus most of the time Monday—Wednesday, so if my door is open, feel free to drop in.
E-mail: Samra.Bufkins@unt.edu
Twitter: @samjb

Course Description
This course will explore the philosophical bases for ethical behavior, as well as the professional codes of ethics for public relations practitioners and other journalists. We will examine mass communication law, including privacy, defamation, copyright, financial disclosure, legal and regulatory compliance. Readings and assignments will explore tactics and strategies for understanding and working with diverse communities in a pluralistic democracy. (Prerequisite(s): JOUR major status; JOUR 4450 or JOUR 4210.)

Texts
5. Outside readings as assigned
6. Selected Web links, including articles referred via Twitter (#untj4470), UNT class Blackboard; selected blogs

Course Objectives
After taking JOUR 4470, each student will be able to:

• Understand basic mass media law, especially as it relates to privacy, intellectual property, and financial disclosure requirements used by PR practitioners.
• Identify regulatory agencies that monitor the work of companies & organizations.
• Cite fundamental beliefs contained within media codes of ethics, their histories, and contemporary challenges.
• Analyze ethical dilemmas in public relations and mass media case studies.
• Apply moral and ethical principles to professional situations.
• Understand the need for tolerance when disagreement arises and ways to mediate differences among publics.
• Respect differences brought about by cultural, gender, or religious perspectives within and outside of American and Western culture.
• Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practice.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
• Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
• Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes in which they work.

**Journalism Requirements and Guidelines**
The Mayborn School of Journalism, in conjunction with the Registrar’s Office, has eliminated the need for individual class codes for the majority of journalism courses. Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program: thus, we are unable to maintain the traditional waiting list as has been done previously.

By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required pre-reqs according to your calendar year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven’t taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your pre-requisites, please see an advisor.

A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all pre-major courses, and Math 1680 and also have applied for major status. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses. Pre-majors must file a formal application for major status in the final semester of pre-major status to be eligible for early registration of major-level classes in the following semester.

Students will not be allowed to take automatically a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

**Disability Accommodation**
The School of Journalism cooperates with the Office of Disability Addommodations to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students. If you have not registered with ODA, please present your written accommodation request to me by the 12th day of class.
Textbook Policy
The Mayborn School of Journalism does not require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online, and are available for rental.

SETE
The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a university-wide online evaluation and a requirement for all UNT classes. The Mayborn School of Journalism needs your input to improve our teaching and curriculum. This short survey will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Prompt completion of the SETE will mean earlier access to final semester grades. You are a critical part of our growth and success. We look forward to your input through SETE.

Academic Honesty
Introduction: When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people’s work and ideas are unacceptable.

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people’s written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7-10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people’s writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It’s a firing offense in the professional world.

Any situations involving potential academic dishonesty will be handled through procedures established by the UNT Office of Academic Integrity. The process also includes the opportunity for students to appeal the outcome. Read specific procedures at http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm

ATTENDANCE POLICY
You are expected to attend and participate in each class meeting, complete all assignments and online assessments on time and participate in any online and social media activities that are assigned.

This class also depends heavily on class discussion and lecture in addition to the reading material. An excused absence is one about which you have communicated with me at least 24 hours in advance of the class time. “Not showing up” will constitute an unexcused absence. Two absences in the course are the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem (like you’re on life support). If you miss three or four classes, 10 points will be taken off your final grade. If you miss five or more classes, you will be dropped from the course. Coming to class late or leaving early constitutes an absence for that day.
Class Protocol
Once in the classroom, you will silence your cell phone or PDA, and keep it packed inside your purse or backpack. Same goes with iPods, etc. During class lecture, you may not use your computer at all unless we are doing an in-class exercise or search. Do not surf the Web or check e-mail; if you do so, I will ask you to leave the class, and the dismissal will count as an unexcused absence. I will take roll in writing at the beginning of each class and again at the end.

Case study assignments will be turned in via Turnitin on the class Blackboard. There will be a definite cut-off time, after which the assignment will be considered late.

Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blog assignments (4)</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case study research project</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics, Law and Diversity exam</td>
<td>25 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final case study proposal/project</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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Blog assignments (4) will be graded according to AP style, grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as content. You must have a blog. You may not count blog postings for any other class in this assignment.

