



## MPJO-500-01: ETHICS

### GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS JOURNALISM

Wednesdays, 5:20 p.m. to 8 p.m. | Fall 2015

#### Instructor: Carole Feldman

Downtown campus, Room C229

- Office hours are by appointment.

#### COURSE OVERVIEW

It's often said that journalists are the eyes and ears for a public that can't be everywhere at once. That role comes with responsibilities for delivering the news accurately and fairly. And it comes with pressures, in the ever-changing media environment, to get the story first. Sometimes, those two collide.

Journalists are confronted with ethical dilemmas on a routine basis. But there's no black-and-white answer for many of them. This class is therefore intended to explore the myriad gray areas that dominate the way journalists work and live, the blurry lines that divide right from wrong, or, more accurately, divide "probably should" from "probably shouldn't." And, it will examine why ethical journalists sometimes come down on opposite sides of an issue.

The class is designed to help you understand the ethical implications of the choices journalists make, to empower you to navigate the ethical minefield of attempting every day to explain to the world the activities of other people.

**This is a core course of the MPS Journalism program, and students must earn a "B" (83) or higher to pass the course. Please see the Graduate Student Handbook for more details.**

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand the basic tenets of journalism ethics and ways to apply them
- Know how to find, track and discuss current ethical issues
- Be familiar with the major case studies of journalism ethics
- Be familiar with the ethics/standards code of a news organization of their choosing
- Be familiar with the intersection of journalism ethics and media law

#### REQUIRED READING

Each student must read a daily newspaper, either the online or paper version, or an online news site such as CNN.com, huffingtonpost.com or politico.com. Students will be required to follow the news organization throughout the semester and analyze the ethical decisions it makes.



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
School of Continuing Studies  
Journalism

Title: *The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century*

Author: Kelly McBride and Tom Rosenstiel

Publisher: CQ Press

Publication Year: 2013

ISBN: 978-1604265613

Price: \$34.54 (from Amazon)

Title: *Regret the Error: How Media Mistakes Pollute the Press and Imperil Free Speech*

Author: Craig Silverman

Publisher: Union Square Press

Publication Year: 2009

ISBN: 978-1402765643

Price: \$12.95 (from Amazon)

Title: *The Bang-Bang Club*

Author: Greg Marinovich and Joao Silva

Publisher: Basic Books

Publication Year: 2001

ISBN: 9780465019786

Price: \$13.47 (from Amazon)

The instructor will assign additional required reading in class each week. Links are listed in the class schedule below. The instructor reserves the right to add short reading assignments off the news during the course of the semester.

Students have until November 7 to read *The Bang-Bang Club*, when it will be discussed in a Saturday book club meeting.

Recommended readings:

- Jim Romenesko: <http://www.JimRomenesko.com>
- Poynter Institute ethics blog: <http://www.poynter.org/tag/ethics/>
- [Regret the Error section on Poynter \(companion to the required book\):](http://www.poynter.org/category/latest-news/regret-the-error/)  
<http://www.poynter.org/category/latest-news/regret-the-error/>
- Nieman Journalism Lab: <http://www.niemanlab.org/>
- Media Gazer: <http://www.MediaGazer.com>
- Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism: <http://www.Journalism.org>
- Pew Internet & American Life Project: <http://www.PewInternet.org>
- Dylan Byers on Media: <http://www.politico.com/blogs/media/>
- NYT's Media Decoder Blog: <http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/>

**ATTENDANCE**



As outlined by the university, missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-). **Absences for classes beyond the initial two will result in further reduction of the final grade.** If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.

This class relies heavily on attendance and participation. Punctual attendance is critical. If you have to miss a class – family emergency, medical emergency or other act of God – you must let the instructors know in advance and work out a proposal for making up whatever work you will miss. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary circumstances.

