

VM 402-02 Seminar in Media Arts:  
Media Production Ethics and Social Justice  
Fall 2020  
T/R 4-5:45  
Classroom: T 604

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## **VM 402: SEMINAR IN MEDIA ARTS TOPICS: MEDIA PRODUCTION ETHICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:**

After an introduction to green, red, and yellow light ethics, emphasis will be given to ethical concerns which arise in *media production* in industry roles included writing, documentary production, casting, and more. Issues include discrimination, consent, deception, racism, pornography/First Amendment tensions, reputation, product placement, hate speech, conflict of interest, and social justice. Examples from film, Internet, video, audio, Journalism, Marketing, and Advertising. Includes screenings, discussions, debates, papers, and the building of "a community of justice". Special attention given to marginalized, "myth-represented" groups. **Prerequisites:** VM200 and Junior standing.

Although this specialized section of VM402 focuses upon ethical and cultural inclusion issues in Media Arts production, other sections of VM402 focus upon other topics. While issues in video, film, audio, new media/digital and photography are primary, issues and cases from neighboring fields such as journalism, public relations, marketing, and advertising are also considered.

VM 402 is designed specifically for seniors, although motivated juniors are welcome. Like astronauts who encounter "re-entry", seniors face re-adjustments to the "real world" and the ethical dilemmas faced in the communication arts industries, related businesses and institutions. In such arenas, where deadlines, economic pressures, employer expectations, and peer influence impinge, the individual may benefit from a personal and professional ethical framework. Throughout the term ethical issues involving social justice and inclusiveness are presented. Particular emphasis will be given to African-American case studies via video/film/reading and to Native American reading and discussion.

## **ISSUES FREQUENTLY ARISING DURING MEDIA PRODUCTION:**

Seven important issues you may confront in productions are listed below. We will be seeing examples of each with the intention of finding the best strategies for addressing them in the studio and on location.

1) **PRIVACY:** Are you encroaching upon the psychological and physical boundaries of others? Would you mind if you were treated in a similar manner? Does the person's public role (e.g. politician, celebrity, spokesperson) change the way you regard his or her privacy? Have you considered how privacy differs for people of different nationalities, religions, and cultures? Are you being reasonable, legal, and humane?

2) **DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER:** Are you depicting real people in a manner which might unfairly damage their reputation? If your motivation could be seen as malicious or vindictive, do you realize that your work might be considered "libel", which is illegal? Is your work satire or fiction, which grants you more freedom of expression, or can your work be interpreted as a factual demeaning of your subjects? Do you show them in a false light?

3) **RACE, GENDER, ORIENTATION, AND STEREOTYPE:** Are you depicting nationalities, religions, racial groups, women, the disabled, and other groups in ways which could promote prejudice, misunderstanding, or hate? Although we are told it is healthy "to laugh at ourselves", when is it unacceptable to laugh at others? How would you feel if your group(s) were depicted in this manner? Have you discussed your possible approach with spokespersons from that group? How might your humor be interpreted?

4) **OWNERSHIP AND APPROPRIATION:** If you would like money and acknowledgement for your work, why not also compensate and credit others for their work? How will you obtain permission from or give royalties to the other artists — musicians, writers, photographers, and others -- whose work you use? Have you consulted anyone about using copyright and public domain materials? Are you aware that **plagiarism** (theft of ideas and product) may occur in all forms of electronic media, not just in print? Are you following these rules of thumb: 1) "when in doubt, check it out" (with the human subjects officer) and 2) "when in doubt, spell it out" (in your credits or acknowledgments)?

5) **DECEPTION AND FRAUD:** Have you researched your claims for accuracy? Are you endorsing or promoting products that could be hazardous or include unannounced side-effects? Could your subjects claim that your editing, context, or "facts" are misleading? Do you present "the other side" if you convey allegations, accusations, or rumors? What is the difference between "artistic license" and "lying"?

6) **OBSCENITY AND OFFENSIVENESS:** while your poetic license and academic freedom are important, do you have the right to convert people into “objects” such as sex objects, objects of ridicule, or of morbid obsession? Is any of your material so grotesque, sacrilegious, or sexually controversial that you wish to consult your professor to see if you might be “crossing the First Amendment threshold”? Who will be in your audience? Children? People with weak hearts? People from other cultures? Do you think about the psychographics (mindsets, belief systems) of your audience?

