

## COM 450: Senior Seminar in Ethics (3)

Fall 2014

Office: Hermann 242

Office Hours: By appointment

(Contact Cindy Womack at [cwomack@berry.edu](mailto:cwomack@berry.edu) or at ext. 2216 to schedule)

Dr. Kathy Brittain Richardson

Professor of Communication

Phone: 706.236.2216

**Course Description:** Synthesis of communication research and theory with a special focus on media ethics using the tools of ethical reasoning and critical analysis. Issues of ethics and social responsibility confronting contemporary media will be addressed through readings, research and case studies. Students must successfully complete designated reading and writing assignments, major field examinations and a portfolio for departmental review. *PR: SS*

**Course Purposes:** The purposes of this course are to both round out and consolidate your communication education. By successfully completing this course, the student will:

1. Integrate and synthesize the knowledge gained through major courses and applied experiences.
2. Further develop and demonstrate moral reasoning through the exploration of ethical principles and the application of these to issues in mass communication.
3. Further develop and demonstrate the skills, competencies and perspectives required for effective communication.
4. Improve career preparation by acquiring and applying knowledge of job-search strategies.
5. Enhance preparation and prospects for graduate education.
6. Demonstrate critical thinking and argumentation through research and writing.

### **Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures:**

Students will demonstrate a satisfactory level of competency in professional skills and techniques through the presentation of a professional portfolio. (Assessment via use of rubric by faculty judges)

Students will demonstrate a satisfactory level of research skill and analytical and writing abilities through the revision of a significant position paper and the oral defense of its arguments. (Assessment via use of multiple rubrics by instructor and department faculty)

Students will demonstrate a satisfactory level of analytical ability and the application of moral principles through various writing and/or speaking assignments. (Assessment through use of rubric by instructor.)

Students will demonstrate the acquisition of facts, knowledge and theory of mass/speech communication through the satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination. (Through achieving at least 60 percent score on Exit Examination, the student will demonstrate that he or she has acquired such knowledge.)

**Instructional Methods:** This class will incorporate a combination of lectures, workshops, research and creative assignments, and discussion sessions. Several sessions will be held during

afternoons or evenings at announced times; participation in these events is mandatory. Therefore it is your responsibility to manage and use your time wisely. Completion of the senior-exit examination is a graduation requirement. Students should also participate in recommended Career Center workshops; each student **must** schedule and complete a Mock Interview with the Center.

**Required Reading and Viewing:** Some readings will be distributed as handouts in class or posted on Viking Web, and some readings and videos are available through the Internet. Some readings will require you to access them through the Memorial Library databases. The attached class schedule shows what readings and videos are assigned for which class days.

**Attendance Policy:** Each student is expected to attend class. Failure to attend class and to knowledgeably participate will impact the final grade in the course. Missing more than three class sessions may result in the lowering of your final grade or result in being withdrawn from the course. **Assignments are due on the deadline date whether you are present or not.** **NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE ANNOUNCED DEADLINE DATE without prior notification of the instructor AND a written medical excuse or an official college statement.**

**Tutoring:** Students who believe they may need tutoring in this class are encouraged to contact the instructor as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made with the Academic Support Center to provide a tutor in a timely manner.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center in Memorial Library, First Floor, (706.233.4080) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

**Writing Assistance:** The Berry College Writing Center, located on the second floor of the Memorial Library, offers free support to students writing in any discipline. In general, sessions are hands-on, and tutors ask students to help themselves by developing and practicing concrete revision strategies. While students are welcome to drop by the Writing Center without an appointment, appointments do receive priority service. To make an appointment, and to see the Center's regular hours, go to <https://www.berry.edu/wc/>.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is the foundation of college life and experience at Berry. All members of the Berry College community are responsible for working together to establish and uphold an environment conducive to honorable academic endeavor. In no case will academic dishonesty be tolerated. A complete definition of “academic dishonesty” may be found in the *Viking Code* and *College Catalog*. Violation of this policy will result in a failing grade on the assignment; should a second violation occur, the student will fail the course. Students sanctioned for violating academic integrity policy may not withdraw from the class with a “W.” Students may appeal faculty decisions to a subcommittee of Academic Council through the provost.

