

CA 260 Media and Communication Ethics
T/U 3:00-4:45
Fall 2002

Brent Malin
Arter 114B
332-2903 (Office)
724-1430 (Home)
bmalin@allegheny.edu

Office Hours:
M&W, 1:00-2:30
Tu&Th, 1:30-3:00
And By Appointment

This course explores a variety of ethical problems confronting communicators today. While we will focus in particular on case studies and problems in media ethics, these examples will also allow us to think more broadly about the ethical dilemmas of other communicative experiences, from interpersonal exchanges and exchanges in the classroom, to national and global level exchanges. In the process we will undertake several things. First, we will be exposed to and read a variety of canonical pieces exploring communicative ethics, beginning with Plato and Aristotle and moving through to the “postmodern” theories of Foucault and Baudrillard. Engaging these complicated and often difficult ideas will give us interesting frameworks for thinking about ethical dilemmas and offer us ideas to argue for, with, and against when thinking about the ethics of communication. Second, with these theories in hand, we will explore a selection of case studies in which media practitioners must confront particular ethical problems. Here, we will discuss and evaluate the ways in which these ethical issues are negotiated, thinking about the implications, possibilities, and problems associated with the ethical frameworks they demonstrate.

Ethics is a complicated subject informed by multiple and differing perspectives and this course will reflect that. There is no handy tool for solving an ethical dilemma and no one ethical perspective that solves the problem of ethics once and for all. Still, by immersing ourselves in philosophical discourses on ethics, and practical ethical issues in communication, we will begin to find ways to think more deeply about ethics, and our own particular ethical positions on various communicative issues. It will be each of our responsibilities to work through, and think deeply about the various positions we explore in class. You should feel free to argue with the readings, with each other, as well as with me. This is just the sort of dialog necessary to begin to think through these complicated ethical issues.

Through our various explorations we will pose a number of important questions: On what bases have or should mass media practitioners make particular ethical decisions? How do institutional factors, such as media economics, advertising, and legal policies inform particular ethical decisions within the media, or how should they? Do mass media practitioners have a special obligation to ethical behavior that we, as ordinary citizens, do not; or do they, in fact, have a special waiver of the basic moral tenets that the rest of us must accept in order that we might have access to a “free marketplace of ideas?” What ethical obligations do we have in terms of our relationship to the media, whether we are current or future media practitioners, consumers, parents, etc.?

Texts & Materials:

Leslie, L. (2000) . *Mass communication ethics: Decision making in postmodern culture*. Boston: Houghton & Mifflin Company.

Other essays available from the reserve reading desk of the library as well as on-line.

Participation and Attendance:

Participation in class discussions is an essential component of this course. Thus, you should make every effort to attend each class period and be prepared to contribute in insightful ways. If you must miss a class, be sure to notify me well in advance whenever possible. Additionally, daily participation factors heavily into your final grade, so your regular contributions will greatly influence your overall course evaluation. ***Both the quantity and quality of your contributions are important. The best students will attend every class session and make regular, daily contributions that are insightful, interesting, and that encourage discussion from fellow students—making efforts to engage, respond to, and converse with classmates in intelligent ways without monopolizing discussion or discouraging others from participating.***

Guidelines for Participation Grades:

A (90%-100%): These students ***attend all or virtually all class periods*** and ***make daily contributions to class***. These students evidence careful preparation for each class, complete daily reading assignments, and offer insightful, challenging, and critical commentary without monopolizing class discussion, or silencing other class members.

B (80%-89%): These students ***attend all or virtually all class periods*** and ***make at least weekly contributions to class***. While these students may not speak up every class period, it is clear that they have prepared for class, completed daily readings, and that they make a genuine effort to engage in a productive, thoughtful conversation.

C (70%-79%): These students ***miss several classes*** or ***make irregular contributions to class***. If these students miss several classes, then they make up for it by making frequent, insightful, contributions when they are present. If these students do not participate regularly, then they make up for it by regular attendance, careful preparation, and at least some effort to participate in class sessions.

D/F (0%-69%): Generally, these students miss an unusually high number of class periods and/or make little or no effort to engage in class discussions.

Debates

To encourage spirited discussion of the various ethical issues we explore, we will have a series of debates throughout the semester, with everyone taking part in two such debates (for which the formal assignment is appended below). While there will be only 4 formal participants in each debate, two “affirmative” partners and two “negative” partners, **everyone should come prepared to actively engage in the resolution under discussion, as this is a critical component of your course participation.** Debate days and resolutions are marked on the syllabus. Formal debate assignments will be made during the second week of class.