7) **CONSENT:** When you ask a person to sign a consent form, do you take into account whether their consent is legal, genuine and valid? This question could lead to asking yourself if they are sane, literate, of age, sober, rushed or confused by you, medicated, and, in other words, able to fully understand the form and to foresee any known consequences of signing it? Are you helping the person to understand the form and your intentions for using their likeness, art, voice, child, pet, property, possessions and ideas?

## **SCOPE**

**MEDIA ETHICS:** Professional case studies, especially those in the first textbook, **MEDIA ETHICS: CASES IN MORAL REASONING**, are closely inspected before possible courses of action are debated. Theoretical grounding is equally significant: ethics is revealed to be a profound method of philosophical reasoning which shapes an intellectual discipline. Hence the course provides a balance between practical professional preparation and expanded thinking. Scholarly depth is encouraged in the two-month preparation of a researched term paper. Students are encouraged to use CDs, the Internet, DVDs, and VMA tools as part of their research but they must also use traditional scholarly texts and articles.

All major aspects of media arts-- digital, cable, film, audio, telecom, print, photography, advertising, public relations, marketing, journalism, etc., will be considered. Special subject areas--privacy, sources, censorship, political images and coverage, pornography, and others--will be given focused scrutiny. Issues of diversity – representation, discrimination, bias, type-casting, profiling, “myth-understanding” etc. will be of equal importance. While these issues penetrate numerous societies, some issues, such as privacy, slander, and pornography, do not exist in the same manner in all cultures. Moreover, each society has created a unique ethical system by which to control, temper, or tolerate problems in communication. We will be examining some of these differences to increase understanding and broaden our inventory of options for making ethical decisions.

## SCREENINGS

Since this is a Visual and Media Arts Class, the use of film, video, audio, hand-held, and photography “texts” are no less important than the readings . Although we may only have time to screen excerpts of longer works in class, you are welcome, encouraged, and sometimes assigned to see complete works in the library or on-line. Here is a PARTIAL list of some of the videos/films we might screen. I have made certain that most of these are available in the library, or on your CANVAS site.

Marketing Booze to Blacks (Targeting audiences of color)  
Killing Us Softly IV (Images of Women in Advertising)  
Say My Name (Image of Female Hip-Hop Artists of color)  
The Other Side of the News (Charles Stuart Hoax)  
Say Brother (Charles Stuart Hoax)  
Harvard Panel: The National Association of Black Journalists  
Women In the Media: Panel at American University  
The Celluloid Closet (Image of Gay and Lesbians in Hollywood)  
Fabulous (More recent version of Image of GLBT in Hollywood)  
Harmonica Man (Image of Elderly)  
Chinese Ballet (Image of Disabled)  
Reel Arabs (Images or peoples from the Middle East)  
Slaying the Dragon (“Myth-representation” of Asian and Asian-American Women)  
Talk Radio (the limits of free speech and the boundaries of hate speech)  
Money For Nothing (Ethical issues in the recording industry)  
The Passion of the Christ (Anti-Semitism in Hollywood)  
Night And Fog (understanding the Holocaust from historical documents)  
From the Heart of the Earth (Understanding the Cogi Indigenous people of the high Sierra)  
And Starring Pancho Villa (media distortions of race and history)  
Consumer Kids (marketing products to children)  
The Year of Living Dangerously (Indonesia Framed through the eyes of Australia)  
BarBQArea (black/white role reversal)  
Cyberhate (on-line racism and counter-racism)  
Cyberethics (what kind of regulation and “netiquette” is needed?)  
Growing Up On Line (cyber-bullying)  
Brother Outsider (Bayard Rustin’s contribution/LGBTQ/Race)  
Sankofa (Feature film presenting an INSIDER experience of slavery, political awakening)  
Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution (under-represented cultural history)  
People with Heart (The Korean-Native American arts exchange)  
Suffragette (Gender Equality)  
Where to Invade Next (Gender Issues and Michael Moore methods)  
Steve Jobs (deception/personal vs. professional)  
Trumbo (censorship/blacklist/defamation of character)  
Moonlight (LGBT/race/identity)  
Loving (inter-racial marriage, USA)  
A United Kingdom (inter-racial marriage, Botswana)  
Denial (Anti-Semitism trial)  
I Am Not Your Negro (race/civil rights/history/literature)  
Hidden Figures (intersectionality re racism; sexism; elitism)

