

**JOUR 373**

**Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies**

**Four Units**

**Spring 2016 – Tuesday – 2 to 5:20 p.m.**

**Section:** **21209R**

**Location: ASC 240**

**Instructor: Joe Saltzman, Professor of Journalism, Director of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC), a project of the Norman Lear Center, USC Annenberg (www.ijpc.org)**

**Office:** **ASC 102B**

**Office Hours: Monday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Tuesday, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. By Appointment.**

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**I. Course Description**

The course will feature a dozen ethical issues facing journalists as dramatized in the movies. It is a unique adaptation of the case study approach used in journalism ethics classes for a century. Journalists have been major characters in the movies since the medium began – from the silent days to the movies of today.

Clips from each film will precede a brief lecture, but the heart and soul of this class is the give-and-take discussion of a major ethical issue each week by students and faculty.

The key to good journalism practices can be summed up in two words: accuracy and fairness. But there are many other ethical issues facing journalists on a daily basis:

\*What are the standards of inquiry and verification, especially in a world where there is a

deadline every minute

\*Fabrication and the issue of trust

\*Getting the whole story and checking the source of a story

\*How far should a journalist go in getting a story

\*Deception and Undercover Journalism

\*The price of access in beat coverage

\*Sensationalism and getting the story first

\*Journalistic values vs. Business values: the staging of the news

\*The myth of objectivity

\*The journalist as celebrity and the reporter’s role in society

\*Anonymous Sources

Empathy in covering stories

**II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment**

To give students a sense of the complexity of making ethical decisions on a daily basis in journalism, and to help them create an ethical structure they can use as journalists or simply as consumers of news and information in the complex world of social media and the Internet.

**III. Description of Assignments**

Weekly Papers:

In-Class Assignments -- After each class discussion, students will be asked to write a short paper summing up the issue at hand – giving both sides of the argument leading up to how they would handle such a situation. There is no right or wrong answer here. Each paper is worth 10 points and the points will be determined as to the quality of the points leading up to the conclusion. Students should bring their laptops to class to write the short paper and then e-mail it to [saltzman@usc.edu](mailto:Saltzman@usc.edu)

Each student will also be required to bring in an ethical problem they have witnessed in student media, or read about in the newspapers or seen on television or found on the Internet. These problems will be discussed in class.

There will also be a take-home mid-term examination/paper and a take-home final examination/paper.

**IV. Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Points** | **% of Grade** |
| Class Participation | 60 | 6 |
| Weekly Papers | 240 | 24 |
| Mid-Term Take-Home Examination/Paper | 300 | 30 |
| Final Take-Home Examination/Paper | 400 | 40 |
|  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** | 1000 | **100%** |

**b. Grading Scale**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 950 to 1000: A | 770 to less than 800: C+ | 600 to 6:30: D- |
| 900 to less than 950: A- | 730 to less than 770: C | Under 600: F |
| 870 to less than 900: B+ | 700 to less than 730: C- |  |
| 830 to less than 850: B | 670 to 700: D+ |  |
| 800 to less than 830: B- | 630 to 670: D |  |

**c. Grading Standards**

While your code of conduct will involve personal decisions, the mid-term and final take-home examination-papers requires you to defend your positions by using all of the films, sources and references discussed in class as well as any sources and references you find in books, the Internet and other published materials. A paper just filled with your opinions and conclusions is not sufficient. You must use your textbook, the films discussed in class, the various journalism codes of ethics available to you. The more documented your paper, the better the grade. You will not be graded on length or on your opinions, but on the quality of presentation – writing (grammar, spelling), clarity, references cited and the intellectual content.

**“A” –** an examination-paper that does 90 percent of what is recommended above. The writing is clear and lucid, all your conclusions and opinions are carefully referenced, and the paper shows a keen understanding of the subject and critical thinking.

**“B”** – an examination-paper that does 80 percent of what is recommended above. The writing is serviceable, the majority of your conclusions and opinions are referenced, and the paper shows a good understanding of class content.

**“C”** – an examination-paper that does 70 percent of what is recommended above. The writing is passable, but few of your conclusions and opinions are referenced. The paper shows an adequate understanding of class content.

**“D”** – an examination-paper that does 60 percent of what is recommended above. The writing is barely passable. The paper is filled with unreferenced conclusions and opinions. The paper shows a minimal and unacceptable understanding of class content.