## Grading Scale

**A = 930 - 1000, A- = 900 - 929, B+ = 860 - 899, B = 830 - 859, B- = 800 - 829, C+ = 760 - 799, C = 730 - 759, C- = 700 - 729, D+ = 660 - 699, D = 630 - 659, F = below 629.**

**Course Requirements:** Following is a list of course requirements and **graded** assignments:

**ASSIGNMENT A PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS:** Choose TWO of the codes of ethics linked from the website on the class schedule to analyze, and answer the following questions:

Identify the professional associations that adopted the codes. When was each adopted? What values are identified as important by each of the codes? What principles are identified as important by the codes? What behaviors, if any, are identified as actions communications should NOT do? Is there an enforcement mechanism if the code is violated? If so, what is it? Which of the codes do you think is the more effective? Why?  
**Possible 50 points.**

**ASSIGNMENT B RESUME:** After completing the self-assessment posted on Viking Web, each student will submit a professional resume tailored to individual communication career goals. **Possible 50 points.**

**ASSIGNMENT C GRADUATE SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT:** Students will identify and research a potential graduate program. In a paragraph or two, describe the degree requirements. What would be the benefit of pursuing graduate study at that institution? **Possible 50 points.**

**ASSIGNMENT D Ethical Analysis:** Each student will be asked to respond to an ethical case study where you must apply one of the moral-reasoning techniques discussed in class by writing an in-class response. You must appropriately apply one or more philosophical principles to support your conclusions. Your grade will be determined by the demonstrated critical reasoning, coherency and competency evidenced in your writing. **Possible 100 points.**

**ASSIGNMENT E Written Proficiency Examination (Senior Exit Exam):** Each student **must** successfully complete the Communication exit examination, which serves as the exit examination required of all Berry graduating students. This examination is used as an assessment of the learning of Berry communication majors, so your thoughtful preparation and participation in the examination is critical. **Possible 100 points.**

**ASSIGNMENT F Professional Development Activities:** You will be required to participate in a minimum of three (3) professional development activities sponsored by the Career

Development Center over the course of the semester to help prepare you for your job search or graduate school application process. **You must participate in one mock interview, which will be held during the evening of Nov. 3,** and then choose **two** of the workshops listed on the syllabus. Several of these are early in the semester, so you should plan **now** which ones you might want to attend. You must submit a brief summary paragraph describing the two workshops you participate in. **Possible 75 points.**

**ASSIGNMENT G Oral Defense:** Each student must participate in an oral examination with department faculty members as evaluators. You will be asked questions relating to the assertions presented in your revised paper. The examination will last about 5 minutes and will be conducted individually by appointment the **evening of Nov. 12.** To earn the maximum **100 points** for this assignment, you must complete a strong abstract of your paper (**25 pts. possible**) and perform competently during the defense as judged by the faculty who participate (**75 pts. possible**).

**ASSIGNMENT H Paper Revision:** Each student must select a major paper that has been submitted as part of another upper-level COM course. For examples, a student may select the paper completed for COM 416I or COM 415I, or with permission, an alternate paper of similar length and depth. The student must revise the paper, prepare an abstract that will be reviewed before the Oral Defense, and then submit the paper for review by Dr. Richardson. The revised paper must be included in the Portfolio. **Possible 100 points.**

**ASSIGNMENT I Portfolio (300 points):** Each student is required to compile a portfolio to be submitted for departmental review, grading and approval. Required contents will vary, depending on the communication concentration. The following details the minimum requirements for each area:

► **Journalism**

1. Professional Resume
2. A revised *communication* research paper from Media Law, Communication Theory, or an alternative paper of similar length and depth
3. 7 published articles: A minimum of four of these must be hard news stories characterized by the news values of timeliness, impact, prominence, proximity, oddity and/or conflict. The remaining stories may be features, but should not include opinion pieces.
4. 3-5 published photos and/or page layout designs (samples must demonstrate good composition, technique, storytelling and/or creativity).
5. 2 published examples of multimedia storytelling (to qualify, you would need to be presenting information via multiple media – such as a text story with video/photo gallery, photo slideshow with sound bytes, Flash presentation of a news story or an edited video report that tells a story)
6. 1 sample of copy editing (so those reviewing portfolio can assess their work, students who submit stories they have edited must include copies of the stories both before and after they were edited)

► **Public Relations**

1. Professional Resume
2. A revised *communication* research paper from Media Law, Communication Theory, or an alternative paper of similar length and depth
3. 3-5 published articles or other published written materials
4. 2 news releases that comply with accepted practice
5. At least two samples that demonstrate some of the following evidence:
  - A. Design, photography and/or videography skill as demonstrated through newsletters, brochures, websites, scripts, etc.
  - B. 1 multimedia package (on CD and/or online)
  - C. Strategic use of social media communication for an organization or cause
  - D. Strategic research and analysis such as an extended case study, etc.

