MCS 343-202
Media Ethics
Winter quarter 2018, 4 credit hours
Mondays and Wednesdays 2:40pm-4:10pm
Levan Center Room 303 - Lincoln Park campus

Instructor: Nathanael Bassett
Contact Email: nbassett@depaul.edu
Office:
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:30pm-2:30pm, & via appointment (Skype, Google).

Course Description:

Media and technology are inseparable from our culture in ways that makes their use and social role difficult to define. Highlighting the importance of both raises unique questions about our judgements of the world, choices of behavior, and our responsibilities to one another. This course will introduce various ethical frameworks as articulated in moral philosophy, and call for students to apply them in contemporary contexts of media and technology. Key themes include the importance of critical thinking on ethical dilemmas, the accountability of media participants (producers, professionals and consumers) to one another, and the value-laden nature of media (in form and content).

Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

• Understand the role of ethics in contemporary and historical media.
• Articulate the differences between various ethical frameworks and ground their choices when resolving ethical dilemmas.
• Be a critical participant in debates about the ethical implications of choices and actions concerning media.
• Understand contemporary media as involving unique ethical dilemmas that challenges historical values.

Required Texts:
(note: Due to various considerations, weekly readings will be made available on D2L)

• Alan Moore, (2013). *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics
• Boss, J. A. (2001) *Ethics for Life: A Text with Readings* (*4th Edition*). McGraw-Hill (see note)

Suggested additional texts:

• Christians, C. G., Fackler, M., & Ferré, J. P. (2012). *Ethics for public communication: Defining moments in media history*. Oxford University Press.
• Singer, P. (2017). *Ethics in the Real World: 87 Brief Essays on Things that Matter*. Text Publishing.

Assignments & Grading:

Writing assignments:
        Signed Syllabus: 1
        Ethical Manifesto: 23
        Case Study: 23
        "Making Choices": 23
    In-class participation and discussion: 20
    Reading Reflection: 10
Total: 100 points

Grading Scale (please refer to the <u>Academic Handbook</u> on the significance of letter grades):

A	100-96		C+	75-73
A-	95-90		C	72-70
B+	89-86		C-	69-65
B	85-80		D	62-60
B-	79-76		F	59 and below

Assignment Descriptions

Signed Syllabus/Pre-Assessment
(due January 8th): 1 point

Turn in a signed copy of the last page of this syllabus, indicating that you have read and understand these expectations. Complete the pre-assessment on the last page indicating what you are hoping to get out of this course.

Ethical Manifesto
(due February 12th): 23 points

4-5 pages (1,000-1,250 words)
Outline and elaborate on a personal ethical manifesto that draws from the moral theories discussed in class. This should include an explanation of principles you plan to follow in pursuing your life and career - provide practical examples where possible.

Case Study
(due March 12th): 23 points

4-5 pages (1,000-1,250 words).
Choose a dilemma or situation related to your own interests and involvement (present or anticipated) as a media practitioner. Describe this conflict in detail (outlining the risks, possible harm, and potential rewards) and the various stakeholders involved. What sort of guidelines can you establish for yourself and others to resolve that conflict? Feel free to revise your position taken in the Ethical Manifesto you wrote, or apply those principles to this scenario.

"Making Choices"
(due after February 5th): 23 points

> **4-5 pages (1,000-1,250 words)**
> Using the moral philosophies discussed in class, write a 4-5 page essay that examines questions relating to personal responsibility on involvement with media and technology.

In-class participation and discussion
1 point per day of class

> You are expected to participate and be involved in classroom discussion. This class values input from students based on their insights derived from the readings and personal experience. Sharing those views contributes to the overall learning of the class. Additionally, breakout sessions will help students to draw from one another and better understand the topic at hand. During class time your involvement is important to your success and others. Participation will earn you this portion of your grade. Deliberately distracting and disrupting the environment by detracting from discussion will cost you those points.

Reading Reflections (due each Monday, 9 total starting Jan 8th):
1 point each, 10 total

> **1-2 pages (250-500 Words)**
> What were your thoughts and reactions to the reading(s) we had? What important points do you think should be raised?. At the start of class we will break out and discuss, drawing from the points you make in your reflection. A physical copy of the Reading Reflections can be handed in at the end of class on the first Monday of every week.

Instructions for assignments and extra credit:

> **Turn in all written assignments electronically via D2L, or by email (using the subject "MCS 343 *[assignment name] [last name]*" substituting the name of the assignment and your last name). Please use doc, docx, or pdf format and save your work as "[*assignment name*]_[*last name*]".** Physical copies of Reading Reflections can be handed in at the end of class each Monday.