The Circle (Privacy, human rights)  
Maudie (Disability/ability, gender equity)  
Detroit (Racism, violence, chauvinism)  
Beatriz at Dinner (Immigration/race/gender)  
Women In the Balcony (Gender/Jewish traditional patriarchy in Israel)  
In Between (Gender/Muslim women/LGBTQIA)  
Black Panther (Race/Gender)  
Marie Curie (Gender/patriarchy)  
The Handmaiden (Asian/LGBTQIA)  
BlacK K Klansman (Race/civil rights)  
The Green Book (Race, homophobia, civil rights)  
Bohemian Rhapsody (Bisexuality, race)  
The Hate U Give (Black Lives Matter, race)  
On the Basis of Sex (Sexism, legal discrimination)  
The Best of Enemies (Racial integration, civil rights)  
Bombshell (institutionalized sexual abuse; extreme journalism)  
Just Mercy (incarceration, race, and death penalty)  
The Song of Names (Anti-Semitism, Holocaust)  
Brian Banks (false accusation; penal system; gender; race)  
Jo-Jo Rabbit (Anti-Semitism)  
Official Secrets (national security; state deception; reputation; privacy)  
Harriet (race; slavery; gender)  
Seberg (privacy, reputation, race, gender)  
Madiba (apartheid/race)  
He Called Me Malala (gender/age/race/religion)

Some of the other 90 excerpts from previous classes may be introduced and explained later.

## **INCLUSION STATEMENT**

Every student in this class will be treated with respect as an individual without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, socioeconomic status, or national identity. Issues of diversity will be a part of class discussion, assigned material, and projects. The instructor will make every effort to create a comfortable and inclusive environment for all. If you have concerns or suggestions for improving the classroom climate, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor. You are also encouraged to visit our Center for Social Justice in the Walker Building and attend their special events. Please bring me your concerns, ideas, grade appeals, issues regarding diversity, and awareness of any parts of the class which you'd like to discuss. Inclusiveness of your voice and perspective is important to the class. Please feel most welcome.

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

- 1) **MEDIA ETHICS: CASES AND MORAL REASONING**, Christians, C. et al. (2020, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, Routledge)
- 2) **DOING THE RIGHT THING**, Cooper, T., (2020, Arima Publishing).

## **RECOMMENDED READING (NOT REQUIRED)**

- 1) A TIME BEFORE DECEPTION , Cooper, T, (1998, Clear Light Publishers)
- 2) THE NEW MEDIA NATION: INDIGENOUS PEOPLE & COMMUNICATION, Alia, V. (Berghan, 2010).

3) SPLIT IMAGE: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE MASS MEDIA, Dates, J., Howard University

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Press, latest edition available.

4 ) OUT OF THE PAST: GAY AND LESBIAN HISTORY FROM 1869 TO  
THE PRESENT by Neil Miller (Vintage Books, 1995)

5) STRANGERS DROWNING by Larissa MacFarquahar. (Penguin Press, 2015).

6) THE POWER OF IDEALS: THE REAL STORY OF MORAL CHOICE by  
William Damon and Anne Colby. (Oxford University Press, 2015)

7) THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE: Sidgwick and Contemporary  
Ethics by Peter Singer and Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek. (Oxford  
University Press, 2014).

8) HIGH NOON ON THE ELECTRONIC FRONTIER: edited by  
Peter Barlow. (MIT Press, 1996).

9) COMMUNICATION ETHICS AND GLOBAL CHANGE, by Cooper, Christians,  
White, and Plude. (Longman, 1989).

10) The bibliographies at the end of each text are a useful starting point  
for your research. A much larger bibliography entitled TELEVISION  
AND ETHICS (Cooper et al, Hall, 1988) is on reserve at the library.

11) Many germane newsletters and journals such as THE JOURNAL OF  
MEDIA ETHICS, HOWARD JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION, WORLD  
NEWS DIGEST, WACC JOURNAL, MEDIA DEVELOPMENT, MEDIA ETHICS,  
NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER, COLUMBIA JOURNALISM  
REVIEW, NIEMAN REPORTS, ETHICA, MEDIA ETHICS NEWS,  
WASHINGTON JOURNALISM REVIEW, TV AND VALUES, etc., are  
available in the periodicals room of the library or, in some cases,  
in my office. Please also visit [www.mediaethicsmagazine.com](http://www.mediaethicsmagazine.com).

