

COMM 215 – 203 Ethics & Communication (2308)

Bastiaan Vanacker

CBL 522

T.-Th.: 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Office Hours: 60 minutes before and after class.

Email: bvanacker@luc.edu

Cell Phone: 312-XXX-XXXX

Twitter: @bas_vanacker

Text

Book: *Media Ethics at Work: True Stories from Young Professionals – 2nd Edition* by Lee Anne Peck and Guy S. Reel (**Be sure to get the 2nd edition.**)

Other readings will be made available under the “lessons” tab of our Sakai site. For each lesson, check if there are online readings.

Objectives of the course

This course explores various approaches to ethical decision-making and applies that process to diverse aspects of every day communication in a professional and non-professional setting. This class not only seeks to prepare future media professionals, but also tries to increase media literacy and critical awareness with students who might not pursue a career in media. Students learn to discern a wide variety of ethical issues concerning communication behavior, apply systematic ethical analysis to various communication situations, and clearly explain their analyses.

In order to this, the course text is designed to accomplish five objectives with students.

1. Recognizing moral issues
2. Developing analytical skills
3. Tolerating and resisting disagreement and ambiguity
4. Stimulating moral imagination
5. Eliciting a sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility

While recognizing the importance of consistently applying abstract principles to specific cases in applied ethics (deductive approach), I also am a strong believer in a bottom-up (inductive approach) in developing one’s ethical decision making skills. After spending several weeks introducing the students to various ethical theories, this class will make ample use of the method of casuistry, a case-based approach to ethics in which ethical principles and values are not only

applied to specific cases, but are generated by them. Contrasting and comparing one's ethical thinking in similar cases is instrumental in this endeavor.

This class is not about learning what is wrong and right in the communicative setting, but developing skills to figure this out by yourself.

Expectations

Attendance

Show up when the class starts; stay until we're finished. Regular attendance is critical and will affect your participation, but attendance is not mandatory and is not part of the grade. However, if you miss class, you will also miss any in-class assignments and quizzes and will not be able to make them up.

Excused Absences

Only in cases of a **documented** illness, family emergency, involvement with an official Loyola activity (such as a sport game) or other extenuating circumstances will a student be excused from attending class without repercussions. It is the student's obligation to provide me with documentation that shows (s)he was unable to attend class. If you will miss class because of one of the above reasons, please notify me in advance. If you think that you have another important obligation that should excuse you from coming to class not covered under this policy, contact me **BEFOREHAND** and see if you can be excused from class. Otherwise, your absence will be unexcused (see above in "attendance" for my policy on unexcused absences)

Top Hat

This class will use Top Hat, the class response software adopted by Loyola Chicago. You are responsible for signing up for the service and come to class with a tablet, smart phone, or laptop. I recommend you download the Top Hat app on these devices. This software's prime purpose is to increase the interactivity of the class and enable everyone to contribute. Though at times, graded questions will also be administered through Top Hat. Top Hat will also be used to take attendance. If you are in class but do not have access to a connected device, let me know beforehand.

Work ethic: Arrive prepared, meet deadlines, participate and have fun, too.

Technology: Bring your digital devices to class – but use them only for assigned work during the class time. If I see you are focused on your screen instead of in the classroom, I will ask you a question. If your reply is "Can you please repeat the question?" you will be deducted one whole grade for participation. Don't text and don't have chat/text/messenger programs open during class. When videos are shown or when groups are presenting, you should not be looking at your laptop.

Spelling, grammar and writing skills: All are important and will affect your grade. Don't hesitate to use the Loyola Writing Center <http://www.luc.edu/writing/> to help improve your work.

Readings: You need to do your readings before coming to class. Not doing so will result in low participation and quiz grades.

Deadlines: In the interest of reducing printing costs and the environment, you can turn in papers electronically. Papers turned in fewer than 24 hours late will incur a 20% penalty. After that, I will no longer accept papers.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY CENTER (SAC)

If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact the SAC as soon as possible. Formal arrangements must be made through the office before course adjustments can be made. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SAC website: <https://luc.edu/sac/sacstudents/>.

MANDATED REPORTER

As a faculty member at Loyola University Chicago I am committed to supporting students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. Therefore, if a student chooses to confide in me regarding an issue of gender-based misconduct, I am obligated to inform Loyola's Title IX Deputy Coordinator. The Title IX Deputy Coordinator will assist you in connecting with all possible resources for support and reporting both on and off campus.