**Instructional continuity:** In the event of a weather emergency (or any other widespread emergency) that would close the Georgetown Downtown building, we will plan to meet virtually through online videoconferencing tools. More information will be provided on how this will work later in the semester.

## ASSIGNMENTS

At the beginning of the semester, each student will choose a daily news outlet to monitor. An analysis of that outlet will be the basis for the final project.

For eight weeks during the semester, students will be required to email to the instructor by 8 p.m. Sunday a 150- to 200-word summary and a link to an example of an ethical issue or question raised in the course of news coverage that week. These may be drawn from the news outlet chosen for the final project or another news organization. It may be an example of poor or successful handling of an ethical component or it may be simply a story that leads to an additional question about journalism ethics.

The instructor will provide regular feedback on the weekly summaries. One or two students each week will share their submission in class; everyone will share at least twice during the semester. The summaries are worth 10 percent of the final grade. Summaries will be divided into two groups for grading purposes, each worth 5 percent of the total grade.

There are three additional written assignments required for the course. More details will be given in class, but generally the assignments are as follows:

For the first paper, students will write a two- to three-page paper, double-spaced in 12-point type, picking from the one of the two options below:

OPTION ONE: Analyze the ethics involved in a current news story chosen by the student. The paper must include the following:

- What is the ethical issue?
- How did the news organization handle it?
- Was it the right choice? Why? Students must be able to defend their response.



OPTION TWO: Analyze an ethical issue you have confronted in your own reporting or editing, either for another class or for a professional news organization. The paper must include the following issues:

- What is the ethical issue?
- How did you decide to handle it?
- Do you believe it was the right choice? Why? Students must be able to defend their response.

For the second paper, students will be required to survey a minimum of 15 people about their perceptions of the media from an ethical point-of-view and write a three- to five-page paper analyzing the results. Use a professional media code of ethics to frame your questions. Survey a diverse group of individuals.

The third written assignment, the final project, will be an eight- to 10-page paper analyzing the ethical standards of the news organization students followed throughout the semester. Does the news organization have an ethics code? Has it abided by it? What issues have been handled well? What were handled poorly? How does the news organization handle errors? Cite specific examples.

Unless otherwise noted, these three assignments should be filed by email to the instructors by the time class begins on the day the assignment is due. Please submit the papers as Word documents and attach them to your email.

There will also be two out-of-class exams. For each, students will have a defined period of time to make and defend an ethical news judgment call. Just like in real life, important decisions must be made on tight deadlines.

**Journalism requires a strict adherence to deadlines. Late papers will not be accepted.**

Summary of assignments/tests and deadlines:

1. Weekly summaries of current ethical issues: Due by 8 p.m. each Sunday prior to class meetings on the following dates: Sept. 13, 20, 27; Oct. 4, 11, 25; Nov. 1, 8. You will get feedback on your weekly summary each week. Grading for these will be done in two groups, ending with the weeks of Oct. 4 and Nov. 8.
2. Two- to three-page analytical paper: Sept. 23
3. Survey questions: Sept. 30
4. Out of class exam No. 1: Between Oct. 3 and Oct. 7
5. Three- to five-page paper on survey analysis: Oct. 21
6. Pitch for final paper: Oct. 28
7. Out-of-class exam No. 2: Between Nov. 21 and Nov. 25
8. Eight- to 10-page final paper analyzing news organization's ethics: Due Dec. 2



## GRADING

Your papers will be graded on content and also the mechanics of writing. Your course grade will be based on the following:

In-class participation:	5 percent
Weekly reading summaries (5 percent each grading group):	10 percent
Analytical paper:	15 percent
Survey (questions, 5 percent; analysis, 20 percent):	25 percent
Exams (10 percent each):	20 percent
Final paper:	25 percent
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 percent</b>

Students will receive information detailing the expectations for each assignment. Each assignment will get a numerical grade, 0 to 100, which will translate to the letter grades below. Final grades will be determined by multiplying the numerical grade by the percentage outlined above.