11) Any hand-outs will be available to you at the CANVAS website  
as explained in class.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Each class member will be graded on class participation and the prompt completion of these four assignments:

1. The midterm exam will be discussed in class two weeks prior to the actual exam. Later a sealed envelope will be distributed to each student with specific questions assigned for a three minute oral presentation and typed exam to be turned in at the beginning of a later class to be discussed in class.
2. The final exam will last up to 90 minutes, will be cumulative, and will be discussed one month prior to the exam.
3. Debates will be discussed during the second week of classes and will total eight minutes in length, one two minute speech per person (side) and two one minute rebuttals per person (side). Each student may choose a topic, and either support or argue against the resolution. Students may choose a topic first come, first served during the first week of classes. Later all remaining topics will be randomly assigned. Debates should be well prepared from the standpoint of research, rehearsal, and persuasiveness. A hand-out is posted on Canvas explaining how debates are graded.
4. Term papers will each provide a ten-page (or web site equivalent) study of the media **production** ethics of a country other than that of your own origin and citizenship. You will be asked to represent your nation at a small United Nations style gathering or your culture and a “cultural summit” and to advocate those aspects of your media ethics system that you deem worthy of emulation by other countries or cultures. Documentation such as codes, policies, best practices, and guidelines from “your” country or culture is essential and must be appended to the ten plus pages of text. Much more detailed explanation and help will be provided in class. A special VM 402 website discussed in class was created to help with term paper research and three hand-outs will help students prepare and find sources.

**PARTICIPATION**

Since this is a seminar, attendance and participation are very important to the entire class. After two free cuts, any absences or major lateness that are not due to sustained severe health problems, adversely affect one’s participation grade. In a small seminar, each person’s presence or absence, silence or oral contribution, is noticeable. We are each responsible for the quality of our learning and for the energy quotient of the class. Thus participation is worth 200 points. Also see “student attendance policies” at end of this syllabus.

**EXTRA CREDIT**

Four a/v assistants, one for each month of the term, will receive minor extra credit for helping cue up video clips, slides, etc., on a strictly voluntary basis. Each is responsible for contacting a replacement during an absence.

September \_\_\_\_\_  
October \_\_\_\_\_  
November \_\_\_\_\_  
December \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Back-up #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Back-up #2 \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADING**

Debate.....	100 points
Participation.....	200 points
Midterm/sealed envelope.....	150 points
Term paper/oral presentation.....(200+50).....	250 points
Final exam.....	300 points

**TOTAL**

**1000 points**

Divide this total by 10 for your percentage grade. Grades may be curved depending upon overall grade distribution and individual progress.

## **CLASS FORMAT**

### **TUESDAY**

- 1) Announcements and introductions
- 2) Screenings: film, video, audio, or slides with commentary

### **THURSDAY**

- 1) Debate
- 2) Discussion
- 3) Lecture/analysis
- 6) Assignment/class mechanics/homework/questions

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Office hours are listed atop page one of this syllabus. You may prefer to call me at 824-8812 during office hours. Or, if office hours are inconvenient, please feel free to make a separate appointment. Feel free to e-mail me at any time and, if you have an emergency, please mark the e-mail URGENT, and in your message, please let me know which phone number you wish me to call to reach you if necessary.

## **PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

The theft of another's ideas, research, is a serious offence. Should you submit research by someone else, cheat on an (ethics !) exam, or similar you will automatically fail the course and be presented to the Dean for additional discipline by the college. The use of papers purchased, commissioned, or "co-authored" from or with "research companies", websites, and similar is plagiarism. See separate hand-out, Emerson College student handbook, and [www.emerson.edu/student\\_life/index.cfm?doc\\_id=1006](http://www.emerson.edu/student_life/index.cfm?doc_id=1006).

## **INFORMAL CONTRACT**

A separate handout entitled “your informal contract” will be on Canvas that thoroughly explains my expectations regarding your classroom performance and behavior. It is important that you know at the outset that late papers will not be accepted, that missing an exam without medical documentation means failure, and that there are classroom policies which will answer your questions about course logistics. “If in doubt, check it out” (i.e. see me!)