Critical Essays:

You will write a series of 3 brief critical essays—each 2-3 double-spaced, typed pages, and each addressing a particular issue or problem in contemporary communication ethics. Your essays should be carefully crafted, well written, concise and specific, evidencing careful thinking, editing, and revision, and demonstrating your critical thinking and writing skills, as well as your understanding of and engagement with concepts of ethics.

Mid-Term and Final Exams

The Mid-Term and Final Exams will be composed of short answer and essay type questions and will ask you to engage our readings and other material in critical, insightful manners. Questions, terms, and concepts will be developed directly from our readings and discussions. Thus, you should read each essay carefully and be familiar with its principle terms and concepts.

Deadlines:

Deadlines are clearly marked on all assignments. As a general rule, late assignments are unacceptable. In addition, you must be present on exam dates in order to complete examinations. If you must miss an exam date, speak with me well in advance. Such requests to reschedule exams will be taken on a case by case basis.

Technology is meant to be a tool at our disposal, not the other way around. It is your responsibility to be sure that your computer files are properly backed up, that you have ample time to print your assignments before they are due, and that you are prepared for any other technology mishap that might occur in the process of completing an assignment. Malfunctioning computer equipment is not an adequate reason for a late assignment.

Grading:

Grading for the course breaks down as follows:

Debates:	20%
Mid-term Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	20%
Essays:	20%
Participation:	20%

Problems and Concerns:

Please see me about any problems or concerns that might arise throughout the semester. I will always be available during my office hours, and at other times by appointment. If you have a situation or problem that we cannot resolve, please contact the chair of the Department of Communication Arts, Professor Keeley.

I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

Plagiarism:

Using someone else's work as your own, or without proper citation, constitutes plagiarism, and as such is grounds for failure of this course, and disciplinary probation. If you have questions about properly citing an article, or what can be considered plagiarism, please feel free to speak with me. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work is original and contains the appropriate citations, references, etc.

Debate Assignment

As explained on the syllabus, each of you will participate in two formal, public debates, in which you consider some important question of media and communication ethics. For these debates, you will read a particular case study, then spend approximately 35 minutes debating a particular ethical issue it addresses, taking questions from the class, etc.

In groups of four, two affirmative partners and two negative partners, each group will become minor experts on their given ethical situation, such that they can present a perspective on the issue, answer questions, challenge ideas, etc. Each of you will offer your own 4 min. presentation on the resolution (included on the syllabus), supporting the resolution, if you are affirmative, or attacking the given resolution, if you are negative. You and your partner should work to build cohesiveness between your two presentations such that each builds upon, and contributes to the other.

Likewise, ***you will want to conduct a fair amount of research on your topic*** so you can provide relevant information to the other group, your classmates, etc. While everyone in class will read the primary case study you explore, and you should pay particular attention to its details, you should have additional information that helps you add context and depth to your discussion. If your ethical situation has to do with a newspaper publishing a controversial photograph, then you should know some details about the photograph, when possible, as well as other situations in which similar things have occurred. The groups that perform the best will have found relevant complimentary examples and will use them to help support their central arguments. ***This means working ahead, and not waiting until the last minute to prepare materials.***

You should look at the debate itself as more of a structured conversation than an out and out argument. The goal here is not to trip up your opponent with verbal trickery or slight of hand argumentation skills. Rather, your goal should be to build a well developed, well researched, sequence of presentations that explores the issue fully from differing perspectives, allowing your presentations to converse with each other as well as with the class. Thus, you shouldn't necessarily see yourself as against your opponent in some binary way. Such binary arguments generally amount to mere contradiction or verbal bantering such that nothing is resolved or explored, particular when matters of ethics are involved. In stead, work on creating a subtle argument and presentation that is sensitive to the others position, yet still maintains the perspective for which you are arguing. To this end, it might be helpful for the affirmative and negative to meet sometime before the actual presentation to discuss these issues and decide on questions, approaches, etc., that will help maintain a lively, interesting, informative discussion.

EACH GROUP OF DEBATERS MUST MEET WITH ME (AT THE VERY LEAST) BY THE WEEK PRIOR TO THEIR IN-CLASS DEBATE.

Each presentation will take the following structure (***time limits will be strictly maintained***):

Affirmative #1 (4 min.) The *first affirmative speaker* gives his or her prepared presentation. This should introduce the affirmative position and lay out some of the issues that the affirmative partners think are important, clearly demonstrating why the affirmative speakers are in favor of the specific resolution.