► **Visual Communication**

1. Professional Resume
2. A revised *communication* research paper from Media Law, Communication Theory, or an alternative paper of similar length and depth.
3. You should minimally include materials from four of the categories below:
  - A. 7-10 photographs, at least five of which must be published
  - B. 1 promotional script and 1 screenplay (minimum ten-minute screenplay)
  - C. 3-5 publication designs (brochures, newspaper pages, magazine spreads, marketing materials, etc.)
  - D. 2 published moving image projects (short film, promotional video, news story, etc.)
  - E. 2 published examples of multimedia storytelling (to qualify, you would need to be presenting information via multiple media – such as a text story with a video and slide show connecting to the story or a photo slideshow with sound bites)
  - F. 1 program proposal for a recurring moving image series OR 1 three-year business plan for a visual communication-related business

ASSIGNMENT J Class Discussions: Each student is expected to be prepared for and to fully participate in case-study analyses and discussions throughout the semester. **Possible 100 points.**

**ALL INFORMATION ON THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY ANNOUNCEMENT.**

## Class Schedule

		Topic	Preparation/Assignment
<b>M</b>	<b>8/25</b>	Orientation to course	Syllabus
<b>W</b>	<b>8/27</b>	What are ethics, and why do we care?	Ferguson and Foley images <a href="http://lightbox.time.com/2014/08/20/ferguson-michael-brown-st-louis-photographers/#1">http://lightbox.time.com/2014/08/20/ferguson-michael-brown-st-louis-photographers/#1</a> <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/18/business/media/view-of-ferguson-thrust-michael-brown-shooting-to-national-attention.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/18/business/media/view-of-ferguson-thrust-michael-brown-shooting-to-national-attention.html</a>
<b>F</b>	<b>8/29</b>	How do we develop our ethics?	Elliott-- <a href="http://www.denielliott.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Morally-Developed-Media-Pro.pdf">http://www.denielliott.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Morally-Developed-Media-Pro.pdf</a>
<b>M</b>	<b>9/1</b>	LABOR DAY	NO CLASS MEETING
<b>W</b>	<b>9/3</b>	What about professional codes?	<a href="http://www.journalism.org/resources/ethics-codes/">http://www.journalism.org/resources/ethics-codes/</a> <b>Assignment A DUE</b> Adam, G.S., Craft, S., & Cohen, E.D. (2004). Three essays on journalism and virtue. <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> , 19(3&4), 247-275.
<b>F</b>	<b>9/5</b>	Resume/Portfolio	Bring resume draft to class/Complete self-assessment >see VikingWeb <b>Assignment B DUE</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>9/8</b>	Ethics and democracy	Tim Russert lecture pdf (VikingWeb)
<b>W</b>	<b>9/10</b>	Ethical reasoning/ Potter Box and SAD	Potter Box <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWWnY85QdLI">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWWnY85QdLI</a> <a href="http://www.spj.org/rrr.asp?ref=4&amp;t=ethics">http://www.spj.org/rrr.asp?ref=4&amp;t=ethics</a>
<b>F</b>	<b>9/12</b>	Ethical reasoning/ Poynter questions; the TARES test for persuasion	Resources at <a href="http://ethics.poynter.org/">http://ethics.poynter.org/</a> <a href="http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/everyday-ethics/talk-about-ethics/1750/ask-these-10-questions-to-make-good-ethical-decisions/">http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/everyday-ethics/talk-about-ethics/1750/ask-these-10-questions-to-make-good-ethical-decisions/</a> Baker, S., & Martinson, D.L. (2001). The TARES test: Five principles for ethical persuasion. <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> , 16(2 & 3), 148-175.
<b>M</b>	<b>9/15</b>	Principle: Virtue ethics	Aristotle <a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/aristot/">http://www.iep.utm.edu/aristot/</a> Quinn, "Quinn, A. (2007). Moral virtues for journalists. <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> , 22(2&3), 168-186.
<b>W</b>	<b>9/17</b>	Virtue ethics	Case Study: discussion >See VikingWeb
<b>F</b>	<b>9/19</b>	Graduate School	<b>REVISED PAPER TOPIC DUE</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>9/22</b>	Principle: Duty ethics	Kant <a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/kantmeta/">http://www.iep.utm.edu/kantmeta/</a> Plaisance, P.L. (2007). Transparency: An assessment of the Kantian roots of a key element in media ethics practice. <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> , 22 (2&3), 187-207.
<b>W</b>	<b>9/24</b>	Duty ethics	Case study discussion
<b>F</b>	<b>9/26</b>	Networking/ netweaving	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kFz8dcZ58o">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kFz8dcZ58o</a> See VikingWeb/ <b>Assignment C DUE</b>