## **CELLPHONE AND LAPTOP POLICY**

If you wish to use your cell, please do so only outside the classroom where you will not disturb others. Please turn off your ringer prior to entering the classroom. No laptops or hand-held devices may be used in class except during breaks. They must be stored and out of sight. Please make sure no audio may be heard nor images may be seen via your laptop, IPHONE, or similar devices. Thank you.

## **TITLE IX AT EMERSON COLLEGE**

Emerson College strongly opposes any form of sexual harassment by and toward any members of our community. It strongly supports the Provisions of Title IX and any other laws and policies which prohibit sexual and other harassment. I have taken the TITLE IX training offered at Emerson College and can be considered a resource who can forward all concerns to the appropriate officers of the College. This class and related activities such as office hours, field trips, small group meetings, etc. should be considered “no tolerance zones” regarding words or actions of sexual misconduct. If you have been harassed in any way, please see me or go directly to our Title IX office in the Transportation Building.

## **COURSE/INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION**

At various times during the semester, the professor may ask you to briefly and anonymously evaluate the class to help make adjustments to improve instruction. At the end of the semester 15 minutes will be set aside for you to concurrently use the standard Emerson on-line evaluation forms during class. All evaluation processes will be explained and encouraged.

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

<u>A/V</u>	<u>Week of</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assn. Due/Discussion</u>
BP:Vanguard P (10) ENRON 13, TRTH	R S 3	Age of Enron; Syllabus; Cultural diversity introduced	Choose debate/buy texts ATBD; Intro. & Ch. 1 Bivins comics
1984 (20) BT (20) YAP (20) EOS 9 (10)	T S 8  R S 10	The spectrum & acceleration of media ethics issues of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century (R: NO AN. - APP) Dyads-Reich-Goods	Know Syllabus; 1984 essay (a) Choose Debate
MCL (10) L&R (10) ARC (10) TV P/D (10) SB (10) DIBucket MTM:Food Harmonica/ Ballet TPOTC	T S 15  R S 17	Welcoming perspectives, cultures, and philosophies; toward multicultural understanding. RESOLVED: The Anti-Defamation League is correct in stating that Mel Gibson should have met with their representatives and re- edited <b><i>The Passion of the Christ</i></b> prior to its release to avoid both the perception and the possible effects of cinematic anti- Semitism.	Text 1, Intro & Ch. 1 Debate; Explain term papers (Dominion Case)  Pro— Con—
M&C STUART (30) CULT. DIV I The Hate U giv	T S 22  R S 24	Ethics defined: conflicting values & loyalties. Conflict of interest, motivation and institutional racism. Resolved: Mass media coverage of the Stuart murder was substantially motivated and characterized by racial prejudice.	Midterm discussed Stuart essay  Pro— Con—
JOBS CYBERH (30) LOTI: CS (30) CYBERE(15) Growing Up:Cby\\yberB 2 Sp Reel A	T S 29  R O 1	New media technologies and business realities: Term paper logistics, ideas and web site brainstorming; cyberclass resource e-mail.  CULT . DIVERSITY #2	Read case study; Study web site

<u>A/V</u>	<u>WEEK OF</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
\$40 T R SU&S SayMN	T O 6  R O 8	Audio ethics  CODES OF ETHICS: Panacea or prohibition? Resolved: Media codes of ethics do more harm than good.  <b>MIDTERMS HANDED OUT</b> <b>Term paper topics approved – final deadline</b>	H-O: Barney & Black; Elliott,  PRO-- CON--
GAND. SHATT (11) PACK OF (30), MOONL; HIDFIGS; 2SPIRITS DRAGON BOHRHAPS	T O 13  R O 15	Truth, distortion, and deception  <b>MIDTERMS DUE- TUESDAY</b> <b>4 presentations</b>  <b>MORAL EXEMPLARS - #1</b>	MIDTERMS DUE  Text 2, Intro and Chapter 7
MBTB (17) SL (30) CON. KIDS SKUS 3 (15) SOS.com GreatestMov.	T O 20  R O 22	Advertising, targeting audiences by race, gender, and age, from hyperbole to hype (special goodies) Resolved: It is ethical to produce advertising which targets audiences by race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and class.	HO -28 & 31 Text 1-- Advert. Chapt.; TBA PRO-- CON--
Mandel WAG (10) DVD3 TYOLD (45) ASPanchoV (11) BARBQAR Lov UNITED KING	T O 27  R O 29	EXEMPLARS#2 (Thinking groups) Resolved: Since acting is fictional by nature, casting should take into account only the talent and availability of the performer, not the person's race, gender, and orientation.  PRO--                      CON-	Text 2, Chapter 11
DB, SNEAK DIRT, EYEINSKY MM (B4C) Priv. slides	T N 3 R N 5	<b>Privacy, reputation</b> Open Forum C.D. # 3; Term paper format/present. prep. (Thinking groups?)	

