

Journalism 308-1200 (No. 19364)

Ethics in a Wired World

Fall Semester, 2019

August 26 to December 20, 2019; MW, 11:00 am to 12:15 pm, Summerfield 427

Instructor: Mark Johnson

mark.johnson@dentons.com

markjohnson@ku.edu

(816) 460-2424 (Office)

Office Hours: 307 Green Hall (Law School) MW,
12:30 pm to 2:00 pm and by appointment

(816) 456-5044 (Cell)

To ensure success in reaching me, please use both email addresses. Do not contact me by text. I will not contact any student by phone or text.

The Course:

Recognizing why and how one should act ethically is crucial to being a productive member of society. In this course we will consider the sources of our concepts of ethics and apply the lessons from those sources to contemporary, real-life situations. We will also consider the similarities and differences between the systems of law and ethics, one system that requires a certain set of behaviors and a second system that recommends another set of behaviors.

The course will have three basic modules: first, studying the writings of major philosophers on ethics, second, examining two principal approaches to analyzing ethical problems, and third, applying the philosophies of ethics and approaches to analyzing ethical problems to practical ethical issues faced in contemporary society.

Requirements:

There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam. The final exam will be comprehensive, covering all material in the course. The mid-term will include multiple-choice and true-false questions, while the final will be essay-based.

Each student will also prepare a 5-page paper (exclusive of bibliography) addressing an ethical issue the student has faced. I will be available to discuss proposed topics, and you must obtain my approval of your topic.

Class Participation. Students are encouraged to speak up and ask questions. I also teach in the law school, where students are required to speak in class, so I feel comfortable with consistent interaction with the class members. Questions and comments from students will help guide the lectures.

Once we reach the part of the semester on practical ethical issues, students will be expected to participate, and each week a group will be selected to be prepared to answer questions and comment on the problems presented in that week's case. Each group will be announced a week ahead, so the group members may do necessary preparation (in other words, make sure they do the reading and are familiar with what we will be studying).

Grading:

Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%
Ethics Paper	40%
Class Participation	10%

Students who participate in class discussions (ask questions and respond to questions I pose, demonstrating an understanding of the subject material) will be given credit for their participation.

Civility and Respect:

Civility and respect for the opinions of others are very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. Courteous behavior and responses are expected at all times. When you disagree with someone, be sure that you make a distinction between criticizing an idea and criticizing the person. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity/expression, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or marital, parental, or veteran status are contrary to the mission of this course and will not be tolerated.

Use of Electronics:

You may use laptops for note-taking. However, use of phones/smartphones/tablets is not allowed (my experience is that such devices are used to consult email, texts, social media, and the Internet, but not to take notes). If I see you using one of the forbidden

devices, I will politely ask you to turn it over to me and I will return it to you at the end of class.

You may audio-record my lectures for personal use only. You may not share recordings with other students.

Misconduct:

You are bound by the University rules on academic misconduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, please ask BEFORE your endeavor.

Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification

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 the course and expulsion, if applicable, 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 the 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. 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.

Financial Aid Policy

The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required to monitor the attendance of students who receive financial aid. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and the 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 and Special Needs

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW). The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (v/tty), 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 me privately in regard to this course.

Course Schedule (Subject to change as announced in class):

Readings should be completed BEFORE the assigned date. Readings will be posted in Course Documents on the class Blackboard website at least one class period before they are discussed.

CONTENT

READING

August 26	Introduction to the Course What is (are?) Ethics? What is ethical behavior? What are the differences between laws, rules, guidelines, and values?	
I. THE BIG FOUR: PHILOSOPHERS AND THEIR APPROACHES TO ETHICS		
August 28	Aristotle	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
September 4	Immanuel Kant	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Kant's <i>Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>
September 9	John Stuart Mill	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i>
September 11 and 16	John Rawls September 16: exercise demonstrating the Veil of	Material on Blackboard: Excerpt from Rawls' <i>A Theory of Justice</i>

	Ignorance and its application to KU issues	
II. MODELS FOR ANALYZING ETHICAL PROBLEMS		
September 18 and 23	The Potter Model	Blackboard PowerPoint on Potter Model
September 25	The Ginn Model	Blackboard PowerPoint on The Ginn Model
III. ETHICS IN THE WIRED WORLD: ETHICAL PROBLEMS WE EXPERIENCE AND HOW TO RESOLVE THEM		
September 30 and October 2	Ethical Behavior in the Strangest Places: Crime Honor Among Thieves	Materials on Blackboard
<u>Topics for Papers on Personal Ethical Issues must be approved by October 7 at 5 pm -- use email to submit topics and obtain instructor approval</u>		
October 7 and 9	Case Study on Social Media: the Cautionary Tale of the Rise and Fall of Yik Yak and the unethical use of social media	Materials on Blackboard
<u>NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 14 -- FALL BREAK</u>		

October 16: Mid-Term Exam		
October 21 and 23	Case Study on Social Media: the Use and Misuse of Twitter	Materials on Blackboard
October 28 and 30	Case Study on the Ethics of Instagram (not just whether you use Instagram ethically, but how Instagram uses you)	Materials on Blackboard
November 4 and 6	Case Study: The Ethics of Lying Are there "Good Lies?"	Materials on Blackboard
Personal Ethics Paper due November 11 at 5 pm -- submit via email		
November 11 and 13	Case Study: the College Admissions Scandal	Materials on Blackboard
November 18, 20, and 25	Case Study: Ethics in business (the Merck, Citicorp, and Volkswagen stories) To whom do businesses owe loyalty? When do people trump profits?	Materials on Blackboard
December 2 and 4	Case Study: Ethics in Sports -- the Steroid Scandal and why we still have PED problems today	Materials on Blackboard
December 9	Ethics in Politics (is the term "ethical politics" an	Materials on Blackboard

	oxymoron, like “jumbo shrimp?”)	
December 11	What have we learned? Why should/must we act ethically? Review session for final exam	
FINAL EXAM, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20		