A	100-93	B-	82.99-80
A-	92.99-90	C	79.99-70
B+	89.99-88	F	69.99-0
B	87.99-83		

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.** The instructor will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a grade of a B- or below.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

- MPS Writing Resource Program  
202-687-4246  
<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>
- Academic Resource Center  
202-687-8354 | [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)  
<http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services  
202-687-6985  
<http://caps.georgetown.edu/>



## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu); <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

## GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

## PLAGIARISM

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in journalism, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs at <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

## SYLLABUS MODIFICATION

The instructors reserve the right to update the syllabus during the semester, especially as it pertains to the timing of guest speakers. In those instances, the instructor will provide ample warning of any changes.



## CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 (WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 9): WHY ETHICS?

After introductions and a review of the syllabus, we will explore public perceptions of the media and how those perceptions are based on ethical decision-making. We will explore some of the key questions involved in ethical decision-making.

- **Assignments:**
  - Weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Sept. 13
  - Due Sept. 16: Select a news organization to follow during the semester. Bring to class its code of ethics for discussion, if the organization makes one public. Some are listed here: [http://www.journalism.org/resources/ethics\\_codes/](http://www.journalism.org/resources/ethics_codes/)
- **Reading for Sept. 16:**
  - *The New Ethics of Journalism*: Chapters 1-3
  - *Regret the Error*: Chapter 1-3
  - SPJ ethics code: <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>
  - RTDNA ethics code: [http://www.rtnda.org/pages/media\\_items/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct48.php](http://www.rtnda.org/pages/media_items/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct48.php)
  - AP ethics code: <http://www.apme.com/?page=EthicsStatement>

### WEEK 2 (WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16): CODES OF ETHICS & WHAT'S THE TRUTH ANYWAY?

- Why do we need codes of ethics? Should they be mandatory?
- Explore codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists (including its discussions about updating them and its name); Radio, Television Digital News Association; The Associated Press and others. Where are the similarities and differences?
- Is the glass half empty or half full? When a story seems too good to be true, is it?
- Can you report accurately but still not report the truth?
- Why it matters what words you choose
- Getting beyond the spin
- Chasing rumors in the digital world
- **Assignments:**
  - Weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Sept. 20
  - Bring to Sept. 23 class examples of how anonymous sources are used by the news organization you are following.
  - Analytical paper (emailed to instructor before the start of class on Sept. 23)
- **Reading for Sept. 23:**
  - *The New Ethics of Journalism*, Chapters 8-9



- Woodward and Bernstein on Watergate: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/all-the-presidents-men-at-40/>
- Reporter's Case Poses Dilemma for Justice Department: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/28/us/case-of-james-risen-times-reporter-poses-dilemma-for-justice-department.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C%5B%22RI%3A11%22%2C%22RI%3A14%22%5D&r=0>
- What Journalists Need to Know About the Justice Department's Seizure of AP Phone Records: <http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/213344/what-journalists-need-to-know-about-the-justice-departments-seizure-of-ap-phone-records/>
- Fox News reporter Jana Winter grateful for court win on sources: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/11/us/fox-news-reporter-sources-court/>
- Suggestion for PR People: Don't Tell Journalists How to Do Their Jobs: <http://jimromenesko.com/2013/03/29/suggestion-for-pr-people-dont-tell-journalists-how-to-do-their-jobs/>
- *New York* magazine on the Judith Miller saga: <http://nymag.com/nymetro/news/media/features/9226/>
- AP story on missing man in Iran: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/missing-american-iran-was-working-cia>
- Rolling Stone story "A Rape on Campus": <http://web.archive.org/web/20150404090041/http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/a-rape-on-campus-20141119>
- Rolling Stone "Note to Readers": <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/a-note-to-our-readers-20141205>
- Washington Post on Rolling Stone rape story: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/u-va-fraternity-to-rebut-claims-of-gang-rape-in-rolling-stone/2014/12/05/5fa5f7d2-7c91-11e4-84d4-7c896b90abdc\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/u-va-fraternity-to-rebut-claims-of-gang-rape-in-rolling-stone/2014/12/05/5fa5f7d2-7c91-11e4-84d4-7c896b90abdc_story.html)
- Being duped by sources: <http://io9.com/i-fooled-millions-into-thinking-chocolate-helps-weight-1707251800>

