Revised Course Proposal
Journalism 4102: Journalism Ethics

Note: This proposal asks that Journalism 4102 be changed from two hours (2-0-2) to three hours (3-0-3). The change is sought because of the increasing concern about ethics and the need for additional study by Journalism majors and minors and students in the Broadcast News.

1. Catalog Description:
   (a) Journalism 4102
   (b) Journalism Ethics
   (c) 3-0-3
   (d) On demand
   (e) JOU Ethics
   (f) Ethical principles and issues of journalism; philosophical and professional standards of reporting and editing for newspapers, broadcast and online journalism.
   (g) Junior standing

2. Objectives and Evaluation of the Course:
   (a) Course Objectives:
   • To understand and examine the ethical principles of journalism, their origins, purposes and relevance to us and to the profession.
   • To help formulate our own professional--and perhaps personal--values and principles and to help reform the profession.
   • To understand the public perception of ethics in the media and to think critically about current media issues related to journalism ethics.
   • To explore issues of diversity and multiculturalism in the newsroom and in the profession and to promote the diversity goals of the profession.
   • To define, develop and practice the most important journalism skill and professional ethical skill--gatekeeping, the defining, detecting and interpreting of news and the issues that relate to the professional work of journalists and the media in a diverse democracy.
   (b) NA
   (c) Assessment
      Two exams
      An eight-to-ten-page research paper
      Four two-to-three-page reaction papers
      Quizzes
      Several oral reports
      These tests and projects will include the issues and principles studied and their application to quandaries and current questions in the profession.
   (d) NA
   (e) Rationale: A number of writing assignments/writing activities are required throughout the course in the form of reaction papers on ethical case studies, essay questions on examinations and a research paper that gives the student an opportunity for revision after review by the instructor. Approximately 40 to 50 percent of a student’s grade is based upon these assignments, far exceeding the university’s 35 percent minimum requirements for a writing intensive class.
      Writing-Intensive: Writing assignments and activities are designed primarily to assist students in mastering course content, secondarily to strengthen students’ writing skills.

3. Outline of the course (three 50-minute or two 75-minute class sessions per week)
(a) Week 1: A brief look at ethics in philosophy, the history of American journalism ethics, the contemporary ethics movement, several ethical myths, and critical thinking.
Week 2: Ethics and News: an exploration of journalism and the public interest, the journalism skill of gatekeeping, and some problems of ethics in news reporting
Week 3: Ethics and Truth: an examination of the principles of the search for truth, cumulative knowledge, credibility in journalism, accuracy, objectivity, the right to know, and the role of language in truth.
Week 4: Law and Ethics: a look at how ethics and law relate
Week 5: Political Morality and Ethics: an analysis of issues where journalism ethics and politics meet
Week 6: Ethical Values and Attitudes: an exploration of ethical principles such as the relation of ends and means, Kohlberg’s stages of moral growth, general rules in ethical decisions, skepticism and cynicism, classic virtues, and Arendt’s banality of evil
Week 7: Journalism Values
Week 8: Critical Thinking and Fallacies.
Week 9: Journalists’ conflicts of Interest
Week 10: Misrepresentation: an examination of ethical issues such as snooping, phone deception, passive deception, and insider reporting;
Week 11: Freebies: a look at issues such as gifts, junkets, perks, political problems, sports issues, travel sections, and covering entertainment
Week 12: Confidential Sources: an analysis of such areas as shield laws, attribution, leaks, secret sources, trial balloons, disinformation, trading information, breaking promises, offensive language, and free press and fair trial.
Week 13: Diversity: an exploration of such areas as multiculturalism in journalism, diversity in the newsroom, covering minority groups and underrepresented people, and identity politics.
Week 14: Deception: a look at issues involving lying, fakery, hoaxes, subjectivity and the New Journalism, plagiarism, and copyright problems.
Week 15: Covering War and Terrorism: an analysis of issues such as defining terms, journalism and patriotism, ethnocentrism in international news, war coverage and battlefield censorship, government secrecy, and covering terrorism.

(b) NA

4. Rationale
(a) The Journalism Department proposes to raise the credit hours of the Journalism Ethics course from two to three hours due to the great increase in the amount of ethical concern and in the number of problems in the profession in recent years. Students would benefit from the additional hour of classroom study of journalism ethics.
(b) Since this course is considered one of the capstone courses in the Journalism major, the 4000-level designation is appropriate.
(c) None
(d) This course is required of all Journalism majors and minors and Speech Communication majors pursuing the Broadcast News Concentration.

5. Implementation
(a) Peter Voelz or James Tidwell.
(b) NA
(c) Texts:
• Selected readings on library reserve and online.

(d) Fall 2003

6. **Community College Transfer**: A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course

7. **Date approved by the department**: November 21, 2002

8. **Date approved by the CAH Curriculum Committee**: December 18, 2002

9. **Date approved by CAA**: January 30, 2003