Question and Answer (2 min.) The *second negative speaker* stands in for the audience, asking the first speaker questions based on this initial presentation. These questions should be focused and deliberate, exploring underlying issues and engaging the first speaker in a sort of conversation.

Negative #1 (4 min.) The *first negative speaker* gives his or her prepared presentation. This should introduce the negative position and lay out some of the issues that the negative partners think are important and clearly demonstrating why the negative speakers are against the specific resolution. This speaker might also leave some room in the prepared speech to address specific issues raised in the first speakers presentation, or in the

question and answer session. Regardless, the speaker should maintain an organized, structured, clear presentation throughout.

Question and Answer (2 min.) The *first affirmative speaker* stands in for the audience, asking this second speaker questions based on his or her presentation. Again, these questions should be focused and deliberate, exploring underlying issues and engaging the speaker in a sort of conversation.

Affirmative #2 (4 min.) The *second affirmative speaker* gives his or her prepared presentation. As well as continuing, developing, etc., the first speaker's points, this should also somehow conclude the affirmative position. This speaker might also leave some room in the prepared speech to address specific issues raised in any of the previous speakers' presentations, as well as in the question and answer sessions. Regardless, the speaker should maintain an organized, structured, clear presentation throughout.

Question and Answer (2 min.) The *first negative speaker* stands in for the audience, asking this third speaker questions based on his or her presentation. Again, these questions should be focused and deliberate, exploring underlying issues and engaging the speaker in a sort of conversation.

Negative #2 (4 min.) The *second negative speaker* gives his or her prepared presentation. As well as continuing, developing, etc., the first speaker's points, this should also somehow conclude the negative position. This speaker might also leave some room in the prepared speech to address specific issues raised in any of the previous speakers' presentations, as well as in the question and answer sessions. Regardless, the speaker should maintain an organized, structured, clear presentation throughout.

Question and Answer (2 min.) The *second affirmative speaker* stands in for the audience, asking this fourth speaker questions based on his or her presentation. Again, these questions should be focused and deliberate, exploring underlying issues and engaging the speaker in a sort of conversation.

Open Forum (10 min.) The group of affirmative and negative speakers, together, engage the class in an open discussion of the issues raised throughout the presentations. This will be led by the speakers themselves, who should be prepared to answer any questions the class may have for them, as well as ask questions of the class, if necessary, to maintain a lively discussion. Thus, each speaker should have thought about questions in advance, anticipating issues that might arise so that he or she can adequately address them throughout this open discussion. *Likewise, each member of the class will have prepared questions and comments from listening to the speeches, and should be ready to add these to the conversation.*

Closing Statements (1 min. each) Each of the four presenters will offer concluding remarks to help tie together their various arguments, as well as the issues raised in the open forum. These concluding remarks should be well focused and powerful enough to provide an interesting and insightful closing to the discussion. To be clear, closing statements will go in the following order:

Negative#1

Affirmative #1

Negative#2

Affirmative #2

While the quality of your arguments is most important, so are your abilities to deliver your position in a persuasive, interesting way. As a student in a communication class, you should take seriously your task to argue your position in a persuasive, compelling manner. Your grade will be determined by the strength of your arguments, the originality and strength of your supporting research, and by your ability to deliver and argue your point in a persuasive, compelling manner. A more specific grading criteria sheet will follow shortly.

CA 260 Media and Communication Ethics

T/U 3:00-4:45

Fall 2002

Malin

Week 1:

August 29, Thursday:

COURSE INTRODUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Week 2:

September 3, Tuesday:

POSTMODERN ETHICS: ETHICS AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM

Reading for Discussion:

“Postmodern America” and “Ethics in America” in *Mass Communication Ethics*, by Larry Leslie (*MCE*, pp. 5-23)

Bring to class something that you think demonstrates “postmodernism” or “postmodern ethics.”

September 5, Thursday:

POSTMODERN ETHICS CONTINUED: ETHICS AFTER 9/11

Reading for Discussion:

The Hitchens-Chomsky debates.

(On-line: <http://www.thenation.com/special/20010911debate.mhtml>)

(Read all of the included articles)

Questions for consideration: Do either Chomsky or Hitchens seem to demonstrate a sense of postmodern ethics? In what ways? What do you find persuasive or unpersuasive about their discussions? How would you characterize their various senses of ethics? Do the events of 9/11 change or otherwise challenge the sense that we are living in a postmodern world? Do they make our sense of ethics deeper, or do they make ethics seem like a thing of the past? Do the events of 9/11 make it easier or more difficult to formulate a sense of ethics?