### WEEK 3 (WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 23): SOURCING, ATTRIBUTION AND RUMORS

- How does a reporter develop sources?
- The importance of attribution in print, broadcast and online
- On the record, off the record, background and deep background
- Should journalists ever be required to disclose the identity of their anonymous sources?
- Case study: *Branzburg v. Hayes* Supreme Court case and clashes between the media and law enforcement over anonymous sources
- When sources deceive
- When you shouldn't protect sources
- When should reporters hold a story at the government's request?





- **Assignments:**
  - Weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Sept. 27
  - Survey questions due by 5:20 p.m. Sept. 30. Come up with a minimum of 10 questions for the survey on public attitudes toward the media, not including basic demographic information. We will decide on five questions to include in all surveys.
  
- **Reading for Sept. 30:**
  - *Regret the Error*: Chapters 4-6
  - Michael Hastings, “The Runaway General”:  
<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-runaway-general-20100622>
  - How he got the story:  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2010/06/22/rolling-stone-author-discusses-general-mcchrysal-interview.html>
  - His death:  
<http://www.publiceditor.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/22/times-obituary-of-michael-hastings-did-not-capture-his-adversarial-spirit/>
  - SCOTUSBlog denied Senate press credentials because of ties to law firm:  
<http://www.rcfp.org/browse-media-law-resources/news/scotusblog-denied-senate-press-credentials-because-ties-law-firm>
  - Disclosure statement by Katie Boehret of Re/Code (J, '12):  
<http://recode.net/author/katherine-boehret/>
  - Sources placing conditions on coverage:  
<http://jimromenesko.com/2015/06/10/reporters-with-passes-to-nkotb-concert-will-not-have-to-write-about-toilet-paper/>
  - Journalists entering into business arrangements with sources or subjects of news coverage: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/evan-solomon-fired-by-cbc-news-in-wake-of-alleged-secret-art-deals-1.3106983>

#### **WEEK 4 (SATURDAY, SEPT. 26): FIELD TRIP TO NEWSEUM**

We will take a field trip this week to the Newseum. There may be an additional fee, but it will not exceed \$25 per person. More details about the exact time and structure of the visit will be provided in the first few weeks of class. Anyone with concerns about this should talk to the instructors once the details of the trip are provided.

#### **WEEK 5 (WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 30): CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND CITIZENS AS JOURNALISTS**

In the course of covering a story or a beat, journalists are often faced with situations that are or could be perceived as conflicts of interest. We'll discuss these issues and possible responses to them. For example, journalists could face the following situations:

- My spouse gets a job in an agency I'm covering. Do I have to change assignments?
- A source sends me a bottle of booze for the holidays. Should I accept it?



- I'm covering a Broadway opening. Should I pay for my own ticket?
- Can I become friends with a source?
  
- **Assignments Due:**
  - Weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Oct. 4
  
- **Reading due Oct. 7:**
  - Watch *Lou Grant* "Nazi" episode. It is about 50 minutes long:  
<http://www.hulu.com/watch/685>
  - Should a newspaper have printed a map of legal gun holders?  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/19/nyregion/newspaper-takes-down-map-of-gun-permit-holders.html>?
  - The Journal-News' reasoning behind the map:  
<http://www.lohud.com/article/20130118/NEWS02/301180125/A-letter-from-Journal-News-publisher-Janet-Hasson?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Cimg%7Cfrontpage%20%5D%5D>,
  - Naming rape victims: <http://www.poynter.org/news/mediawire/1655/naming-rape-victims/>
  - The sexual lives of politicians. Should they have an expectation of privacy?  
<http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/08/12/mcgreevey.nj/>

**\*\*Out-of-class exam No. 1:** Details will be given in class about how to take the exam through Blackboard. All students should plan to set aside time (TBD) to take the exam between 10 a.m. Oct. 3 and the beginning of class, Oct. 7.