M	9/29	Principle: Utilitarian ethics	<a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mill-moral-political/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mill-moral-political/</a> Elliott, D. (2007). Getting Mill right. <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> , 22 (2&3), 100-112.
W	10/1	Utilitarian ethics	Case Study discussion>See VikingWeb
F	10/3	Interviewing	See VikingWeb
M	10/6	Principle: Justice	<a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/</a> <a href="http://www.businessinsider.com/these-6-corporations-control-90-of-the-media-in-america-2012-6">http://www.businessinsider.com/these-6-corporations-control-90-of-the-media-in-america-2012-6</a>
W	10/8	Justice ethics	Case Study discussion>See VikingWeb
F	10/10	Job Search Tactics	See VikingWeb
M	10/13	<b>FALL BREAK</b>	<b>NO CLASS MEETING</b>
W	10/15	Principle: Agape	<a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/love/">http://www.iep.utm.edu/love/</a> Craig, D.A., & Ferré, J.P. (2006). Agape as an ethic of care for journalism. <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> , 21 (2&3). 123-140.
F	10/17	Agape ethics	Case Study discussion>See VikingWeb
M	10/20	Preparing for exam	Review potential questions
W	10/22	Paper consultations	Individual appointments with Dr. Richardson
F	10/24	ALUMNI PANEL	Question/Answer period for visiting alumni
M	10/27	<b>EXIT EXAM I</b>	<b>IN-CLASS WRITING Assignment E</b>
W	10/27	<b>EXIT EXAM II</b>	<b>IN-CLASS WRITING Assignment E</b>
F	10/31	Research Day	NO CLASS MEETING
M	11/3	<b>MOCK INTERVIEWS (Assignment F)</b>	NO CLASS MEETING/EVENING INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED AT CAREER CENTER
W	11/5	Principles: Caring	<a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/care-eth/">http://www.iep.utm.edu/care-eth/</a> Steiner, L., & Okrusch, C.M. Care as a virtue for journalists. <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> , 21 (2&3), 102-122.
F	11/7	Caring ethics	Case Study discussion>See VikingWeb
M	11/10	Defense preparation	<b>PAPER ABSTRACT DUE IN CLASS</b>
W	11/12	<b>ORAL DEFENSE (Assignment G)</b>	NO CLASS MEETING/EVENING DEFENSE INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN LAU 121
F	11/14	Portfolios	Bring portfolio materials to class
M	11/17	Decision making	Review decision-making processes
W	11/19	<b>CASE STUDY</b>	<b>Assignment D WRITTEN IN CLASS</b>
F	11/21	RESEARCH DAY	Complete paper revision
M	11/24	After the interview...	<b>REVISED PAPER (Assignment H) DUE</b>
W	11/26	THANKSGIVING	NO CLASS MEETING
F	11/28	BREAK	NO CLASSMEETING
M	12/1	Job/grad school launch	See VikingWeb
W	12/3	<b>PORTFOLIO REVIEW</b>	CLASS MEETS FROM 4-6 p.m. in LAUGHLIN116 <b>Assignment I DUE</b>
F	12/5	Course Wrap-Up	Evaluations
W	12/10	FINAL	Pick up portfolios