Week 3:

September 10, Tuesday:

THE BEST WORST CHOICE: PRACTICAL DECISIONS FOR ETHICAL PROBLEMS

Reading for Discussion:

“Decision Making” (*MCE*, pp. 141-160)

Case Studies for Discussion (Privacy versus...)

“Public Grief and the Right to be Left Alone” by Philip Patterson (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

“Arthur Ashe and the Right to Privacy” by Carol Oukrop (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

“Competition, Deadlines, and the Mistreatment of Richard Jewell” by Greg Lisby (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

September 12, Thursday:

INTRODUCING PLATONIC ETHICS

Reading for Discussion:

“Plato” (MCE, pp. 25-29)

Republic, Book VII

(On-line: <http://eserver.org/philosophy/plato/republic.txt>)

Questions for Discussion: How might the media look different, if journalists (for instance) followed a strictly Platonic notion of ethics? How might Plato’s “Myth of the Cave” be applied to contemporary mass media? What would it mean for us to undertake a Platonic notion of ethics in our own personal communications?

Week 4:

September 17, Tuesday:

JOURNALISTIC DECISIONS AND JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Reading for Discussion:

“Ethical Issues and Case Studies in Journalism” (MCE, pp. 161-189)

Case Studies for Discussion:

“Supporting Professional Football” (MCE, pp. 189-190)

“A Glass Not so Transparent” (MCE, p. 192)

September 19, Thursday:

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS CONTINUED

DEBATE #1: “Chopper Journalism” (MCE, pp. 190-192)

Resolution for Debate: The public and journalistic importance of having live coverage of significant events is ultimately more important than the potential effects that that live coverage might have.

DEBATE #2: “Problem Photos and Public Outcry” by Jon Roosenraad (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

Resolution for Debate: Photographs determined to have important aesthetic, dramatic, or photographic value should be run, even if they clearly violate readers’ sensitivities.

Week 5:

September 24, Tuesday:

ARISTOTELIAN ETHICS

Reading for Discussion:

“Aristotle” (MCE, pp. 29-33)

Nicomachean Ethics, Book I & II

(On-line: <http://eserver.org/philosophy/aristotle/nicomachean-ethics.txt>)

Questions for Discussion: How might the media look different, if journalists (for instance) followed a strictly Aristotelian notion of ethics? How might Aristotle’s “Golden Mean” be applied to media ethics? What would this mean for how a media practitioner made practical decisions? How might we apply this in our own, personal communications?

Essay #1 Due in Class

September 26, Thursday:

THE ETHICS OF ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Reading for Discussion:

“Ethical Issues and Case Studies in Advertising and Public Relations” (MCE, pp. 197-222)

Case Studies for Discussion:

“Taken for a Ride” (MCE, pp. 222-223)

“The 1997 Lemon Awards” (MCE, pp. 224-226)

Week 6:

October 1, Tuesday:

FURTHER CASE STUDIES IN ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

DEBATE #3: "Nike Takes a Hit" (MCE, pp. 223-224)

Resolution for Debate: We should support Nike's own position that they are simply being unfairly singled out and that, as they put it, "We are not here to eliminate poverty and famine or lead the war against violence and crime."

DEBATE #4: "Breaking through the Clutter: Ads that Make You Think Twice" by Fritz Cropp (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

Resolution for Debate: Benetton's "We, on Death Row," and their other advertisements are good for the public because they force people to think about important public issues.

October 3, Thursday:

TRANSITIONAL FIGURES IN ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY

Reading for Discussion:

"Transition Figures" (MCE, pp. 37-46)

Ethics (pp. 3-37) by Peter Abelard (on reserve)

Summa Theologica (The good and evil of human acts, in general) by St. Thomas Aquinas
(On-line: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/201800.htm>)

Essays ("Of Truth" and "Of Simulation And Dissimulation") by Francis Bacon
(On-line: <http://eserver.org/philosophy/bacon-essays.txt>)

Questions for Discussion: How might the media look different if practitioners followed the teachings of Abelard? Of Aquinas? Of Bacon? What would this mean in terms of practical decision making? What would it mean to incorporate these perspectives into our own personal communications?