### **WEEK 6 (WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7): PRIVACY**

How do you balance the public's right to know with minimizing harm?

- When might publishing or broadcasting information be unethical, even though you have legal access to it?
- Why don't the media identify victims of sexual attack?
- What kind of special sensitivities are needed when dealing with children?
- Are politicians' or celebrities' sexual activities news? How do you decide?
- Should the permanence of information on the web be a factor?
  
- **Assignment:**
  - Weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Oct. 11
  
- **Reading for Oct. 14:**
  - "Briefing on Media Law" in the AP Stylebook. Please read all the sections in this chapter. You can access the Stylebook online for free through the Georgetown University website: <http://answers.library.georgetown.edu/a.php?qid=140574>. Click on the words that read, "Direct Link." If you are off campus or not on the



Georgetown network, you will be asked to provide your last name and student ID number in order to continue on to the AP Stylebook page. Once there, hover over “AP Stylebook” in the top navigation row and click on “View by Chapter.” In the Chapter dropdown menu, click on “Briefing on Media Law,” which is toward the end of the list.

- Why the First Amendment didn’t save a Mississippi blogger. CJR.  
[http://www.cjr.org/united\\_states\\_project/first\\_amendment\\_clayton\\_kelly\\_thad\\_cochran.php](http://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/first_amendment_clayton_kelly_thad_cochran.php)
- Complaint filed against Rolling Stone and Sabrina Erdely for the “A Rape on Campus” story:  
<http://pdfserver.amlaw.com/nlj/Eramo%20v%20Rolling%20Stone%20complaint>
- The clash of ethics and law in the Rolling Stone case.  
<http://www.rcfp.org/browse-media-law-resources/news-media-law/news-media-and-law-spring-2015/clash-ethics-and-law>

#### **WEEK 7 (WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14): WHERE ETHICS MEET THE LAW**

This class will give an overview of important legal concepts and how they relate to ethical decision-making:

- Where freedom of the press and the right to privacy clash
- Private individuals vs. public figures
- What about copyright?
- With “minimize harm” a key tenet of the SPJ code of ethics, does news value outweigh a person’s right to privacy? What about the adage, “Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable”?
- **Assignment:**
  - Due Oct. 21: Survey paper

#### **WEEK 8 (WEEK OF OCT. 21): FIELD TRIP TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

We will take a field trip this week to AP. More details about when will be provided in the first few weeks of class. Students should be prepared for the field trip to take place **outside of the regular class day and time**. Anyone with concerns about this should talk to the instructors once the details of the trip are provided.

- **Assignments:**
  - Weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Oct. 25
  - Final project pitch is due by Oct. 28. Details for the format of the pitch will be given in class.
  - Due Oct. 28: Be prepared to discuss your news organization’s presence on the web.
- **Readings for Oct. 28:**