> **All written assignments should be double space, 10pt Times New Roman font, with standard 1" margins, with the authors name and date present. Deviations from these requirements may result in grade penalties. Use a consistent citation/ reference style (APA, Chicago, etc).**

> Extra credit is available in the form of unfulfilled opportunities to earn points for in-class participation and discussion and reading reflections. As we have 9 opportunities to provide a reflection you have the chance to earn a single additional point, if the need should arise. Your reflection should be on a voluntary scholarly reading (see me for suggestions). Additionally, should you complete your "Making Choices" assignment prior to the deadline and wish to present it in class, you may earn 5 points depending on the quality of your presentation. In the event that you are concerned with your grade, this will be the only opportunity presented to you – no late work will be accepted more than one class period after it is due.

Course Policies:

Absences and Late Work

Absences (including tardiness and leaving early) are heavily discouraged. That said, life happens. Students are allowed one absence throughout the quarter with no explanation. Reading responses are still required, unless the student chooses that week to use their one "no penalty" skip. Late assignments will be penalized 1/10th of the possible points for that assignment per day that the work is overdue. The "new day" begins at 12:01AM. Late work will not be accepted more than one class period after it is due. For instance, reading reflections may be accepted with a penalty of .2 if handed in by Wednesday, but will not be accepted a week late. Likewise, "Making Choices is due March 7th, but can be accepted as late as March 12th with a penalty of 11.5. (making the maximum possible grade for that single assignment 50%).

Course Evaluations

Students will have the opportunity to provide formal feedback on the course during the later portion of the quarter. You will receive an email notification that will allow you to complete an online teaching evaluation. This is important to me because I take your input into how I teach will teach this class and others in the future. Additionally, the university uses these evaluations to determine which classes will be made available, assess the quality of courses, and maintain student enrollment. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that promotes the intellectual development of each individual within the community. The University seeks to maintain and enhance the educational environment of the community in a variety of ways including through the development of and promotion of standards for academic honesty. The University believes that all members of the community are responsible for adherence to these standards for academic honesty, and that all violations of academic integrity are detrimental to the intellectual development of individuals within the community and to the community at large. Violations include but are not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University for further details.

Accessibility

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:
Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Please feel free to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I can help to facilitate any accommodations you will need in this course. This is best done early as possible. Any conversation we have will remain confidential.

Writing Center

The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Utilizing the writing center as a resource can have a direct impact on the quality of your work and your total grade. Visit www.depaul.edu/writing for more information.

Sexual and Relationship Violence

As a DePaul community, we share a commitment to take care of one another. It is important for students to know that faculty are required to report information reported to them about experiences with sexual or relationship violence to DePaul's Title IX Coordinator. Students should also know that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence in course assignments or discussion does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response. Students seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7777; Loop: 312-362-8400) or the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7290; Loop: 312-362-8066 or titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu). Students seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or hpw@depaul.edu). More information is available at http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services and to seek help around sexual and relationship violence for themselves as well as their peers who may be in need of support.

On Course Content

Materials in the class will describe various ethically complicated scenarios and may touch on sensitive subjects. These may include the depiction of physical violence, sexual assault, invasion of privacy, hate speech and more.

If you are concerned that certain material or subjects will likely be emotionally challenging for you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

If you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion as a result of those concerns, you may always do so without academic penalty. However you will be responsible material and you may not be able to earn a participation grade. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

Liberal Studies Program:

Introduction to Mass Communication is listed as a Liberal Studies Domain Course under Philosophical Inquiry area. This means that the course should adhere to the learning goals for the Liberal Studies program and the specific goals of the Philosophical Inquiry area. A list of those goals and a description of the Philosophical Inquiry domain are in Appendix C.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction - The Trolley Problem, Media & Technology Ethics

January 3rd

Week 2 - Frameworks: Virtue Ethics

January 8th (**Signed Syllabus/Pre-Assessment Due**)
- *Watchmen* Chapter 1-3
- Boss, J. A. (2001) Virtue Ethics and the Good Life. In *Ethics for Life: A Text With Readings (4th Ed.)*. McGraw Hill.

January 10th - Applications
- Quinn, A. (2007). Moral virtues for journalists. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 22*(2-3), 168-186.

Week 3 - Frameworks: Deontology (Obligations and Absolutes)

January 15th
- Reading: *Watchmen* Chapter 4-6
- Boss, J. A. (2001) Deontology: The Ethics of Duty. In *Ethics for Life: A Text With Readings (4th Ed.)*. McGraw Hill.

January 17th - Applications
- Plaisance, P. L. (2007). Transparency: An assessment of the Kantian roots of a key element in media ethics practice. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 22*(2-3), 187-207.

Week 4 - Frameworks: Teleology (Consequences and Utility)

January 22
- *Watchmen* Chapter 7-9
- Boss, J. A. (2001) Utilitarianism: The Greatest Happiness Principle. In *Ethics for Life: A Text With Readings (4th Ed.)*. McGraw Hill.