**“F”** -- an examination-paper fails to meet the major criteria of the assignment, is late, has numerous errors, no references and little understanding of class content. or both. The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

• Fabricating a story or making up quotes or information.

• Plagiarizing a script/article, part of a script/article or information from any source.

• Staging video or telling interview subjects what to say.

• Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as original work.

• Shooting video in one location and presenting it as another location.

• Using the camcorder to intentionally intimidate, provoke or incite a person or a group of people to elicit more “dramatic” video.

• Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an interview either on or off camera.

• Missing a deadline.

**V. Assignment Submission Policy**

All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be marked down.

The class will begin promptly at 2 p.m. Since each section of the class will include video, it is important that we start on time if you want to get out on time.

**VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

The required textbook is *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies*, edited by Howard Good (Rowland & Littlefield Publishers, 2008). **YOU MUST READ EACH CHAPTER BEFORE THE CLASS DISCUSSION.**

The Society of Professional Journalists code of Ethics is required reading (to be passed out in class).

The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Website ([www.ijpc.org](http://www.ijpc.org)) offers background information on journalists in the movies.

There will be regular handouts on current stories that involve specific ethical issues.

**VII. Laptop Policy**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [**Annenberg Virtual Commons**](http://vc.uscannenberg.org/) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [Information Technology Services](http://itservices.usc.edu/wireless/support/) website.

**Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 01/11/16 – 04/29/16)**

**Friday, January 29:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, January 29:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, February 2:** Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, February 26:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the week three equivalent for short sessions) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, April 8:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

**\*For shortened/condensed courses (e.g.: seven-week courses), please find your course on the** [**Spring 2016 Schedule of Classes**](http://classes.usc.edu/term-20161/classes/jour/) **and click the “Info” button for different add/drop dates.**

**VIII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown  
*Important note to students:*** *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Topics/Daily Activities** | **Readings and Homework** | **Deliverable/Due Dates** |
| **Week 1**  Dates: 1/11-1/15 | **Orientation – Introduction to the Course** | REQUIRED READING: *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies,* Chapter 1: Responsible Journalistic Inquiry |  |
| **Week 2**  Dates: 1/18-1/22 | **Responsible Journalistic Inquiry:** Film: *The Paper*  Viewing of clips from the film and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally, what are the standards of inquiry and verification, especially in a world where there is a deadline every minute. | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 2: Fabrication in Journalism | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 3**  Dates: 1/25-1/29 | **Fabrication in Journalism:**  Film: *Shattered Glass* Viewing of clips from the film and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally the issue of making up stories and the relationship between editor and reporter: a question of trust. Fabrication and the issue of thrust. | REQUIRED READING: *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 3: Political Manipulation of the Media | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 4**  Dates: 2/1-2/5 | **Political Manipulation of the Media.**  Film: *Wag the Dog*  Viewing of clips from the film and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally where does the story come from, checking the source of a story to verify its veracity and completeness. Getting the whole story and checking the source of a story. | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 4: What is Good Work? | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 5**  Dates: 2/8-2/12 | **What is Good Work?**  Film: *Absence of Malice*  Viewing of clips from the film and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally how far should any journalist go in getting a story, what are the boundaries of ethical journalism when investigating story participants. | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 5: Deception and Undercover Journalism | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 6**  Dates: 2/15-2/19 | **Deception and Undercover Journalism.**  Film: *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr. Deeds*  Viewing of clips from both films and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally the issues of undercover journalism and deception: Should a journalist, who values the concept of truth and accuracy and transparency in journalism lie to others in pursuit of a story? | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 6: Covering Sports | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class.    **PASS OUT: TAKE-HOME MID-TERM EXAMINATION AND PAPER – DUE THE WEEK OF MARCH 8, 2015**  **Covers first 7 weeks of the class.** |
| **Week 7**  Dates: 2/22-2/26 | **Covering Sports.**  Film: *The Pride of the Yankees*  Viewing of clips and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally the price of access to sources, especially in beat coverage and the ethical dilemmas involved | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 7: When Journalists are First Responders | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 8**  Dates: 2/29-3/4 | **When Journalists are First Responders.**  Film: *Die Hard* and *Die Hard 2*  Viewing of clips and discussion of ethical clips involved, principally the idea of always getting the story first no matter the ethical consequences and the problems of sensationalism. | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 8: Style Over Substance | **TAKE-HOME MID-TERM EXAMINATION-PAPER DUE**  ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 9**  Dates: 3/7-3/11 | **Style Over Substance.**  Film:  *Broadcast News*  Viewing of clips and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally the staging of the news for maximum effect and journalism values vs. business values | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 9: Ethics in Black and White | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Spring Recess:** 3/13-3/20 | | | |
| **Week 10**  Dates: 3/21-3/25 | **Ethics in Black and White:**  Film: *good night, and good luck*  Viewing of clips and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally the myth of objectivity and the involvement of the reporter in a story. | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 10: Crime Reporting | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class.    [**Good Friday:** Friday, March 25] |
| **Week 11**  Dates: 3/28-4/1 | **Crime Reporting**  Film: *Veronica Guerin*  Viewing of clips and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally the journalist as celebrity and the role of a reporter in helping to solve the problems of society. | REQUIRED READING:  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 11: The Utopian Nature of Journalistic Truth | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 12**  Dates: 4/4-4/8 | **The Utopian Nature of Journalistic Truth:**  Film: *The Year of Living Dangerously*  Viewing of clips and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally anonymous sources. What is the journalist’s responsibility in protecting sources who give him/her information.  Other Film clips: Sleeping with sources and colleagues. Discussion. | REQUIRED READING  *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies:*  Chapter 12: Journalism and the Victims of War | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 13**  Dates: 4/11-4/15 | **Journalism and the Victims of War**  Film: *Welcome to Sarajevo*  Viewing of clips and discussion of ethical issues involved, principally the empathy of the journalist in covering stories in a war zone |  | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class. |
| **Week 14**  Dates: 4/18-4/22 | Open Viewing:  Current film dealing with an ethical issue |  | ASSIGNMENT DUE: Weekly paper on an ethical problem witnessed in student media, or read in a newspaper, seen on television or the Internet. The problem will be discussed in class.  **PASS OUT FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAMINATION-PAPER**    [**Passover:** Saturday, April 23] |
| **Week 15**  **Dates:** 4/25-4/29 | Summary of Class. Discussion of ethical issues discussed throughout the semester  Final thoughts. |  |  |
| **FINAL EXAMS**  Dates: 5/4-5/11 |  |  | **ALL FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAMINATION-PAPERS DUE on Thursday, May 5, 2015 at 4 p.m. NO PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER 4 P.M.** |

