

Media Criticism/Capstone

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Wartburg College/CA 461
Winter Term 2009-2010
Office Hours Posted at 140 CAC
Section 1, M-W-F, 1:15-2:20 p.m.
Section 2, M-W-F, 2:30-3:35 p.m.

Description of the Course:

“Philosophical, sociological, ethical, legal dimensions of communication. Student synthesis of communication knowledge and experience. Career preparation guidance including resumes, portfolios, demonstration tapes. Seminar. Writing intensive. Capstone for communication arts majors. Prerequisite: fourth-year standing or instructor approval.” (*Wartburg College Academic Catalog, 2006-2008*)

Purposes and Objectives of the Course:

- to undertake a critical look at the role of the mass media in society
- to examine the ethical, cultural, political, economic and educational impacts of the mass media
- to look at opportunities to use the mass media more constructively for the improvement of society

Required Textbooks:

Given that much of the class discussion will be based upon assigned readings, students must read the assignments before class and should be prepared to bring their notes or the readings with them to that class. There is only one required textbook, devoted to the study of ethics, but there will also be numerous handouts and web-based reading assignments in order to keep the discussion as current and topical as possible. Those readings and other matters pertinent to the course may be found via the class web site (found at either <http://www.JeffStein.org> or <http://faculty.wartburg.edu/stein>). The required textbook is “Media Ethics: Issues and Cases” (6th edition), by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins (McGraw-Hill, 2008). All lectures, lecture notes, original handouts and supplemental materials are Copyright © 2010 by Dr. Jeff Stein; use of the materials beyond the specific class setting without prior written consent is prohibited.

Attendance Policy:

Since this course is required of all Communication Arts majors, regular attendance is required. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period; being tardy or absent will result in a reduction of points (one point per tardy; three points per absence). If you are unable to attend due to illness or emergency, you must contact Dr. Stein *in advance* either at the phone number or e-mail address listed above in order to receive credit for assignments due that class period and to avoid losing points. The course is scheduled to meet Mondays-Wednesdays-Fridays (section 1 from 1:15-2:20 p.m.; section 2 from 2:30-3:35 p.m.). Students should be prepared to meet for the entire class period each day.

Plagiarism Policy:

“The Communication Arts Department is dedicated to the advancement of honest and accurate exchanges of information, ideas, and opinion.” (*Wartburg College Academic Catalog, 2006-2008*) Therefore, plagiarism—the use of ideas, materials, or words of others without proper attribution and acknowledgment—is improper and simply will not be tolerated. Minimum sanctions for this will include a grade of "F" for the course and referral of the matter to college officials.

The Wartburg Honor Council has asked faculty to remind students of their responsibility under the Wartburg Honor Code. The Honor Code is a statement of academic responsibilities supported by Wartburg College students and was originally created by Student Senate to embody the values of integrity and trust that are fundamental to Wartburg College. The official Honor Code, as approved by faculty and Student Senate, is as follows:

“As a matter of personal commitment, students, faculty, and staff of Wartburg College are expected to demonstrate four simple principles:

- 1.) All submitted work must be your own.
- 2.) When using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, provide full credit through accurate citations.
- 3.) Ask for clarification if there is uncertainty about citation rules on a particular assignment.
- 4.) Maintain academic honesty on examinations and class assignments.”

Dr. Stein expects students to follow the Honor Code and reminds students of their responsibility to promote academic honesty by opposing cheating and plagiarism and reporting dishonest work.

In a related effort, Wartburg College has again this year invested in an affiliation with the national “TurnItIn.com” service, to allow students and faculty alike the opportunity to compare written assignments and papers with a database of primary sources and other student work. In a positive sense, this will allow students to catch inadvertent overquoting during the draft phase so their work will adhere to appropriate writing and citation standards; in addition, this will help Dr. Stein maintain academic integrity to protect all students. (The TurnItIn.com service will also be used by Dr. Stein to facilitate grading and posting of a grade book online.) Each student will be responsible for activating their own account at TurnItIn.com so they may hand in their work, check grades, etc. All written work to be handed in by students will be submitted electronically via TurnItIn.com.

Requirements of the Course:

A class-by-class schedule is included within this Syllabus. The schedule is subject to change, based on the progress of class discussion, current events in the field, availability of guest speakers and the like. Any changes will be announced in class and by an e-mail message sent to each student. Students are presumed to frequently check their Wartburg e-mail account; if a student wishes that a different e-mail address be used, the student should notify Dr. Stein and register that alternate address with TurnItIn.com.

