**Course Name:** Media Ethics and laws

**Course Instructor:** Ms. Zowaina Azhar

**Areas of Media Ethics**

Media ethics: Issues of moral principles and values as applied to the conduct, roles, and content of the mass media, in particular [journalism ethics and standards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalism_ethics_and_standards) and [marketing ethics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing_ethics); also the field of study concerned with this topic. In relation to news coverage it includes issues such as [impartiality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impartiality), [objectivity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalistic_objectivity), [balance](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/balance), [bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bias), privacy, and the [public interest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_interest). More generally, it also includes [stereotyping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereotyping), taste and decency, [obscenity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obscenity), [freedom of speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech), advertising practices such as [product placement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_placement), and legal issues such as [defamation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defamation). On an institutional level it includes debates over [media ownership](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_ownership) and control, [commercialization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commercialization), accountability, the relation of the media to the political system, issues arising from regulation (e.g. [censorship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Censorship)) and [deregulation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deregulation).

**Online journalism**

The Internet has shaped and redefined various ethical and moral issues for both online journalists and journalists utilizing online resources.

While some journalists continue to adhere to ethical principles of traditional journalism, many journalists believe that with the absence of a mutually agreed upon code of ethics specifically pertaining to internet ethics, and lack of literature dealing specifically with the ways in which the Internet impacts media ethics in journalism online, the online environment poses new threats to the profession.

Some of the core issues of media ethics in online journalism include commercial pressures, accuracy and credibility (which include the issues dealing with hyperlinks), verification of facts, regulation, privacy, and news-gathering methods.

### Ethics of entertainment media

Issues in the ethics of entertainment media include:

* The depiction of violence and the presence of [strong language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strong_language). Ethical guidelines and legislation in this area are common and many media (e.g. film, computer games) are subject to ratings systems and supervision by agencies. An extensive guide to international systems of enforcement can be found under [motion picture rating system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_picture_rating_system).
* “Fluff or “Celebrity News”: Over the years, print media has been dying out so journalists began to report on what is referred to as “Celebrity News”, or “Fluff.” As more outlets adopt this topic to report on, people become dependent on them. According to Alden Weight, most people know not to completely trust these outlets due to ethical discrepancies, but the issue arises when people who are not as mature or educated find these reports to be completely true.
* [Product placement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_placement). An increasingly common [marketing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing) tactic is the placement of products in entertainment media. The producers of such media may be paid high sums to display branded products. The practice is controversial and largely unregulated. Detailed article: [product placement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_placement).
* Advertising: Attraction and persuasion are currently found in modern journalism. It is found that these methods of advertising may alter an audience's point of view of what is realistic and falsified information.
* [Stereotypes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereotypes). Both advertising and entertainment media make heavy use of [stereotypes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereotypes). Stereotypes may negatively affect people's perceptions of themselves or promote socially undesirable behavior. The stereotypical portrayals of [men](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Men), [affluence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affluence) and [ethnic groups](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups) are examples of major areas of debate
	+ - Women in Media: Entertainment media often exploits female bodies by objectifying and de-humanizing them. By doing so, the concept of female bodies being bought and sold becomes common.
		- Media outlets usually use either images or imagery of female bodies to counter negative news that is provided throughout the day.
* Taste and [taboos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboos). Entertainment media often questions of our [values](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values) for artistic and entertainment purposes. [Normative ethics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normative_ethics) is often about moral values, and what kinds should be enforced and protected. In media ethics, these two sides come into conflict. In the name of art, media may deliberately attempt to break with existing norms and shock the audience. That poses ethical problems when the norms abandoned are closely associated with certain relevant moral values or obligations. The extent to which this is acceptable is always a hotbed of ethical controversy. See: [Turner Prize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turner_Prize), [obscenity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obscenity), [freedom of speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech), [aesthetics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesthetics).

### Media and democracy

In democratic countries, a special relationship exists between media and government. Although the freedom of the media may be [constitutionally](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution) enshrined and have precise legal definition and enforcement, the exercise of that freedom by individual journalists is a matter of personal choice and ethics. Modern democratic government subsists in [representation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representation_%28politics%29) of millions by hundreds. For the representatives to be [accountable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accountability), and for the process of government to be [transparent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transparency_%28humanities%29), effective communication paths must exist to their [constituents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_district). Today these paths consist primarily of the mass media, to the extent that if [press freedom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Press_freedom) disappeared, so would most political [accountability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accountability). In this area, media ethics merges with issues of [civil rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_rights) and [politics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics). Issues include:

* Subversion of [media independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_independence) by financial interests.
* Government monitoring of media for intelligence gathering against its own people.

### Media integrity

Media integrity refers to the ability of a media outlet to serve the [public interest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_interest) and [democratic process](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_process), making it resilient to institutional [corruption](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corruption) within the media system, economy of influence, conflicting dependence and political clientelism. Media integrity encompasses following qualities of a media outlet:

* [independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editorial_independence) from private or political interests
* [transparency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_transparency) about own financial interests
* commitment to [journalism ethics and standards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalism_ethics_and_standards)
* responsiveness to citizens

### Digital media ethics

Digital news media includes online journalism, blogging, digital photojournalism, citizen journalism and social media.It talks about how journalism should interact and use the 'new media' to publish stories including how to use texts and images provided by other people.

#### Ethics of images

There are new ethical issues due to the new image technology. Citizens now have the availability to take pictures and videos from easier and faster ways like smartphones which allow them to not only collect information but also edit and manipulate it.

This convergence of ease of capture, ease of transmission, and ease of manipulation questions the traditional principles of photojournalism which were developed for non-digital capture and transmission of pictures and video.

The main issues regarding the new image technology is that the newsroom cannot trust the easily obtained images and also the limit of the image edit. It is vague and very difficult to decide the borderline of image manipulation.

It is very complicated and still a dilemma to clarify the principles of responsible image making and ethics on it.