- *Regret the Error*: Chapter 9
- *The New Ethics of Journalism*: Chapter 3
- Virtual Newsroom: getting journalism done in a digital age:  
<http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/leadership-management/241606/virtual-newsroom-getting-journalism-done-in-a-digital-age/>
- NPR memo warns staffers about social media posts:  
<http://jimromenesko.com/2014/07/08/npr-memo-warns-about-social-media-posts/>
- The Evolving Role of News on Twitter and Facebook (Pew Research Center, 2015): <http://www.journalism.org/2015/07/14/the-evolving-role-of-news-on-twitter-and-facebook/>
- NYT publishes deleted story after BuzzFeed reporter reconstructs it:  
<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/216743/nyt-publishes-deleted-story-after-buzzfeed-reporter-reconstructs-it/>
- Roland Martin, CNN:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/13/business/media/twitter-is-all-in-good-fun-until-it-isnt.html?pagewanted=all>
- Elizabeth Flock, The Washington Post:  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/elizabeth-flocks-resignation-the-post-fails-a-young-blogger/2012/04/20/gIQAfACXWT\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/elizabeth-flocks-resignation-the-post-fails-a-young-blogger/2012/04/20/gIQAfACXWT_story.html) and  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/omblog/post/post-roast-mitt-romney-and-the-kkk-slogan/2011/12/16/gIQAAtx3yO\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/omblog/post/post-roast-mitt-romney-and-the-kkk-slogan/2011/12/16/gIQAAtx3yO_blog.html)
- Under the category of what not to do in changing online content:  
<http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/citydesk/2010/01/28/washington-post-editorial-board-livid-over-turque-blog-post/>
- The Boston Marathon Bombing:  
<http://nieman.harvard.edu/reports/article/102877/Journalism--the-Boston-Marathon-Bombings.aspx>
- The Growth in Digital Reporting (Pew Research Center, 2014):  
<http://www.journalism.org/2014/03/26/the-growth-in-digital-reporting/>
- Young vs. old in digital journalism:  
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/columnist/wolff/2015/07/12/career-prospects-of-young-journalists/29958311/>

## WEEK 9 (WEDNESDAY, OCT. 28): ETHICS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Digital tools offer journalists new ways to tell stories and access to many more resources for reporting. But the digital space can also present ethical challenges, especially when considering the speed and ease of publishing online. How do traditional ethics apply online? Or do they?

- Moving between media – from print to online to radio to TV. Are there different ethics?
- The rise of the social web and the risks of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and other social sites. The people you're watching are watching you, too.



- Engaging with readers in comments sections
- Speed kills – the pressure to be first vs. the need to be right
- Ethics and curation online
- Case studies: Sandy Hook and the Boston Marathon Bombings
- **Assignments:**
  - Weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Nov. 1
- **Reading for Nov. 4:**
  - *Regret the Error*: Chapter 10
  - Brian Williams: [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/business/media/brian-williams-apologizes-matt-lauer-nbc-interview.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/business/media/brian-williams-apologizes-matt-lauer-nbc-interview.html?_r=0) and <http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/04/nbc-news-brian-williams-scandal-comcast>
  - Janet Cooke: <http://academics.smcvt.edu/dmindich/Jimmy's%20World.htm> and [http://articles.latimes.com/1996-05-28/entertainment/ca-9096\\_1\\_janet-cooke](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-05-28/entertainment/ca-9096_1_janet-cooke)
  - Stephen Glass: [http://www.pennenberg.com/story\\_archive.html](http://www.pennenberg.com/story_archive.html) and <http://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/archive/1998/09/bissinger199809>
  - Jayson Blair: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/11/us/correcting-the-record-times-reporter-who-resigned-leaves-long-trail-of-deception.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>
  - Jack Kelley: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/2004-04-22-report-one\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/2004-04-22-report-one_x.htm)
  - AP correction for Christopher Newton stories: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nZj5frtxkLJw7VMdF6cGH4nkaCf\\_NzKI2vIbOLObvc/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nZj5frtxkLJw7VMdF6cGH4nkaCf_NzKI2vIbOLObvc/edit)
  - Jonah Lehrer, The New Yorker: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/20/jonah-lehrer-s-self-plagiarism-scandal-rocks-the-new-yorker.html> and <http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/30/jonah-lehrer-resigns-from-new-yorker-after-making-up-dylan-quotes-for-his-book/>
  - Award-Winning Photo of ‘Sniper’ Was Really Staged Pic of a Photojournalism Student: [http://www.imediaethics.org/News/3792/Award-winning\\_photo\\_of\\_sniper\\_was\\_really\\_staged\\_pic\\_of\\_a\\_photojournalism\\_student.php](http://www.imediaethics.org/News/3792/Award-winning_photo_of_sniper_was_really_staged_pic_of_a_photojournalism_student.php)
  - Gawker suspends staffer after story with ‘several similarities’ to Miami New Times piece: <http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/256684/gawker-suspends-staffer-after-story-pulls-from-miami-new-times/>