Current Events Quizzes. There will be ten (10) current events quizzes, made up of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions, on most Mondays during the term. The five-minute-long quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period, as per the wall clock in 134 CAC; those arriving late will have less time in which to complete the quiz. Quizzes cannot be made up. The quizzes will focus on college, local, national and world issues. Each quiz is worth a maximum of 10 points (100 points total during the term).

Quizzes Over Readings. There will be a total of 6 quizzes during the course of the term over material in the textbook and related lectures, to be administered during the last five minutes of a class period. Each quiz is worth a maximum of 10 points (60 points total during the term), and will be over material assigned since the previous quiz. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

Research Paper. Each student will be required to write a formal research paper focusing on a pertinent topical issue in mass communication. The paper must be 20 pages long not including bibliography and footnotes, double-spaced, with page numbers, without a separate title page, with one-inch margins on all sides, using 12-point Times or Arial font. Students will choose their own respective topics, as approved in advance by Dr. Stein. A three-page topic statement, complete with itemized list of proposed sources, will be due on Monday, January 18. A complete draft of the paper will be due Monday, February 22. The final paper, including footnotes and bibliography, will be due on Monday, March 29. (All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period to turnitin.com.) Each student will also convey the information gathered in the research paper during a 10-minute oral presentation in class. All components of the project (topic statement, draft, final paper, and in-class presentation) will be graded and scored. The research paper will be worth a maximum of 150 points. This assignment is intended to fulfill the College's "writing intensive" designation for this course, as well as part of the departmental Oral Communication Across the Curriculum requirement; therefore, each student must turn in a paper and do the oral presentation, and score a minimum of 60 percent of the maximum number of total assignment points. Failure to do so will lead to the student automatically receiving a grade of "F" for the course. Separate handouts, including grading criteria, will be distributed in class.

Resume/Portfolio. To allow for student development and to allow the department and college to assess whether departmental educational goals are being met, each student will be required to prepare a formal resume and cover letter, suitable for sending to a prospective employer, as well as a portfolio or demonstration tape which is representative of the student's work to date (from class work, student media, internships and/or professional jobs). Print majors will turn in a portfolio of clips and/or photographs; public relations majors will turn in a portfolio which may include print and electronic components; electronic media majors will turn in audio and/or video demo tapes/scripts. The resume/cover letter and portfolio will be critiqued during optional individual sessions with Dr. Stein. The resume/cover letter will be worth a maximum of 50 points and will be due on Wednesday, January 27. The portfolio will be worth a maximum of 40 points and will be due on Monday, February 1.

Group Project/Presentation. Instead of the traditional final examination, the class will be divided into groups; each group will independently develop a code of professional ethics and prepare a detailed answer to an ethical issue in mass communication, as assigned by Dr. Stein. Each group will then present their findings in public, leading a discussion on the issue and being prepared to respond to questions about the topic. Fellow students, area professionals and the general public will be invited to join the audience. The presentation will be held on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. Audience grading (both peer and professional) will be utilized in part with regard to this assignment. The code of ethics itself will be worth a maximum of 55 points, while the final presentation will be worth a maximum of 45 points (total maximum of 100 points per student). This assignment is intended to fulfill the College's "final activity" requirement, as well as part of the departmental Oral Communication Across the Curriculum requirement; therefore, each student must participate in the exercise and score a minimum of 60 percent of the maximum number of total assignment points. Failure to do so will lead to the student automatically receiving a grade of "F" for the course. Dr. Stein will also meet with each group separately to discuss their presentations during the time set by the college for final examinations for this class (Section 1, Wednesday, April 21 from 8 to 10 a.m.; Section 2, Tuesday, April 20 from 8 to 10 a.m.) unless an earlier, mutually agreeable time can be found. The group designations for the final presentations will be determined by you, the students. Designations must be made by Friday, March 5.

Format. All written work must be typed and presented in a form which is appropriate for the assignment. Written work will be evaluated on grammar, punctuation, spelling, and general appearance. Gender neutral and non-sexist language must be used. An appropriate tone must be taken in all written work.

Class Preparation and Participation. All students are expected to read assigned chapters prior to class, and are expected to participate in the class discussion. Dr. Stein reserves the right to raise or lower your grade by one-third grade level (such as from B to B+, or from B to B-) based upon such intangibles as how well prepared you are for class, the amount of productive discussion you contribute to class, attendance, etc. Failure to constructively participate in this way will lead to a reduction of points

otherwise awarded in the "professionalism/industry trends" section above. Dr. Stein also reserves the right to not accept late assignments, or to accept late assignments but with reduced credit.

