

# **JOUR 608**

## **Ethics and the Media**

### **Spring 2015**

**204 Stauffer-Flint – 9:30 – 10:45 p.m. TR (Line No. 56968)**

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Office hours: 4:30-5:00 p.m. MW and 12:15-1:00 p.m. TR and by appointment

### **Course Goals**

It would be great if solving ethical dilemmas were like solving a mathematical problem: apply an equation and get an answer. Unfortunately, life doesn't work that way. We are often confronted with difficult decisions and no one correct solution. This course is designed to give you some tools to help you navigate through the landmines of real life. Specifically, the goals of this course are to:

1. Critically analyze philosophies, models, cases and codes.
2. Recognize ethical issues, problems and dilemmas in all facets of communications.
3. Use models effectively to resolve ethical dilemmas.
4. Think critically and clearly in applying models to case studies and current events.
5. Clearly and creatively present case studies and debates.
6. Ground yourself in American media standards and practices.

You and your classmates are going to be the leaders of 21st century journalism and its various disciplines. How you respond to ethical challenges will set the tone and direction for those who follow.

### **Course Resources**

The course is structured around Rushworth M. Kidder's *How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living* (Harper, New York, 2010). The good news: As textbooks come, it is relatively inexpensive. Even better news: It is well written and easy to read!

The case studies discussed in this class and additional reading assignments are on this course's Blackboard site: <https://courseware.ku.edu/>. While you have a large number of reading assignments, most of these consist of only two-to-three pages.

## **Grading, Assignments and Policies**

Each student's final grade in this course will be based on the following assessments:

### **Exams (200 points each)**

There will be two exams, each based on classroom lectures, discussion and assigned reading. Professor Guth will post study guides approximately two weeks prior to each exam. *Please note: Professor Guth is not planning to use PowerPoint in this class, nor does he intend to post class notes on Blackboard.*

### **Personal Code of Ethics (200 points)**

Each student will create his or her own personal code of ethics based upon criteria announced at the time of the assignment.

### **Group Case Study Report/Presentation (200 points)**

Students will be formed into groups of three or four students and will be assigned to write a report about an assigned case study. Students will also present their findings and recommendations to the class. Members of the class will be asked to evaluate their fellow students. Every student is expected to fully participate in its group's assignment. Specific details of this assignment will be announced after Spring Break.

### **Participation/Attendance (200 points)**

For this class to meet its full potential, every student must be an active participant. Each person's participation will be based on:

- Attendance. If you are not here, you cannot participate.
- Classroom discussion. Filling a seat isn't enough. Each student is expected to participate in classroom discussions. And that means completing the assigned reading.
- Online discussion. You will be given several opportunities to express your opinion – and earn participation points – using the Discussion Board feature of Blackboard. Those occasions will be discussed in class.
- Current event briefs. As time permits, time will be set aside to discuss ethical issues in the news. Students are invited to submit a single-paragraph summary of the issue and the ethical issue involved. The operative word here is *brief*. For example, here's how you may have written one in 1971:

*“The New York Times and Washington Post have decided to publish classified Pentagon documents on the origins of the Vietnam War. The Nixon Administration has gone to court to block publication. The ethical dilemma involves national security versus of the people’s right to know.”*

Students are encouraged to attach a copy of an article containing pertinent details. No hand-written submissions will be credited. Nor will submission of articles without the abovementioned brief.

- Participation in the group project. There should be no “free-riders.” Everyone is expected to carry his or her own weight.

**Grade Scale** (percentage): A=92-100, A-=90-92, B+=88-90, B=82-88, B-=80-82, C+=78-80, C=72-78, C-=70-72, D+=68-70, D=62-68, D-=60-62, F=0-60.

**Special Note for Graduate Students:** In order to receive graduate credit for this course, graduate students are expected to complete an extra assignment. While the specifics of the assignment will be developed in consultation with your professor, it will likely involve the creation of an ethics case study that demonstrates graduate-level research and writing. Please meet with Professor Guth for more information on this assignment.

**Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification** -- *Adopted May 7, 2004:*

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of this course.

