2016

477-01 Strategic Communication Ethics

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Welcome to Strategic Communication Ethics. This course will provide an overview of news media ethics, advertising ethics, and public relations ethics. A case study approach is taken to illustrate relevant examples of ethical issues and situations faced by news media, advertisers, and public relations practitioners. The course is divided into three sections: news media, advertising, and public relations. Throughout the semester students will apply standard codes of ethics within each field.

Course length & format: This course is completely online via Canvas. You will work through four distinct modules: news media, advertising, public relations, and digital media. The class modules run for 8 weeks, August 22 through October 14. At the end of the course, students will be given an additional two weeks to complete a research project. The research project is due on Monday, October 31. At that point, the course will be over.

Though the course is online, I am easily accessible on campus. Should you encounter difficulties, you can come visit with me or call the Help Desk at x4357.

Course Outcomes
Upon successfully completing this course students will be able to do the following:
- Evaluate ethical issues faced by communication industries
- Formulate strategies for navigating ethical situations
- Apply codes of standards to case studies

Texts

Assigned readings on Canvas.

Grading
All assignments will be evaluated on a points system. Overall grades are assigned based on the percentage of points according to the grade scale below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94% and higher</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93-90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>86-84%</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>83-80%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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Assignments
Throughout the session you will complete several assignments. Below is a description of each major item. See Canvas for a comprehensive list.

• **Response Paragraphs**: Throughout the semester you will write response paragraphs over various in-class discussions, course readings, or campaign presentations. Response paragraphs should be robust – about 7-10 well-crafted sentences. The paragraph should provide an insightful and comprehensive response, include specific details or examples, and include your assessment of the topic. You should provide a clear and detailed statement of the themes/ethical issue faced and will contain specific references to the text being considered. **This is NOT a summary – do not simply summarize what you have read or viewed. You may be asked to share your response during class and engage in a meaningful debate.**

• **Discussion Posts**: You will read a case study and use the Discussion Board in Canvas to engage in meaningful debate. For the initial post, review the case and work through the Potter Box. Next, make a judgment – was it ethical or unethical? The post should clearly state your judgment. You must also support your judgment by referencing the Potter Box elements and corresponding Code of Ethics. Keep the initial post to 5 sentences. Respond to three classmates by challenging or supporting their positions. Use examples and support from your interpretation of the Potter Box process. Keep response posts to 3 sentences.

• **End of Module Quizzes**: At the end of each Module, you will complete a short quiz over the Module content (readings, assignments, presentations, etc.). Quizzes will be two parts and contain 7 multiple-choice questions and two open-ended application questions.

• **Research Project**: A well-researched, well-written, and properly sourced inquiry into an ethical issue related to media, public relations, advertising, digital media, or communication. The proposal, which is worth 50 points, should describe your paper and its thesis in detail and must include an annotated bibliography of at least eight specific sources. **You must receive approval of the research proposal before you commence work on the actual project.** The paper must be 6-8 pages in length and include a minimum of seven sources, not counting the textbook, codes of ethics, and dictionaries or encyclopedias. A rubric will be provided.

**COURSE POLICIES**

Take a moment to carefully read each policy so that you understand the expectations, rules, and regulations for the course. By remaining in the course students agree to the policies outlined in the syllabus.

**Attendance**
Attendance is essential to passing the course. Attendance in an online course means you must log into the course, stay abreast of requirements, assignments, and engage with other students and the professor. Make it a point to log in at least once a day – at least!

**Late Work**
It is imperative that you turn assignments in on time. Assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a zero.
Sending Appropriate Emails

All emails directed to your professor should use proper address, format, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Always identify yourself in emails by including your name, course, and course time.

Example of an appropriate email:
Dr. Rasmussen,
This is Joan Smith from your noon PR Writing course. Can you tell me if…

Example of an inappropriate email:
Hey,
This is Joan. U didn't give me a rubric b4 class ended.

Note: I do not read in text lingo or abbreviations, nor should you write this way in an academic or professional setting. Emails in poor format may result in delayed response or a complete inability to respond.

Class Conduct

Please treat each other with respect. This is an ethics course and you may have different opinions about topics – and that is great. Engage in meaningful debate to explore the topics further. Any behavior unbecoming of a college student will not be tolerated. Any such behavior will result in the loss of participation points, failure of assignments, or other consequences deemed appropriate, including failure of the course. Drop forms will not be signed for situations stemming from improper behavior. Students will abide by the XU Student Rights & Responsibilities.

Grade Reviews

Request for grade reviews are welcome, but may result in either the raising or lowering of a grade. All requests should be submitted in writing (email is fine) and must clearly indicate the specific questions or sections in question. Written requests must also provide a sound argument supporting each section or question requested for review. Include textbook page numbers and/or notes to offer adequate support.

Sample Request:
Dr. Rasmussen, I believe my answer to question 5 on the midterm is correct. The answer is "Inverted Pyramid." The question required us to name the most appropriate organization for hard news stories. My response can be found on page 123, paragraph 2 in our textbook. When can we meet to discuss this?

Course Withdrawal

The professor will not withdraw a student from a course. If you stop attending, you should withdraw from the course or you will receive an F.

Academic Honesty

Under no circumstances will cheating or plagiarism of any sort be tolerated. All work (writing, photography, sound, video) should be original. Any research should be documented. Any incidents of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy. All assignments run through Turnitin.com.

ADA Statement

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the Learning Assistance Center at 513-745-3280 on the Fifth Floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 514, to coordinate reasonable accommodations.