

Anglo-American University

Media and Democracy

JRN 220

Fall Semester 2010

Monday 11:30–14:15

Instructor: Bruce Konviser

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Course Description:

The course will explore both the broader role of the news media in a democracy and the narrower issues of ethical behavior and ethical dilemmas that regularly confront journalists in the course of their work. In the broader realm, the course will examine, how the media contribute to civic dialogue, which is fundamental to a free society - while also retracing the historical development of press freedom. Fairness, accuracy, professional behavior and conflicts of interest are among the ethical issues that will be discussed.

Course Aims:

For students to understand the the role of news media in a democracy. It also strives to empower students to be conversant in discussing journalistic issues at both a broader, theoretical, level as well as a narrower, tactical, level. That is, to help students develop a rationale for thinking through the various ethical problems that confront journalists, with the aim of reaching carefully considered solutions

Methodology:

Students should learn through interactive classroom discussions, based on lectures, reading assignments, guest speakers and a research assignment/s/. Case studies will be a major part of the discussion topics and students will be encourage to find solutions that balance the public's right to know with the values of decency and fairness.

Evaluation

Student performance will be evaluated, based on mid-term (25%) and final examination (30%), participation in class discussions (25%) and a research project (20%) that either examines an issue related to Media and Democracy or is a case-study of a journalistic ethical dilemma. Students will give a presentation of their findings, and should be prepared to defend their conclusions.

Reading:

It is important to keep up with the readings because they will be discussed in class. (Additional readings will likely be added to the list that follows). And, as mentioned above, class participation is an important part of the grading.

Plagiarism:

Using someone else's words as your own, without proper attribution, is a cardinal sin in both journalism and academia and will not be tolerated. No credit will be given for plagiarized work, and it will put the student in serious danger of failing the course.

Attendance:

Is not required but strongly recommended. Not only will your classroom participation grade (25% of your total grade) be reduced for each absence - and the fourth absence will mean an 'F' for classroom participation - but students will invariably suffer come exam time if they have not been in class.

Course Outline/Reading Assignments

Week 1: Introduction to course

Week 2: The Political, Philosophical and Economic Case for Moral Reasoning in Journalism

Chapters 1,2,3,4 Moral Reasoning for Journalists By Steven R. Knowlton

Chapters 8 & 10 – case studies

Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 3:

Objectivity; Privacy; Balancing Competing Elements

Chapters 5,6,7 Moral Reasoning for Journalists By Steven R. Knowlton

Chapters 12, 13, 14 – case studies

Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 4:

Media and Democracy By Leo Bogart

Chapter 1, Media and Democracy

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 1, What Makes A Story Newsworthy?
Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 5:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 2, Morality, Competence, and Journalistic Excellence
News Values
Chapter 1 The Truth of the News Chapter 1 P 3-43
Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 6:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 3, Publication And Free Speech
Media and Democracy
Chapters 5, 10, 11, 12 &18
Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 7:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 4, Privacy, News Sources, and the Refusal to Testify
Breaking the News
Chapter 6 News and Democracy P. 235-273
Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 8: Mid-term

Guest Speaker: TBA

Mid-term break

Week 9:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 5, Political Power and the Media

Guest Speaker: TBA
Student Presentations

Week 10:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 6, Objectivity and News Reporting
Guest Speaker: TBA

Week 11:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 7, Multiperspectivism and the Problem of News Distortion
Guest Speaker: TBA
Student Presentations

Week 12:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 8, Logical foundations of News Reporting
Guest Speaker: TBA
Student Presentations

Week 13:

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, Edited By Eliot. D. Cohen
Chapter 9, Philosophy and Journalistic Education
Guest Speaker: TBA
Student Presentations

Week 14: Final exam