Overall Policy:

Dr. Stein encourages students to discuss concerns about the class (content, grading, etc.) at any time without fear of retribution. Dr. Stein will strive to promote a classroom environment that is inclusive and positive; students are asked and encouraged to join in the spirit of the educational enterprise. Any student who is offended by any material during the course is urged to bring the matter to Dr. Stein's attention. As a courtesy and as a proper showing of respect, Dr. Stein believes college students should refer to faculty members by their last name and a courtesy title (examples: *Dr. Pier*, *Prof. Brockman*), rather than merely by their first name or their last name; Dr. Stein will similarly refer to students with appropriate respect. Students will be advised in advance of any material that may be objectionable so those who choose to may be excused from class that day. Students must also acknowledge through signature their receipt of this syllabus and their acknowledgement and acceptance of the course provisions.

Classroom Etiquette:

In order to promote the best learning environment possible, the following rules will be strictly enforced during this class:

- No food or drink in the classroom (only exception: bottled water)
- No use of cell phones for any purpose (including text messaging and e-mail)
- No use of tobacco products (including smokeless/chewing tobacco)
- No leaving the room after class starts (including examinations)
- Class begins/ends based at the time shown on the clock on the classroom wall
- Class begins promptly (1:15 p.m., 2:30 p.m.); tardiness is not acceptable
- If a student's behavior or demeanor adversely affects the class environment, the student will be asked to leave

Accommodations Policy:

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides protection from illegal discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students requesting instructional accommodations due to disabilities must arrange for such accommodations by contacting the Pathways Center Associate for Testing Services & Advising, Carla Coates. She can be reached at the Pathways Center, Vogel Library 314, 352-8230, carla.coates@wartburg.edu. Accommodation must be requested and arranged PRIOR to assignment/examination dates. Dr. Stein will make appropriate arrangements for students accordingly, after confirmation of qualification from the Pathways Center.

Dr. Stein’s Educational Philosophy:

Our time in this world is limited; therefore, it is my belief that we should all encourage ourselves to maximize our potential every day. This means putting forth the best effort possible in class. Obviously, none of us—teacher or student—can be at their “best” every day, but we are simply cheating ourselves if we do not strive to excel. We are also depriving others of the chance for meaningful discussion and interaction. It is commonly accepted that for every hour of time spent in class, students should spend roughly three hours outside of class studying and preparing. There are times when you will spend much more than that (such as when you are writing your research paper) and other times when you will spend less than that (such as when the reading assignment is short). However, my experience in teaching this class leads me to believe that this three-to-one ratio is a fair overall estimate of the time I spend preparing for lectures and grading papers, and how much time you should also spend learning the material.

Grading:

Grading will be on a straight percentage scale, based on points. Each assignment will carry a certain number of points. Your grade will be based on the following scale:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Point Range</u>
93-100	A	465-500
90-92	A-	450-464
87-89	B+	435-449
83-86	B	415-434
80-82	B-	400-414
77-79	C+	385-399
73-76	C	365-384
70-72	C-	350-364
67-69	D+	335-349
63-66	D	315-334
60-62	D-	300-314
59-below	F	299-below

No individual extra credit will be allowed. Only the 500 points from the class assignments and examinations will count toward your final grade. The denotation corresponding to letter grades is as follows: A, distinguished performance; B, superior work; C, satisfactory achievement; D, minimal achievement; F, unsatisfactory achievement. (Wartburg College Academic Catalog, 2006-2008)

**Media Criticism/Capstone
Class-by-Class Schedule**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
Mon. Jan. 11 <i>Class #1</i>	Course Overview Introduction to Research Paper Introduction to Resume/Portfolio Assignment	Syllabus Handouts
Wed. Jan. 13 <i>Class #2</i>	Cover Letters	Web Readings
Fri. Jan. 15 <i>Class #3</i>	Resumes	Web Readings <i>CE Quiz #1</i>
Mon. Jan. 18	<i>No Class—Communication Arts Visitation Day Research Paper Topic Due</i>	
Tue. Jan. 19	<i>Last Day to Drop Without “W”</i>	
Wed. Jan. 20 <i>Class #4</i>	Portfolios	Web Readings
Fri. Jan. 22 <i>Class #5</i>	What to Look for in the First Job	Web Readings
Mon. Jan. 25 <i>Class #6</i>	Writing the Research Paper <i>Guest: Kari Weaver, Vogel Library</i>	Handouts <i>CE Quiz #2</i>
Wed. Jan. 27 <i>Class #7</i>	Social Scientific Research <i>Resumes/Cover Letters Due</i>	Web Readings
Fri. Jan. 29 <i>Class #8</i>	Surveys and Polling Focus Groups and Content Analysis	Web Readings
Mon. Feb. 01 <i>Class #9</i>	Individual Career Meetings <i>Portfolios Due</i>	<i>CE Quiz #3</i>
Wed. Feb. 03 <i>Class #10</i>	Individual Career Meetings	
Fri. Feb. 05 <i>Class #11</i>	Individual Career Meetings	
Mon. Feb. 08 <i>Class #12</i>	Introduction to Ethics	Web Readings <i>CE Quiz #4</i>