**IX. Policies and Procedures**

**Additional Policies**

Students are expected to check their e-mails and Blackboard for class information and updates.

**Internships**

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must by unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**a. Academic Conduct**

*Plagiarism*

Presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/b/11-00-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

*USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity*

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an ‘F’ on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators.”

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

**b. Support Systems**

*Equity and Diversity*

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu/contact/report/>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community - such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member - can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men*<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <https://sarc.usc.edu/> describes reporting options and other resources.

*Support with Scholarly Writing*

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://ali.usc.edu/> which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html>provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

Students requesting test-related accommodations will need to share and discuss their DSP recommended accommodation letter/s with their faculty and/or appropriate departmental contact person at least three weeks before the date the accommodations will be needed. Additional time may be needed for final exams. Reasonable exceptions will be considered during the first three weeks of the semester as well as for temporary injuries and for students recently diagnosed. Please note that a reasonable period of time is still required for DSP to review documentation and to make a determination whether a requested accommodation will be appropriate.

*Stress Management*

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

*Emergency Information*

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

**X. About Your Instructor**

Joe Saltzman, professor of journalism and communication at USC Annenberg, has been a prolific print and electronic journalist for more than 50 years. He created the broadcasting sequence for the School of Journalism at the University of Southern California in 1974. He has taught for 48 years, is a tenured professor at USC and the winner of several teaching awards, including the Scripps-Howard National Journalism and Mass Communications Professor of the Year and the USC Associates Teaching Excellence Award. He is currently the Director of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC), a project of the Norman Lear Center, USC Annenberg, and a former associate dean of the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

Before coming to USC, Saltzman was a senior writer-producer at CBS, Channel 2, in Los Angeles. His documentaries and news specials have won more than 50 awards including the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award in Broadcast Journalism (broadcasting’s equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize), two Edward R. Murrow Awards for reporting, five Emmys and four Golden Mike awards. Saltzman is listed in Who’s Who in America, the International Who’s Who in Literature, Who’s Who in California, Who’s Who in the West, Who’s Who in Education and International Biography.