

# J397 Media Ethics (Instagramming Amsterdam: Media Unfiltered)

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Office hours:

Course meets:

## J397: Media Ethics (4 Credits)

Ethical problems in the media: privacy, violence, pornography, truth-telling, objectivity, media codes, public interest, media accountability.

## Course and Study Abroad Experience Motto

If you aren't sure, ask.

## Course and Study Abroad Experience Quote

"The more you know the more you see."

-Aldus Huxley

In essence, the more you see (with your own eyes), the more knowledge you bring to your daily perspective of the immediate world around you.

## Course Philosophy

The mass media are one of the most powerful institutions in society. With that power, **SHOULD** come great responsibility. This course will explore the origins of ethical behavior and actions within the media. We will look at both classical and contemporary approaches to ethical decision making and apply them to modern media practices. At the same time, we will ask whether the media today are acting appropriately in regard to ethical practice, and if not, why not. We will not only critique media practices, we will also search for suggestions that will most positively affect both the media institutions and the publics with which they interact and upon which they rely for their livelihood.

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand the major ethical approaches that have affected moral decision making in the media today, as well as the role of professionals in shaping those decisions.
- Understand the complex relationship between technological, social, cultural, and economic effects on the media and how those impact moral decision making.
- Understand how to make complex moral decisions as a media practitioner by considering all affected parties, and especially the difference between functional and moral obligations and how to order your priorities.
- Apply these concepts to our study of media and icons in Amsterdam.
- Critique the mass media in regard to ethical imperatives.

These outcomes will be accomplished primarily through assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, walking tours, and in-depth study in Amsterdam. They will be tested in in-class assignments, case studies, and social media posts. Your work in this class will draw on your understanding of media ethics, as learned through lectures and readings and excursions. You will also be asked to think about ethics in a way that, hopefully, will make moral philosophy not just an arcane study, but a real and necessary component of your professional and personal character.

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## Course Materials

- Smart phone with camera and internet connection
- Laptop with internet connection
- Instagram account
- Sketchbook and pencils and pens
- All reading materials will be posted on Canvas.

## Studying Abroad

Students studying abroad with Professor Dahmen are expected to be:

- Intellectually curious—interested in learning and learning more, aware that most important issues are complex and interrelated, requiring rigor to unpack.
- Ethically motivated—seek to understand the ethical consequences of their decisions, actions, beliefs; able to articulate grounded personal standards (values) against which to evaluate new ideas or experiences and make informed and principled decisions.
- Tolerant and Flexible—able to tolerate ambiguity, to embrace uncertainty, and to find new and interesting solutions; willing to suspend judgment while investigating a topic from multiple perspectives.
- Connected—able to contextualize issues relevant to today, to see links between one discipline and another.
- Self-learners—able to seek out information, process it and apply it; able to solve complex problems in high-pressure situations.

## Course Considerations

- Arrive promptly for all class sessions, activities, and excursions.
- Be prepared to take notes and contribute to the course discussion.
- Ask good questions.
- Take responsibility and initiative.
- Take all work for this class and experience seriously.
- Remember that on this study abroad experience you represent something larger than yourself.

## Responsibilities!

You must have with you at all times:

- Sketchbook and pencils and pens
- Smart phone for taking photos, writing social media posts, and ability to get in touch with Professor Dahmen
- Contact information for you and your family at home, Professor Dahmen's information, any necessary medical supplies
- Water bottle (Europe is hot and humid in the summer; stay hydrated)
- Study abroad buddy (please always be with at least one other person from the trip)

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>>The “!” above is the only exclamation point you will see me use this term. [Forbes says it well](#): “If you want to be taken seriously as a professional writer, stop using exclamation marks as punctuation. It’s the mark of an amateur, and every editor thinks it, even if they don’t tell you to your face.”

### **Course Format and Workload**

This course will include a variety of formats, including lecture, discussion, and experiential learning.

- To be successful in this course, undergraduate students should expect to spend about 12 hours a week on course requirements (including in-class and out-of-class work).

### **Attendance & Participation**

Attendance is imperative. You are also expected to be on time and to be present and engaged for the entire course session and experiential learning aspects. You will not master the course material if you don’t attend and participate in class. Equally important, attendance is imperative for safety and accountability on this study abroad experience. If you need to miss class or a planned outing (regardless of reason), it is YOUR responsibility to speak with your professor prior to the class period(s) you are missing. Attendance will be taken in every class session. You are also expected to actively participate in every class session: answer questions, ask questions and discuss course topics.

