

Western University
Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 2730F: Media Ethics
Summer 2016

Instructor: Dr. Dean Proessel
Email: dproesse@uwo.ca
Office Hours: By appointment

Class Hours: M and W 12:30-3:-00
Location: P&AB 148

Course Objectives:

This course is an introduction to various political and ethical issues that arise when considering the function and practice of the media. These include: What is ethical theory and what, in particular, are the duties and responsibilities of those engaged in disseminating information? Should journalists be considered professionals? What is an “informational ethic,” and to what extent have new technologies given rise to new ethical challenges? What is the relation between the media and the market? Is the media a “propaganda machine” representing the interests of the property class? Or is the media an instrument of democracy fostering the pursuit of truth and objectivity? What is the connection between the media and political violence? What is the relation between different types of media communication, in particular advertising and journalism? Are advertising and journalism necessarily in conflict? Is the news a mere commodity? And what kind of self and world is in the making in advertising?

In examining these sorts of questions and issues our aim, above all, will be to develop skills of critical reasoning and thus a way of thinking that can be applied to *all* walks of life. Specifically, students will learn to identify arguments and to assess their plausibility. They will learn to see issues from a variety of perspectives and to critically respond to claims made by others by formulating their own arguments.

Required Texts:

Edward Spence, Andrew Alexandra, Aaron Quinn and Anne Dunne (2011)
Media, Markets, and Morals, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Custom Course Package, available at The Bookstore at UWO

Course Requirements:

Two short essays, 5 to 6 pages in length. Each essay is worth 35%

Final exam worth 30% Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices are permitted to be used in class for purposes of note-taking and accessing class-related materials. Any devices required for reasons of accessibility are also permitted. Use of recording devices or transcription software must be approved in advance by the instructor.

2. Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

3. Medical and Non-Medical Absences

Students seeking accommodations for medical illnesses should consult the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (available here: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>). For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation to it. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Assignments worth less than 10% missed as a result of an unanticipated (and documented) medical absence can be submitted late for full credit with the approval of the instructor.

Accommodations for *justified* non-medical (non-emergency) absences that interfere with the completion of assignments worth less than 10% can be arranged only through consultation with the instructor at least **two** weeks before the assignment deadline. In cases where such

accommodations are granted, assignments will typically be allowed to be submitted before (not after) the originally stipulated deadline.

4. Support Services

For information about support services, please visit the web sites for Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>), and Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>) and the Student Development Centre (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>).

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.