You will be required to research a case study, providing a case narrative, facts that should be considered, and all applicable research cited appropriately.

One exam will cover materials from the course-required texts and from class discussions.

Instead of a final exam you will do a major case study project on a topic of your choosing, approved by me in advance.

Class participation will include your proactive participation in class discussions and use of social media to share and comment on issues presented.

Grading System

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>92 percent or higher</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>82-91 percent</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>72-81 percent</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>62-71 percent</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower than 62 percent</td>
<td>F</td>
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Syllabus/ Schedule
Because of the constantly evolving nature of ethics issues in strategic communications, this class outline is subject to change. I will keep an updated version of the syllabus on the class Blackboard and announce any changes both there, in class and via email and Twitter. I expect you to have read the assigned chapters by the time you get to class. You’ll also need to take copious notes in class and read any supplementary materials I pass along, either as handouts or in Blackboard.

Jan. 20 – Introduction, logistics and completion of information sheet.

Jan. 25 & Jan. 27 – Introduction to ethical decision making; introduction to classical ethics theories, discussion of various codes of ethics (Gower, ch. 1, Plaisance Chapter 1 (you can skim over the parts about the philosophers) & Plaisance Chapter 2, and Day, Chapter 3); case study handout.

Feb. 1 & Feb. 3 – Discussion of moral development, ethics and society, (Day, Chapters 1 and 2) introduction of responsibility (personal, social and corporate social); Introduction to corporate speech and commercial speech (Gower, Chapter 2), other possible readings as assigned. First blog assignment posted in Blackboard on Feb. 1.

Feb. 8 & Feb 10 – Truth and honesty (Day, Chapter 4), Transparency (Plaisance Chapter 3), Regulating public relations speech vs First Amendment (Supplementary reading TBA), First blog assignment due Feb. 10.

Feb. 15 –Feb. 17 – Introduction to Communitarianism, Utilitarianism and Harm (Plaisance Chapter 5 and 8) and class handout of article by John Merrill. Case study, other possible readings TBA. Case study research assignment—Due March 3.

Feb. 22—Discussion of values through communitarian and utilitarian lenses; case study discussions in class, readings TBA Second blog assignment posted and due March 5.

Feb 24—No class, research day to work on your case study.

March 1 & 3 – Regulation and privacy (Plaisance Ch 7, Day Chapter 5 & 6, Gower, Chapter 3-4); slander and libel. Protecting creative property, including trademark, copyright, patents (Gower, Chapter 5)

March 3 Case Study Research Assignment Due

March 5 (not a class day) Second Blog Assignment Due.

March 8 & March 10 – Continuation of March 3 topics and catch-up. Conflicts of interest (Day Chapter 7, Plaisance Chapter 6)

March 15 & 17, Spring Break
March 22 & March 24 – Values of public relations; study PRSA Code of Ethics and other professional codes (Day, Appendices 1-3, Web sites to be posted in Blackboard) possible guest speaker. Selected case study discussion, exam review; final project proposal due March 24.

March 29 – Exam
March 31 – Meta-issues in public relations and advertising (Bivins handout). Corporate ethics; the tension between laws and ethical codes; between personal and corporate codes, selected case studies and readings TBA.

April 5 & April 7 – Diversity communications (Day Chapters 8,12 & 13, Plaisance Chapter 4, other possible readings) Possible diversity speakers. Blog #3 Assignment Posted, due April 14.

April 12 – Libel, Slander and the First Amendment, Copyright, Trademark (Gower Chapter 5). Additional reading TBA.
April 14 – Case studies discussion, Readings TBA. Blog #3 Assignment Due.

April 19 & April 21 Social media and networking; transparency and other values applied to new media. Bloggers and paid reviews; is it ethical? Blog #4 Assignment Posted—due April 28.

April 26 – More social media, networking, new media ethical case studies.
April 28 – A word or two about advertising and the law. Blog #4 Assignment Due.

May 3 – Catch-up day

May 5 – Final project due at the beginning of class. Debriefing.