#### **WEEK 10 (WEDNESDAY, NOV. 4): PLAGIARISM, FABRICATION AND ALL-OUT LIES**

- Is there any protection for the media, and the public, from a journalist who sets out to deliberately fabricate stories, in whole or in part?



- Is plagiarism equally egregious? What should the penalties be?
- How has the Internet changed the dynamics of fraud?
- Case studies: Stephen Glass, Jayson Blair, Janet Cooke, Jack Kelley, Jonah Lehrer and more. Students will be asked to present to the class a case of plagiarism and/or fabrication.
  
- **Assignment:**
  - Final weekly ethical summary due by 8 p.m. Nov. 8
  
- **Reading for Nov. 11:**
  - *The New Ethics of Journalism*: Chapter 5
  - Advice on publishing graphic photos from Iraq: <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/newsgathering-storytelling/visual-voice/255944/advice-on-publishing-graphic-photos-from-iraq/>
  - Chicago Sun-Times Will Train Staffers on iPhone Photography Basics: <http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/214954/sun-times-will-train-reporters-on-iphone-photography-basics/>
  - Tom Junod, “The Falling Man”: [http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP\\_FALLINGMAN](http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP_FALLINGMAN)
  - Photographer accused of staging photo: <http://petapixel.com/2013/02/23/magnum-photographer-accused-of-ethics-breach-in-prize-winning-photo/>
  - The New York Post defends its decision to publish a photo of a man on the subway tracks about to be hit: [http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/picture\\_of\\_controversy\\_A06tIjYbasZpf2RvtNNTxM](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/picture_of_controversy_A06tIjYbasZpf2RvtNNTxM)
  - Rolling Stone cover on Boston Marathon bombing suspect: <http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/218633/new-york-times-editorial-defends-rolling-stone-cover/>  
<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/five-revelations-from-rolling-stones-boston-bomber-cover-story-20130716>

### **WEEK 11 (SATURDAY, NOV. 7): BOOK DISCUSSION ON *THE BANG-BANG CLUB***

We will meet as a section at the Downtown Campus for a book club discussion of *The Bang-Bang Club*. Time: TBD.

### **WEEK 12 (WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11): PHOTO AND VIDEO ETHICS**

The classic saying is that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” But sometimes does a picture say too much?

- What should be considered when deciding whether to publish a picture or video? Why context is important.
- Is the use of Photoshop ever permissible? What about re-enacting an event?



- How to use stock photos and videos
- Case studies: “The Falling Man” photo, the case of award-winning photographer Paolo Pellegrin, Rolling Stone cover on Boston Marathon suspect
  
- **Reading for Nov. 18:**
  - *Regret the Error*: Chapter 14
  - *The New Ethics of Journalism*: Chapter 10
  - William Safire on “retraction”:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/12/magazine/12ONLANGUAGE.html>
  - Select a column from New York Times public editor Margaret Sullivan:  
<http://publiceditor.blogs.nytimes.com/author/margaret-sullivan/>. Be prepared to discuss it.
  - Fear and Trust at The Washington Post:  
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/ombudsman/2013/02/28/173175403/fear-and-trust-at-em-the-washington-post-em>
  - Philadelphia Daily News correction:  
<http://jimromenesko.com/2014/07/01/philadelphia-daily-news-correction-our-ex-editor-said-horse-shit-not-manure/>
  - Getting it Right: Sandy Hook and the Giffords Legacy at NPR:  
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/ombudsman/2012/12/21/167828109/getting-it-right-sandy-hook-and-the-giffords-legacy-at-npr>
  - TBD correction on “men” vs. “me” (called the “correction heard round the world”): <http://www.tbd.com/blogs/tbddc/2010/10/the-correction-heard-round-the-world-3006.html>; original TBD story: <http://www.tbd.com/blogs/amanda-hess/2010/10/hiv-positive-black-gay-men-to-get-the-bayard-rustin-project-a-district-campaign-against-aids-2873.html>
  - Howard Kurtz Apologizes for Jason Collins Post:  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/05/05/howard-kurtz-apologizes-for-jason-collins-post.html>
  - CNN’s correction on the Supreme Court healthcare ruling error:  
<http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2012/06/28/cnn-correction/>
  - CJR report on Rolling Stone rape story:  
<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/a-rape-on-campus-what-went-wrong-20150405>