<p>FABULOUS Afghan (1,2)  W2IN Playing C. Game O. Joystick W.</p>	<p>T N 10 R N 12</p>	<p><b>NO CLASS</b> (Wed. Schedule – Veterans Day)</p> <p>Resolved: the ends justify the means - Since Michael Moore chooses alleged "unethical" people (e.g. "Roger", President Bush. NRA and other gun enthusiasts) for his subjects, he is also entitled to use questionable ethical techniques - ambush interviews, decontextualized "facts", one-sided research, etc.- to present documentary portraits of those subjects.</p> <p>(Dyads/Reich/Goods)</p>	<p>ATBD, Ch. 3</p> <p>PRO- CON-</p>
<p>SM (5) N &amp; F (12) POPLas (1-4).</p>	<p>T N 17 R N 19</p>	<p>Censorship, pornography, indecency, and offensiveness.</p> <p><b>TERM PAPERS DUE PRESENTATIONS</b></p>	

<p>Malal Fabulous Playing C; Game O; Joystick</p>	<p>T N 24 R N 26</p>	<p>Exemplars #3</p> <p>Resolved: In light of the deaths of Raphael Schumaker (2016), Sarah Elizabeth Jones, (2014), Vic Murrow (1983), Brandon Lee (1973), and several other adults, children, and thousands of animals, all production and performance directors and producers must be fully accountable and sacrifice all attempts at realism which jeopardize human and animal safety.</p> <p><b>THANKSGIVING/NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING</b></p>	<p><b>Text #2, Chapter 12</b></p> <p>Pro:</p> <p>Con:</p>
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On the Basis of.. Marshall BRO O. Gand TheLETS C.D. #2	T D 1	Review for Final Exam/Chapter 4; Moral exemplars	ATBD, Chapter 4
	R D 3	Open Forum and screening/ Final Q&A/Dyads/Reich/goods	
COGI LIVE NOBEL	T D 8	<b>Final Choices: Real World Ethics</b>	Text 2, Chapter 13
	R D 10	EXAM PREPARATION AND TBA	COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW
	T D 15	<b>Final exam</b>	

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Emerson is committed to providing equal access and support to all students who qualify through the provision of reasonable accommodations, so that each student may fully participate in the Emerson experience. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services at [SAS@emerson.edu](mailto:SAS@emerson.edu) or [617-824- 8592](tel:617-824-8592) to make an appointment with an SAS staff member. Students are encouraged to contact SAS early in the semester. Please be aware that accommodations are not applied retroactively. Confidentiality will be fully honored whenever requested.

**HONORS:** Honors students who are counting the course for honors work should meet privately with the instructor during the first two weeks of class to ensure that additional work is agreed to by appropriate parties including Professor Wendy Walters.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Any assignment which is turned in late will receive a zero grade UNLESS a sustained emergency beyond the student's control and which terminated academic work for several days prevented completion of the work. If a student experiences an emergency (i.e. is coming down with a serious long-term illness, has a parental death, is in an accident requiring days of hospitalization, has a serious fire or flooding in one's apartment, etc.) which is documented by a relevant professional, the student and professor will discuss at the very earliest convenience whether an emergency deadline extension is warranted and how long it will last. This communication must occur prior to the assignment deadline unless the student remains so seriously ill throughout the entire time that communication is impossible.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICIES:**

### **FACULTY ASSEMBLY POLICY:**

Faculty Assembly passed a resolution recommending that instructors adopt the following attendance policy for all undergraduate courses. For courses meeting twice a week, 3 unexcused absences would result in a failing (F) grade. For courses meeting three times a week, 5 unexcused absences would result in a failing (F) grade. It was pointed out, that during the first two weeks of classes, students are still "shopping" and have not yet realized their course selections; therefore instructors may want to start counting absences after the first two weeks of classes.

