

# COMM 498: ETHICAL ISSUES IN ENTERTAINMENT AND COMMUNICATION

## SPRING 2013 SYLLABUS

Instructor:

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Course Objectives:

Ethical Issues in Entertainment and Communication is a seminar course centered on issues of ethics as they play out in the world of entertainment and communication. Many of the issues were touched on in COMM 310 which is a requirement for this course, but the emphasis here is on greater depth and far more student participation given the much smaller size of the class and the advanced knowledge base of the students all of whom should be upper division.

This course attempts to examine prevailing standards of ethical behavior in the entertainment and communications industries as to their derivation, justification and actual practice. The basic teaching method involves the use of case studies built on readings as well as the workplace experience of communications professionals. The range of subjects is broad in an attempt to deal with some of the more vital and

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enduring issues faced in the world of mass media.

The selection of case studies and specific reading assignments will be announced throughout the semester in order to take into account the dynamic and constantly changing landscape of the media and entertainment worlds. Students will analyze these issues in diaries of two-four pages double spaced for every class. The diaries will be turned in at three-four week intervals to be evaluated by the professor and returned for rewrites if necessary. This is a process that will be continued throughout the term and will be reworked to make the basis of the student's grade. The final version of the diaries will be submitted to [bobscheer@gmail.com](mailto:bobscheer@gmail.com) and [marancsmith@gmail.com](mailto:marancsmith@gmail.com) on the final period designated by the University after class has concluded.

NOTE: For each submission, please send the journals in one document including page numbers to [bobscheer@gmail.com](mailto:bobscheer@gmail.com) AND [marancsmith@gmail.com](mailto:marancsmith@gmail.com) with Comm 498 designated in the subject line.

### Requirements:

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class. Athletic competitions as well as medical excuses will count as excused absences; however, students are still required to turn in all assigned work. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the content covered on that day. You may obtain notes from a classmate and watch any screened materials on your own time in preparation for the required journal assignment. In order to receive an excused absence for athletic competition, please turn in all excuse forms to your teaching assistant at least 48 hours prior to missing class.

### Grading:

# COMM 498: ETHICAL ISSUES IN ENTERTAINMENT AND COMMUNICATION

## SPRING 2013 SYLLABUS

Grades will be decided based on a percentage system. Your grade will consist of points earned from journals, attendance, and participation.

The majority of your grade is based on the diary process that will be reworked throughout the semester. This approach leaves room for continual improvement on analyses until students are satisfied with the outcome. There will be no rewrites on final diaries, so students should take advantage of the rewrite process during the term. No other tests will be administered for this course.

Grading Break-down:

Attendance and Participation: 30%

Diary: 70%

Calendar:

Because class discussions depend upon speakers with very busy schedules, it is the nature of this class that we will be bringing people in (and potentially changing their class dates) as they are available. So, we will keep you informed about the readings for each week as they apply. Due dates for diary assignments, and other class-related updates will be posted on Blackboard as we solidify them on our end. Thanks for your flexibility as well with the process, as it's a built-in factor when it comes to bringing our speakers to the class as they can attend!

Academic Integrity Policy:

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## SPRING 2013 SYLLABUS

The USC Annenberg School for Communication is committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic excellence. It endorses and follows the policies and procedures of the University Conduct Code as indicated in the SCampus. It is particularly important that you avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, forging another student's signature on the attendance form or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself as your own. If you are caught cheating on an assignment you will receive an F for the entire percentage allocated to that assignment or group of assignments. (E.g., if you plagiarize on one e-journal, we reserve the right to give you a 0 on all of your e-journal assignments. If you cheat on an exam, you will receive an F on your exam and possibly an F for the semester.) If you have any questions about these practices, please confer with a teaching staff member.

### Academic Resources

If you have a learning disability and need to take your exams in the Learning Center, please provide formal documentation at least two weeks prior to your exam. Please visit <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/asn/DSP/index.html> if you have questions about other accommodations for students with learning disabilities.