### **WEEK 13 (WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18): ADMITTING YOU’RE WRONG**

Part of being an ethical journalist is being accountable and acknowledging your mistakes. But how do you do that effectively?

- When you correct your errors how can you ensure that the correction gets to all those who read the original piece? In the digital environment, is that ever possible?
- Write-thru vs. strike-through





- What role does the ombudsman or public editor play in helping a news organization be accountable? What about readers/viewers?
- . Case studies: CNN's correction on the Supreme Court's health care ruling and Rolling Stone/CJR report on what went wrong
- **Reading for Dec. 2:**
  - *The New Ethics of Journalism*: Chapter 13
  - *The New Ethics of Journalism*: Chapter 13
  - In the Rise of Race Beats, Echoes of History:  
[http://www.cjr.org/minority\\_reports/race\\_beats.php?page=all](http://www.cjr.org/minority_reports/race_beats.php?page=all)
  - Why Newsroom Diversity Matters:  
[http://www.mediabistro.com/10000words/why-newsroom-diversity-matters\\_b397](http://www.mediabistro.com/10000words/why-newsroom-diversity-matters_b397)
  - ASNE report on diversity in newsrooms:  
<http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=121&sl=387&contentid=387>
  - Why Ethics and Diversity Matter: The Case of Trayvon Martin Coverage:  
<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/everyday-ethics/192604/mostly-white-and-sometimes-brown-media-people-in-a-mostly-brown-and-sometimes-white-world/>
  - Lack of Female Sources in New York Times Stories Spotlights Need for Change:  
<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/top-stories/217828/lack-of-female-sources-in-new-york-times-stories-spotlights-need-for-change/>
  - Byline diversity between men and women: [www.good.is/post/a-byline-count-for-the-next-generation-how-diverse-are-the-blogs-and-magazines-most-millennials-read/](http://www.good.is/post/a-byline-count-for-the-next-generation-how-diverse-are-the-blogs-and-magazines-most-millennials-read/)
  - Five facts about ethnic and gender diversity in U.S. newsrooms:  
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/07/18/5-facts-about-ethnic-and-gender-diversity-in-u-s-newsrooms/>
  - As Jill Abramson exits the NY Times, a look at how women are faring in newsrooms: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/05/16/as-jill-abramson-exits-the-ny-times-a-look-at-how-women-are-faring-in-newsrooms/>

**\*\*Out-of-class exam No. 2:** Details will be given in class about how to take the exam through Blackboard. All students should plan to set aside an hour to take the exam between Nov. 21 and Nov. 25 (exact times TBD).

**NO CLASS ON NOV. 25**

#### **WEEK 14 (WEDNESDAY, DEC. 2): DIVERSITY**

Do America's newsrooms mirror America? Is the news media making a strong enough effort to bring diversity to their newsrooms and to their coverage?





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- **Assignment due Dec. 2:**
  - Final paper

**WEEK 15 (WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9): SO HOW ETHICAL IS THE MEDIA?**

- An assessment from students, based on their final paper. Class wrap-up.