### **COLLEGE POLICY:**

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly and are responsible for all work done in their classes while they are absent. Individual instructors determine the number of times a student may be absent or tardy before a grade is lowered. Students are responsible for notifying the instructor in advance of unavoidable absences. Students must adhere to individual instructors' attendance policies. Attending an out-of-class activity or event for another course may not be used as an excuse to disregard a given class's attendance policy. A faculty member may not require a student to attend specified out-of-class activities that conflict with the student's schedule for another class.

In addition, Massachusetts state law requires that any student who is unable, because of religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such requirement. The student will receive an opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work requirement which may have been missed because of such absence on any particular day provided, however, that such make-up examination or work does not create an unreasonable burden upon the College. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available this opportunity to the student. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who takes advantage of these provisions.

### **VISUAL AND MEDIA ARTS DEPARTMENT:**

Any student enrolled in a course in the Department of Visual and Media Arts who does not attend class during the first four class hours -- and who has not made prior arrangements with the instructor -- may be dropped from the class to make room for students on a waiting list for the course. This action can take place, at the instructor's discretion, regardless of any prior registration. The student will be re-admitted only with the approval of the course instructor, and if there is still room for an additional student in the class.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course you will initiate or increase the following mental skills and critical processes:

1. Identify and examine basic assumptions that underlie specific value judgments
2. Understand, analyze, and appraise aspects of systematic moral analysis as exhibited in the thinking of key philosophers from multiple cultural traditions.
3. Confront moral issues on the theoretical level, not just as case studies or problems faced in the workplace framework of politicians, religious leaders, journalists, community activists, and other professionals.
4. Identify voices, experiences, and contributions of groups historically underrepresented in the U.S. and the enduring legacies of such underrepresentation.
5. Foster an understanding of the connections between diversity and economic, social, and political power and inequality in the United States, and the voices, experiences, and contributions made by historically underrepresented groups within the United States.
6. Investigate one or more unfamiliar social and cultural paradigms in order to become more aware of and sensitized to cultural interactions.
7. Learn about and then role play others within different cultures to seek to understand and become more sensitized to their history, perspective, and voices.
8. Accrue appreciation for how many media outlets perpetuate and amplify “myth understanding” about race, gender, sexual preference, and many other areas.
9. Consider positive alternatives and initiatives for deeper understanding of both human oneness and cultural uniqueness.
10. Examine overlapping areas within the fields of ethics and cultural diversity to aspire to build a community of justice both within the classroom and beyond.
11. Consider how traditional philosophical thinking, as discovered through primary sources, once understood, may be applied to the practices within specific professions, including the communication professions associated with the departments and majors at Emerson College.
12. Think more critically and philosophically about ethical issues which are encountered first hand in life and second hand as an informed citizen voting upon and reading about the issues of one’s society.
13. Develop reasoned arguments and counter-arguments for moral thinking rather than rely upon opinion.
14. Think seriously about the moral and ethical implications of one’s own actions both within and beyond the classroom.
15. Develop appreciation for ethical systems beyond those from one’s own background whether or not one agrees with or has familiarity with the cultural context and values undergirding the multiple ethical perspectives presented in

class. Use specific ethical tools such as Potter's Box and Kant's Imperatives when conducting ethical analysis.

16. Re-examine the assumptions behind one's personal ethical decision-making and begin to either: 1) more logically undergird and defend such assumptions or 2) develop and systematically defend new assumptions and corresponding ethical positions.
17. Learn differences between the "emic" (insider) and "etic" (outsider) view of peoples, places, classes, genders, and age groups.
18. Suggest strategies for minimizing and countering reductive and inaccurate images and narratives of many groups and peoples.
19. Understand the limits of free speech regarding hatespeech, libel, slander, and other forms of defamation whether of groups or individuals.
20. Continue building essential academic skills including critical thinking, academic writing, reading scholarly texts, conducting independent research, and building classroom community with uncommon respect for all voices.

## **PRESENTATIONS/PANELS/GUEST SPEAKERS**

In this and other classes I may bring in speakers or stage panels and presentations by leaders in various cultural and, for example, marginalized gender identify or sexual preference (e.g. bisexual, transgender) communities. All details and logistics will be explained in advance and while attendance in other classes or presentations (e.g. by our Office of Diversity & Inclusion and Adventures In Ethics series) cannot be mandatory, some will be highly recommended. Often we also have a package deal arrangement with Arts Emerson and others to see special theater dealing with issues of diversity, inclusion, difference, and media ethics.