Week 7:

October 8, Tuesday:

ETHICS IN THE BOOK, RECORDING, AND RADIO INDUSTRIES

Reading for Discussion:

"Ethical Issues and Case Studies in the Book, Recording, and Radio Industries" (MCE, pp. 231-248)

Case Studies for Discussion:

"The Romance Writer" (MCE, pp. 248-249)

"Jay Tells a Joke" (MCE, pp. 251-252)

October 10, Thursday:

RADIO CASE STUDIES CONTINUED

DEBATE #5: "Hate Radio: The Outer Limits of Tasteful Broadcasting" by Brian Simmons (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

Resolution for Debate: Even so-called "Hate Radio" is an important and necessary element of American Democracy.

DEBATE #6: "Courtney Love does the math" by Courtney Love

(On-line: <http://dir.salon.com/tech/feature/2000/06/14/love/index.html>)

Resolution for Debate: Music trading web sites such as Napster are good for artists and fans and help to make music more democratic.

Week 8:

October 15, Tuesday:

NO CLASS

October 17, Thursday:
MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week 9:

October 22, Tuesday:

INTRODUCING MACHIAVELLI, HOBBS & ROUSSEAU

Reading for Discussion:

“Rebels” (MCE, pp. 47-66)

The Prince (Chapters 17, 18, & 19) by Niccoló Machiavelli

(On-line: <http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm>)

Leviathan (chapter 6) by Thomas Hobbes

(On-line: <http://www.orst.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-a.html#INTRODUCTION>)

Questions for Discussion: What would the media look like if they took on the ethical perspective of Machiavelli or Hobbes? What sorts of advantages would these perspectives have? What sorts of problems? What would it mean for us to take these positions in our own, personal communications?

October 24, Thursday:

INTRODUCING TELEVISION AND FILM ETHICS

Reading for Discussion:

“Ethical Issues and Case Studies in the Television and Film Industries” (MCE, pp. 257-275)

Case Studies for Discussion:

“Exploring *South Park*” (MCE, pp. 277-278)

“Beavis and Butthead: The Case for Standards in Entertainment” by Philip Patterson (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

Week 10:

October 29, Tuesday:

TELEVISION AND FILM CASE STUDIES CONTINUED

Debate #7: “Offering Advice to Postmodern Teens” (MCE, pp. 275-276)

Resolution for Debate: Shows such as MTV’s Loveline cause more problems than they solve.

Debate #8: “Annie Sprinkle Goes to College” (MCE, pp. 276-277)

Resolution for Debate: Showing an Annie Sprinkle film in a college classroom is ethically unjustifiable.

October 31, Thursday

THE ETHICS OF PORNOGRAPHY: A CLASS-WIDE DEBATE

Reading for Discussion:

“Pornography and Male Supremacy” by Andrea Dworkin

“Misguided, Dangerous, and Wrong: An Analysis of Anti-Pornography Politics” by Gayle Rubin

“‘I buy it for the Articles’: *Playboy* Magazine and the Sexualization of Consumerism” by Gail Dines

“Towards a Feminist Erotica” by Kathy Myers

“Pornography and Black Women’s Bodies” by Patricia Hill Collins

“Racism in Pornography” by Alice Mayall & Diana H. Russell
“Pornography and the Limits of Experimental Research” by Robert Jensen
“Confessions of a Feminist Porn Watcher” by Scott MacDonald
“Surviving Commercial Sexual Exploitation” by Evelyn Giobbe
(All of these readings are available in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*, available from the reserve reading desk of the library, under my Media & Society [CA 120] class).

Week 11:

November 5, Tuesday:

INTRODUCING SPINOZA, KANT, & MILL

Reading for Discussion:

“Traditionalists” (*MCE*, pp. 67-86)

“What is Enlightenment” by Immanuel Kant

(On-line: <http://foucault.info/documents/whatIsEnlightenment/kant.whatIsEnlightenment.en.html>)

“What Utilitarianism Is” by John Stuart Mill (on reserve)

Questions for Discussion: How might the media look different if practitioners worked through the lenses of Spinoza, Kant, or Mill? What sorts of advantages would each of these positions have? What sorts of problems? How would these positions influence practical decisions? What would it mean to take on any of these positions in your own personal communications?

Essay #2 Due in Class

November 7, Thursday:

INTRODUCING NEW MEDIA ETHICS

Reading for Discussion:

“Ethical Issues and Case Studies in New Media Technology” (*MCE*, pp. 283-308)

Case Studies for Discussion:

“Is there a Problem with my Term Paper” (*MCE*, pp. 302-303)

“Online Therapy” (*MCE*, pp. 300-301)

Week 12:

November 12, Tuesday:

MORE CASE STUDIES IN NEW MEDIA

Debate #9: “Touching a Nerve” (*MCE*, pp. 300-301)

Resolution for Debate: Nerve magazine’s use of sex undermines the overall literary value of its content.