Loyola's Policy on Academic Dishonesty

The basic commitment of a university is to search for and to communicate the truth as it is honestly perceived. The university could not accomplish its purpose in the absence of this demanding standard. To the extent that this standard is respected, a genuine learning community can exist. Students of this university are called upon to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of this standard. Plagiarism is the appropriation for gain of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the deliberate taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

The faculty and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community:

Submitting as one's own:

1. Material copied from a published source: print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
2. Another person's unpublished work or examination material.
3. Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.
4. Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty.

Plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. The chairperson may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct.

Academic cheating is another serious act that violates academic integrity. Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to or obtaining information from another student during the examination; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; and falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences all are violations of the integrity and honesty standards of the examination process.

In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty across departments, the academic dean of the student's college may convene a hearing board. Students retain the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the academic dean of the college in which they are registered. The decision of the dean is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean

Graded Activities

Final exam: 20%

Philosophy test: 20 %

Ethics bulletin: 7.5 %

Once in this semester, your group will be responsible for presenting an ethics bulletin to the class.

Feb. 19: Group one

Feb 26: Group two

March 14: Group three

March 19: Group four

March 26: Group five

April 4: Group six

April 11: Group seven

April 16: Group eight

Moral Exemplar Interview: 7.5% You will interview someone you consider a moral exemplar in his or her field

Group paper and presentation: 12.5%

Towards the end of the semester, you and your group will investigate in-depth a current media-ethical issue and debate it against another group.

Personal ethical dilemma paper: 7.5%

Participation: 10%

Offer your ideas, question and challenge. On team assignments, be a full participant. Team members will do peer evaluations which affect each person's grade. Other factors that can affect your grade positively:

- Asking relevant questions, offering insights, contributing to class discussions, bringing in examples, being an active listener and participant, applying course concepts to discussion...
- Participate in a thoughtful manner with questions asked over Top Hat

Factors that will affect your grade negatively

- Not being able to answer a basic question about the readings
- Not respecting another person's opinion or viewpoint
- Falling asleep during class time
- "Heels in the sand" approach
- Repeatedly arriving late
- Leave early without previously informing me
- Not answering questions asked via Top Hat

Quizzes and in-class assignments: 15 %

Throughout the semester, you will be taking in class quizzes on the readings and do in-class assignments applying course concepts. Do not blow these off. They are an important part of your grade and can be applied to (part of) your final exam grade.

Grading scale

A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, F, WF are assigned the following credit points for purposes of grade point average (GPA) calculations: A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3.00; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.00; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.00; F = 0; WF = 0.

100 - 93%	A
93 - 90%	A-
90 - 88%	B+
88 - 83%	B
83 - 80%	B-

80 - 78%	C+
78 - 73%	C
73 - 70%	C-
70 - 68%	D+
68 - 63%	D
63 - 60%	D-
below 60%	F

Section I: A Philosophical Approach Towards Ethical Dilemmas

Jan. 15: Introduction

Jan. 17: What is Ethics?

Jan. 22: Kant

Jan. 24: Utilitarianism

Jan. 29: W.D. Ross

Jan. 31: Virtue Ethics and Situationism

Feb. 5: Guest lecture: Jill Geisler

Chapter: 21 You Sent Me What?! The Case of Sexual Harassment at an Internship

Feb. 7: Rawls

Feb. 12: Care ethics, empathy and intuitionism

Feb. 14: Codes of ethics and other decision making tools

Feb. 19: In-class exercise

Feb. 21: Biases and Flaws in Argumentation

Feb. 26: Review

Feb. 28: Test

Section II: Case Studies

March 12: CDEP event

March 14: *When Personal and Professional Ethics Clash*

Chapter 3: Confronting Others' Violations

March 19: *Conflicting Loyalties*

Chapter 11: Face to Face with the Facts

March 21: *Deception in Newsgathering*

Chapter 9: Seeking Answers for Students

March 26: *Deception in Advertising*

Chapter 6: OMG! This Band Is SOOO GR8!

March 28: Online class

April 2: *Privacy*

Chapter 17: Please Don't Use the Video

Chapter 25: On the Record or Off?

April 4: *Privacy and the Right to be Forgotten*

Chapter 18: Source Remorse The Case of the Requests to "Unpublish"

April 9: *Ethical Issues in Advocacy and PR*

Chapter 5: Focus Group Dilemma

Chapter 20: When Ethical Compasses Collide

April 11: *Ethical Issues in Advocacy and PR*

Chapter 4: Political Espionage or Politics as Usual? The Case of Political Campaign Tactics

April 16: *AI, Predictive Analytics and the Future of Advertising*

TBD

April 18: *Getting Ready for the Real World*

Chapter 27: Along Came a Better Offer Two Cases of Job-Hunting Ethics

April 23: Presentations

April 25: Presentations

Final Exam: Tuesday April 30: 9:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.