January 24 - Applications
- Duffy, M. J., & Freeman, C. P. (2011). Unnamed sources: A utilitarian exploration of their justification and guidelines for limited use. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 26*(4), 297-315.

Week 5 - Frameworks: Ethics of Care

January 29
- *Watchmen* Chapter 10-12
- Boss, J. A. (2001) Conscience and Moral Development. In *Ethics for Life: A Text With Readings (4th Ed.)*. McGraw Hill.

January 31 - Applications
- Jackson, S. (2014) Rethinking Repair. In Gillespie, T. E., Boczkowski, P. J. E., & Foot, K. A. (Eds). *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Week 6 - Frameworks: Liberalism & Freedom (+/-)

February 5 Freedom to…
- Berlin, I. (1999) 'Two concepts of liberty' In Warburton, N. (Ed.) *Philosophy: Basic Readings.* New York: Routledge.
- Elliott, D. (2007). Getting Mill right. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 22*(2-3), 100-112.
- Schejter, A. M., & Yemini, M. (2007). Justice, and Only Justice, You Shall Pursue: Network Neutrality, the First Amendment and John Rawls's Theory of Justice. *Mich. Telecomm. & Tech. L. Rev., 14*, 137.

February 7 Freedom from…
- Dyzenhaus, D. (1992). John Stuart Mill and the harm of pornography. *Ethics, 102*(3), 534-551.
- Slagle, M. (2009). An ethical exploration of free expression and the problem of hate speech. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 24*(4), 238-250.

Week 7 - Themes: Cultural Memory

February 12 - Fake News and Forgetting (**Ethical Manifesto Due**)
- Brennen, B. (2017). Making Sense of Lies, Deceptive Propaganda, and Fake News. *Journal of Media Ethics, 32*(3), 179-181.
- Ambrose, M. L., & Ausloos, J. (2013). The right to be forgotten across the pond. *Journal of Information Policy, 3*, 1-23.

February 14 - Representation
- Walsh, K. R., Fürsich, E., & Jefferson, B. S. (2008). Beauty and the patriarchal beast: Gender role portrayals in sitcoms featuring mismatched couples. *Journal of Popular film and Television, 36*(3), 123-132.
- Dyer, R. (2000). The role of stereotypes. *Media studies: A reader*, 245-51.

Week 8 - Themes: Design Ethics

February 19 - Tech as Media (and vice versa)
- Latour, B. (2002). Morality and Technology: The End of the Means. *Theory, Culture and Society, 19*(5&6), 247–260.
- Davis, J. (2009). Design Methods for Ethical Persuasive Computing. *Presented at the Proceedings of the International Conference on Persuasive Technology.*

February 21 - Moral Objects
- Verbeek, P. P. (2006). Persuasive Technology and Moral Responsibility Toward an ethical framework for persuasive technologies. *Presented at persuasive 06, First international conference on Persuasive technology for human well-being*
- de Poel, I. V., Kroes, P. *(2014). Can Technology Embody Values?* In Kroes, P., & Verbeek, P.-P. (Eds). *The Moral Status of Technical Artefacts*. Springer.

Week 9 - Themes: Privacy & Security

February 26 - Privacy or Surveillance
- Lyon, D. (2001). Facing the future: Seeking ethics for everyday surveillance. *Ethics and information technology, 3*(3), 171-180.
- Archard, D. (1998) Privacy, the public interest and a prurient public. In Kieran, M. (Ed.) *Media Ethics*. New York: Routledge.

February 28 - Security as Control
- Solove, D. J. (2007). "I'VE GOT NOTHING TO HIDE," AND OTHER MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF PRIVACY. San Diego Law Review, 44, 745–772. Retrieved from http://ssrn.com/abstract=998565
- Dittrich, D., Bailey, M., & Dietrich, S. (2011). Building an active computer security ethics community. *IEEE Security & Privacy, 9*(4), 32-40.

Week 10 - Themes: Autonomy & Nature

March 5th - Robots
- Asaro, P. M. (2006). What should we want from a robot ethic. *International Review of Information Ethics, 6*(12), 9-16.
- Gunkel, D. J. (2017). The other question: can and should robots have rights?. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 1-13.

March 7 - Environmental Ethics (**"Making Choices" Due**)
- Prins, B. (1995). The ethics of hybrid subjects: Feminist constructivism according to Donna Haraway. *Science, Technology, & Human Values, 20*(3), 352-367.
- Haraway, D. (2016). Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene. *E-Flux*, (75).

Week 11 Wrapping Up

March 12 (**Case Study Due**)

Final Page

I, _____ have read and understand the expectations of this course.

Signed,   _____

Date,   _____

Pre-Assessment

If possible, please type the following answers (copies of the syllabus will be made available). Turn in ONLY this final page to me by January 8th for 1% of your final grade.

What do you want to learn about media ethics?

What are your reasons for taking this course (personal/professional goals)?