Debate #10: “An Unusual Confession” (*MCE*, pp. 301-302)

Resolution for Debate: On-line discussion groups and other Internet conversations constitute an arena of private speech and should be protected and allowed to remain private whenever possible.

November 14, Thursday:

INTRODUCING SCHOPENHAUER & DURKHEIM

Reading for Discussion:

“The Continental Connection” (*MCE*, pp. 87-100)

“On Thinking for Oneself” by Arthur Schopenhauer (on reserve)

“On the Suffering of the World” by Arthur Schopenhauer (on reserve)

(Durkheim reading to be announced)

Questions for Discussion: How might the media look different if practitioners worked through the lenses of Schopenhauer or Durkheim? What sorts of advantages would each of these positions have? What sorts of

problems? How would these positions influence practical decisions? What would it mean to take on any of these positions in your own personal communications?

Week 13:

November 19, Tuesday:

INTRODUCING SARTRE & KOHLBERG

Reading for Discussion:

“Jean-Paul Sartre” (MCE, pp. 102-109)

“Lawrence Kohlberg” (MCE, pp. 115-119)

No Exit by Jean-Paul Sartre

(On-line: <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/keefer/hell/sart.html>)

“Existentialism” by Jean-Paul Sartre (on reserve)

“Stages of Moral Development” by Lawrence Kohlberg

(On-line: <http://www.xenodochy.org/ex/lists/moraldev.html>)

Questions for Discussion: How might the media look different if practitioners worked through the lenses of Sartre? Of Kohlberg? What sorts of advantages would each of these positions have? What sorts of problems? How would these positions influence practical decisions? What would it mean to take on any of these positions in your own personal communications?

November 21, Thursday:

FURTHER CASE STUDIES

Debate #11: “Channel One: Commercialism in Schools” by Rozalyn Osborn (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

Resolution for Debate: As long as Channel One continues to show advertisements, it should not be allowed in public schools.

Debate #12: “Military Censorship of Photographs” by Paul Lester (on reserve in *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*)

Resolution for Debate: The military should not be allowed to censor journalists’ photographs or stories taken during wartime.

Week 14:

Thanksgiving Break

Week 15:

December 3, Tuesday:

INTRODUCING AYN RAND & JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Reading for Discussion:

“Ayn Rand” (MCE, pp. 109-115)

“Judeo-Christian Tradition” (MCE, pp. 119-126)

“Introducing Objectivism” by Ayn Rand

(On-line: <http://www.aynrand.org/objectivism/io.html>)

“Apollo 11” by Ayn Rand

(On-line: <http://www.aynrand.org/objectivism/apollo11.html>)

Questions for Discussion: Many people have claimed that American culture is dominated by the Judeo-Christian tradition. Can we see evidence of this in the ways in which American mass media approach ethics? If not, what would such a media look like? What would the media look like if they embraced Rand’s position? What would it mean to follow any of these positions in our own, personal communications?

December 5, Thursday:

INTRODUCING FOUCAULT & BAUDRILLARD

Reading for Discussion:

“Postmodernist Approaches” (*MCE*, pp. 127-140)

“What is Enlightenment” by Michel Foucault

(On-line: <http://foucault.info/documents/whatIsEnlightenment/foucault.whatIsEnlightenment.en.html>)

“Disneyworld Company” by Jean Baudrillard

(On-line: <http://www.uta.edu/english/apt/collab/texts/disneyworld.html>)

“Baudrillard on the New Technologies: An Interview with Claude Thibaut”

(On-line: <http://www.uta.edu/english/apt/collab/texts/newtech.html>)

Questions for Discussion: What is “postmodern” about Foucault’s ethical position? About Baudrillard’s? What do they each suggest about how we should live in a postmodern world?

Essay #3 Due in Class

Week 16:

December 10, Tuesday:

POSTMODERNISM AND REAL-TIME DECISION MAKING

Reading for Discussion:

“Facing the Postmodern Maelstrom” (*MCE*, pp. 309-316)

Case Studies for Discussion:

“Divulging Information”

“Making the Call”

“The Jumper”

“The Profile”

Final Examination: Saturday, December 14, 2:00pm