### **Deadlines, Late Work & Make-Ups**

Deadlines will be given for all work; these deadlines will not be extended. Meeting deadlines is essential for success in this course and in the journalism and communication fields. All assignments must be turned in at the date, time and location specified. Late assignments will not be accepted. You will get zero points for each assignment you turn in late. This strictness is meant to introduce you to the tight deadlines in the journalism and communication fields. Late work can mean a missed story opportunity or a lost client. If you miss class due to serious and verifiable emergency (such as jury duty notice, military orders, family emergency, etc.) then you must contact the professor prior to missing class and turn your work in before class. In case of verified excused absences, the professor will allow for make-ups. Verification is required for all excused absences.

### **Course Calendar**

Available via “modules” on the course Canvas site.

### **Academic Integrity**

The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

**Integrity is especially critical in the journalism and communication fields. In this course:**

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**Do not plagiarize:** Do not use/copy someone else's work and pass it off as your own. That includes the work of professional reporters as well as the work of your classmates, friends, family, fraternity brothers, sorority sisters, teammates, roommates, fellow club officers, etc.

**Attribute your work properly:** Use first and last names for everyone you quote or paraphrase in a story. Quotations are direct quotes—don't tweak what someone said to make the sentence sound better. If you use information from another news source, attribute it to that source.

**Don't copy directly from websites or other background sources:** This is plagiarism, too. You can't fool your professor—or your readers—by changing a word or two around. That doesn't fly. Again: Attribute your work properly. Be especially careful if you are cutting and pasting information from the internet.

**Accuracy matters:** Accuracy matters always. Triple check your reporting and writing before turning anything in.

**Do not make things up:** Don't invent sources, facts, people, scenarios, quotes, etc.

**Do not interview family, friends and/or acquaintances:** Credibility is everything. If you use people you know well as sources, your readers have cause to doubt whether you are being fully truthful or withholding information that would be damaging to those close to you.

### **Final Note**

Your physical and emotional health are a top priority. If you are experiencing challenges in this course and study abroad experience or if complexities in your life are hindering your success in this course, please let me know ASAP. I want to do everything I can to support you. I want you to be successful in this course and experience, and I will do my best to help you excel. I look forward to working with each of you this term.

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## **Grading**

Your grade for each aspect of this course will be based on thoroughness, as well as the quality of your thinking and writing. All work should be free of inaccuracies, repetition, typos, spelling errors and grammatical problems. Length doesn't translate to excellence. In fact, brevity is a virtue in journalism – and in this course.

“A” grades will be reserved for OUTSTANDING work only. No extra credit will be offered in this course. There will be no grade rounding or grade negotiation. If you earn 79.9% in the course your final grade will be a C+.

A = Your work is thorough and insightful while fulfilling all assignment requirements in an exceptional manner. Well written and free of typos and grammatical errors.

B = Your work is thorough with some insights while fulfilling all assignment requirements in a better-than-average manner. Generally well written but with a few edits needed.

C = Your work is generally superficial and fulfills assignment requirements in an average manner. Poor writing with many edits needed.

D = Your work is poorly executed and doesn't meet the assignment requirements. Poor writing with many edits needed.

F = Work does not fulfill assignment requirements and demonstrates poor execution and writing.

## **Final Grading Scale**

A	94% – 100%
A–	90% – 93.9%
B+	87% – 89.9%
B	84% – 86.9%
B–	80% – 83.9%
C+	77% – 79.9%
C	74% – 76.9%
C–	70% – 73.9%
D	60% – 69.9%
F	0 – 59.9%

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## **Additional Course Policies**

### **Accessibility**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. For more information or assistance, you are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center, 346-1155; website: <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity is supported and valued at the University of Oregon. We respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals; reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, and intimidation; practice personal and academic integrity and expect it of others; and promote a diversity of ideas, opinions, and backgrounds.

### **Title IX**

The University of Oregon is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based bullying and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options, as confidential counselors are not required reporters. You can also visit the SAFE website at <https://safe.uoregon.edu/services> for more information. Each resource is clearly labeled as either "required reporter," "confidential UO employee," or "off-campus," to allow you to select your desired level of confidentiality.

### **University of Oregon Policy Statement on Equal Opportunity**

The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or any other extraneous consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance.

### **DACA**

The SOJC supports all students regardless of immigration status and country of origin (<https://president.uoregon.edu/statement-daca-and-support-students>).

For support, students can visit <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/dreamers/> or contact Justine Carpenter [justcarp@uoregon.edu](mailto:justcarp@uoregon.edu).

### **Food security**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support.

### **Inclement weather/emergency**

If any changes are needed because of inclement weather or an emergency, details will be posted on Canvas.

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### **Grievance/disputes**

Note that all grievances should first be brought to the professor/ GE, then if necessary to the sequence area director or graduate program director. If a student believes the grievance has not been satisfactorily settled, it should then come to the associate dean for undergraduate affairs if an undergraduate or to the senior associate dean if a graduate student.

### **Recording**

Unless specifically noted, no audio or video recording or photography of any kind are permitted during class.

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## **ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.