Wed. Feb. 10 <i>Class #13</i>	Introduction to Ethics	Web Readings
Fri. Feb. 12 <i>Class #14</i>	Introduction to Ethical Decision Making Practical and Professional Ethics	Text, pg. 1-19 Web Readings
Mon. Feb. 15 <i>Class #15</i>	Information Ethics	Text, pg. 20-67 <i>CE Quiz #5</i>
Wed. Feb. 17 <i>Class #16</i>	Photo/Video Journalism	Text, pg. 237-276 <i>Ethics Quiz #1</i>
Fri. Feb. 19 <i>Class #17</i>	Advertising Techniques	Web Readings
Mon. Feb. 22 <i>Class #18</i>	Advertising Ethics <i>Research Paper Draft Due</i>	Text, pg. 68-93 <i>CE Quiz #6</i>
Wed. Feb. 24 <i>Class #19</i>	Loyalty	Text, pg. 94-122
Fri. Feb. 26 <i>Class #20</i>	Public Relations Ethics	Text, pg. 123-146 <i>Ethics Quiz #2</i>
Mon. Mar. 01 <i>Class #21</i>	Ethics in Action	In-Class Video <i>CE Quiz #7</i>
Wed. Mar. 03 <i>Class #22</i>	Privacy <i>Last Day to Declare P/D/F</i>	Text, pg. 147-174
Fri. Mar. 05 <i>Class #23</i>	Mass Media in a Democratic Society <i>Final Groups Set</i>	Text, pg. 175-208 <i>Ethics Quiz #3</i>
Mon. Mar. 08	<i>No Class—Winter Break</i>	
Wed. Mar. 10	<i>No Class—Winter Break</i>	
Fri. Mar. 12	<i>No Class—Winter Break</i>	
Mon. Mar. 15 <i>Class #24</i>	Research Paper Presentations	
Wed. Mar. 17 <i>Class #25</i>	Research Paper Presentations	
Fri. Mar. 19 <i>Class #26</i>	Research Paper Presentations	

Mon. Mar. 22 <i>Class #27</i>	Research Paper Presentations <i>Last Day to Drop With "W"</i>	<i>CE Quiz #8</i>
Wed. Mar. 24 <i>Class #28</i>	Research Paper Presentations	
Fri. Mar. 26 <i>Class #29</i>	Handling Ethical Conflicts Internally	Web Readings
Mon. Mar. 29 <i>Class #30</i>	Research Paper Presentations Introduction to Final Project <i>Final Research Paper Due</i>	<i>CE Quiz #9</i> Handout
Wed. Mar. 31 <i>Class #31</i>	Media Economics	Text, pg. 209-236 <i>Ethics Quiz #4</i>
Fri. Apr. 02 Mon. Apr. 05	<i>No Class—Easter Break</i> <i>No Class—Easter Break</i>	
Wed. Apr. 07 <i>Class #32</i>	New Media Ethics Introduction of Final Ethical Hypotheticals <i>Code of Ethics Due</i>	Text, pg. 277-308 <i>CE Quiz #10</i>
Fri. Apr. 09 <i>Class #33</i>	Arts and Entertainment Ethics <i>Draft Presentation Outlines Due</i>	Text, pg. 309-337 <i>Ethics Quiz #5</i>
Mon. Apr. 12 <i>Class #34</i>	Becoming a Moral Adult Preview of Final Presentations <i>Final Presentation Outlines Due</i>	Text, pg. 338-348 <i>Ethics Quiz #6</i>
Tue. Apr. 13	<i>Presentation of Final Ethical Hypotheticals</i> <i>7:00 p.m., Buckmaster Room, WBC</i>	
Wed. Apr. 14 <i>Class #35</i>	Review of Final Presentations	
Fri. Apr. 16 <i>Class #36</i>	Final Thoughts Course Evaluations	
Tue. Apr. 20 Wed. Apr. 21	Section 2 Ethics Night Evaluations (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.) Section 1 Ethics Night Evaluations (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.)	