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JOUR 481.02: Senior Seminar

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Jour 481 Senior Seminar Fall 2009
Section 2 Wednesdays, 9:10 – 11
Anderson 316
Professor Clem Work
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Now that you're about to go out into the real world, we're going to focus on journalism ethics and professional practice. Students will present case studies (orally and in writing) and will debate a wide variety of issues. We will start by reviewing media codes of ethics and by brainstorming current and historical situations involving ethics and professional conduct.

OUR CLASS BLOG

There is a blog for this class at <http://umseniorseminar.blogspot.com>

During the semester, we will use this blog to share information about journalistic ethics and practice. Once you register at www.blogspot.com, you will be able to comment on posts and read all posts.

ONGOING ASSIGNMENT

Read the journalism sources on the left column of the blog regularly. Suggest other sources to be added. Be prepared to discuss in any class ethics/professional conduct topics that arise and were posted during the previous week.

CASE STUDIES (40%)

Your assignment for this aspect of the class will be to:

- 1) Identify a real case or situation that involves an issue of journalistic ethics or professional conduct. You may gather ideas from the list I posted on the blog last year (see August 26, 2008 post), or from our class discussions or you may suggest a case that we didn't discuss. By noon, Tuesday, Sept. 8, give me your top 3-4 choices; **first come, first pick**. To do so, submit a comment to this post on our blog. List all 3 or 4 of your choices in your comment. Do not give me preferred dates. I will distribute and post a full schedule as soon as everyone's topic is set. I will notify you as soon as possible of your approved topic or suggest revisions.
- 2) Your class presentation will include the following:
 - A) Thoroughly research and investigate the ethics issue or issues presented. Use as many written or human sources as possible. This may include contacting some of the principals involved, and definitely will involve interviewing journalism professionals.

B) Write an outline of the case, questions you will pose to the class, any reading assignment you want classmates to do before your presentation, and get this to me not later than NOON MONDAY BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED PRESENTATION.

C) On the Wednesday of your presentation, give a detailed explanation of the ethical/professional issue to the class and lead a thorough discussion. Your discussion should last 25-35 minutes.

D) By the end of that day (or sooner), email me a short paper of 2-3 pages that discusses the issue and specifically cites the sources you used in your research.

3) I NEED TWO VOLUNTEERS to present on SEPT 2. Students who present on that day get a special dispensation: your papers aren't due until class time, Sept. 9.

PARTICIPATION (20%)

As this is a seminar, meaning its basis is class discussion, you will be expected to attend every class meeting. You will also be expected to participate in class and blog discussions. We will have guests in class from time to time and I may assign background reading.

FINAL PAPER (40%)

You must propose a topic for your senior paper between Sept. 9 and Oct. 14. It should be about ethics or professional practice, but it must be about a situation or issue *other than* the one you chose for your class presentation. There are innumerable topics out there! Pick one that interests you and is complex enough that you can, without padding, write a paper of approximately 4,000 words. The paper MUST include your assessment of the situation. This paper will be kept in your permanent file. Plan to get the OK from me before proceeding with your paper topic.

The final paper is due in my office by 5 p.m., Wednesday, NOVEMBER 18. I may ask you to rewrite parts of it.

Check your email regularly for reading assignments for class discussions and other communications.

There will be no class on Nov. 11 (Veterans Day) and Nov. 25 (travel day for Thanksgiving break)

There will be at least two presentations every class period, beginning Sept. 2 and continuing through finals week (**We will meet on Tuesday, Dec. 15 from 8-10 a.m.**).