*The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.*

### **Plagiarism**

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

### **Fabrication and Falsification**

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

### **Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance:**

"No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester. Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent. The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.

"The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid. Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid."

**Inclement Weather** – The Pentagon doesn't trust Professor Guth with the nuclear launch codes, nor does KU allow him to decide whether classes will be held during periods of bad weather. In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow and/or icy conditions or have canceled classes, please call 8647669 (864-SNOW).

**Students with Special Needs** - The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, (785) 864-2620 coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact your professor privately in regard to this course.

# JOUR 608 - Ethics and the Media

## Spring 2015 Lecture/Reading and Assignment Schedule

Kidder=*How Good People Make Tough Choices*

CB=Casebook (Found in Blackboard/Assigned Reading folder)

P&M=Philosophers and Models (Found on Blackboard/Assigned Reading folder)

Codes=Various professional ethics codes (Found on Blackboard/Professional Codes folder)

*(Schedule subject to change)*

Date	Lecture	Reading	Assignment
<b>January</b>			
T-20	Introduction		Review Blackboard site
R-22	<i>The Interview</i> and Free Expression	CB pp. 8-22 ( <i>The Interview</i> )	
T-27	Right versus wrong	Kidder Chap. 1; CB pp. 23-42 (Ferguson, Mo.)	
R-29	Why ethics matter	Kidder Chap. 2; CB pp.96-102 (NY Subway)	
<b>February</b>			
T-3	Code Breakers: The West Point Cheating Scandal	CB pp. 103-199 (Code Breakers)	
R-5	Sandy Hook Elementary and the Gun Debate	CB-Sandy Hook Elementary pp. 43-48	
T-10	Wisdom of the ages	P&M pp. 1-5; CB pp. 127-134 (Nestle Boycott)	
R-12	Ethical fitness	Kidder Chap 3; CB 49-78 (Thoreau)	
T-17	Core values	Kidder Chap 4; CB 92-95 (Citizens for a Free Kuwait)	Personal code of values assigned
R-19	Wikileaks	CB 79-91 (Wikileaks)	
T-24	Professional Codes - News Info	Codes – SPJ and RTDNA; CB pp. 162-164 (Arthur Ashe)	
R-26	Professional Codes – StratCom	Codes – 4As, IABC and PRSA; CB pp. 135-139 (Argosy)	
<b>March</b>			
T-3	When values collide	CB 203-204 (Redskins) and CB 198-200 (Naming Victims)	<b>Personal code of values due.</b>
R-5	<b>Exam #1</b>		
T-10	Dilemma paradigms	Kidder Chap. 5; CB pp. 154-157 (Rikenbaugh)	
R-12	Dilemma paradigms	Kidder Chap. 6; CB pp. 146-150 (Cisneros)	
T-17	<b>Spring Break</b>		
R-19	<b>Spring Break</b>		
T-24	Resolution principles	Kidder Chap. 7; CB pp. 143-145 (Suicide)	Group papers assigned
R-26	Resolution principles	CB pp. 211-212 (Deep Throat) and pp. 213-214 (Congressman's Past)	
T-31	Checkpoints of ethical decision making	Kidder Chap. 8; CB pp. 158-161 (Brisbane)	

<b>April</b>			
R-2	21st Century Ethics	Kidder Chaps. 9 and 10; CB pp. 168-170 (Phil Witt)	
T-7	Analytical models – The Potter Box	P&M 6-9; CB pp. 193-195 (A&F)	
R-9	Analytical models – The Bok Model	P&M 10-13; CB pp. 182-184 (Racist Joke)	
T-14	Analytical models – The Ginn Model	P&M 17-21; CB pp. 151-153 (Gay marriage)	
R-16	<b>Exam # 2</b>		
T-21	Student group oral reports		<b>Group papers due</b>
R-23	Student group oral reports		
T-28	Student group oral reports		
R-30	Student group oral reports		
<b>May</b>			
T-5	Student group oral reports		
R-7	Last class, course evaluations		
F-8	<b>Stop Day</b>		Take a deep breath and stop!