



MA in International Studies on Media, Power and Difference

COURSE PLAN

Name of the subject: The Ethics of Mediation: Difference and Power

Subject code: 31978

Term: First

Type: Core

Number of credits: 7.5 ECTS credits

Teaching language: English

Teaching staff: Dr Núria Almiron, Dr Ruth Rodríguez, Dr Manel Jiménez and Blanca Fullana

1. Overview

This introductory subject for the Master in International Studies on Media, Power and Difference focuses on the core concepts and approaches underpinning the programme and provides practical perspectives on applying the ethics of mediation to the fields of journalism, film and audiovisual studies, and advertising and public relations.

To this end, first, it will examine existing approaches to understanding media as mediation vehicles with an unavoidable ethical responsibility. This will be done by studying the work of authors who argue that one of the crucial moral challenges in the global media landscape is our relationship to the different, the unfamiliar, the other. It will likewise explore critical political economy approaches, which acknowledge that the dialectics of mediation is a non-linear process that cannot be reduced to merely transmitting messages. This non-linear process includes asymmetric interrelations that can only be explained through the analysis of power relations. Finally, this first part of the subject will address the concepts of difference, diversity, unlikeness and the discourse of strangeness in opposition to sameness, likeness and fellowship. As this opposition lies at the core of violence and conflict in society, media and mediation play a crucial role in the quest for social justice.

The second part of the subject will address how the ethics of mediation are specifically applied in the fields of journalism, film and other audiovisual works, and advertising and public relations. In this regard, it will examine the fundamentals of professional deontology, the basic legal framework and the main trends in self-regulation in the areas of news, documentaries and film, and persuasive communication.



2. Learning outcomes

By the end of the subject, students should be able to:

Critically assess and contribute to the most relevant current debates concerning media production, representation, cultural consumption and diversity.

Assess the keys to interpreting globally unjust phenomena related to the distribution of power.

Define, evaluate and critique the different conceptual frameworks for diversity and communication policy, as well as the resulting media practices.

Identify the ways in which difference and diversity are experienced and projected in socio-political and cultural contexts.

Conceive of and produce flexible and fluid texts on difference and diversity from an ethical perspective.

Critically analyse the communication phenomena surrounding the issue of difference and diversity.

Incorporate inclusive communication techniques into their daily production routines.

Apply inclusive communication techniques to the design of action proposals based on respect for difference and diversity.

3. Subject outline

Programme

1. Introduction

The main approaches to the ethics of mediation. The role of power relations in communication processes. Key concepts: difference, diversity, otherness. The major –isms: racism, classism, sexism, speciesism. Communication for social justice.

2. Journalism and news

History of the ethics of mediation in news and journalism. Key concepts. Deontological codes and the main trends in regulation and self-regulation in news coverage. News for social justice.

3. Documentaries and films

History of the ethics of mediation in documentaries and films. Key concepts. Deontological codes and the main trends in regulation and self-regulation in documentaries and film. Documentaries and films for social justice.

4. Advertising and public relations

History of the ethics of mediation in persuasive communication. Key concepts. Deontological codes and the main trends in regulation and self-regulation in persuasive communication. Persuasive communication for social justice.

4. Assessment

Assessment systems	Weighting
Participation in discussions and seminars and completion of class assignments	40%
Paper	60%
TOTAL	100%

Students must meet the minimum attendance requirements and complete two marked tasks:

Attendance: Students must attend 80% of the sessions to be eligible for assessment (i.e. proper justification will be required for more than 2 missed sessions).

Task 1. Participation in discussions, seminars and class assignments: Students must complete any tasks assigned by the instructors in class to prepare for the next sessions.

Task 2. Paper: Students must write a 2,500 word (max.) essay on a subject related to one of the sections of the course (theoretical framework, journalism and news, documentaries and film, advertising and public relations) to be handed in by **18 December via the Moodle**. They must discuss the preparation of the paper with the appropriate instructor the last week of the course in individual tutoring sessions.

5. Bibliography and teaching resources

5.1. Basic bibliography

Christians, C.G.; Fackler, M.; Richardson, K.B.; Kreshel, P.J.; and Woods, R.H. Jr. (2013). *Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning*. New York: Routledge. 9th Edition.

Silverstone, R. (2007). *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis*. Cambridge: Polity.

5.2. Further reading

Alsius, S.; Alcalá, F.; Figueras, M.; Mauri, M.; Rodríguez, R.; Salgado, F.; Singla, C.; and Tulloch, C. (2010). *The Ethical Values of Journalists: Field Research among Media Professionals in Catalonia*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.

Arnett, R.C. (2011). *Communication Ethics in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt's Rhetoric of Warning and Hope*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Arnett, R.C.; Harden Fritz, J.M.; and Bell, L.M. (2009). *Communication Ethics Literacy: Dialogue and Difference*. London: Sage.

Bertrand, C-J. (2000). *Media Ethics and Accountability Systems*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cheney, G.; May, S.; and Munshi, D. (Eds.) (2011). *The Handbook of Communication Ethics*. New York: Routledge.

Choi, J. and Frey, M. (Eds.) (2013). *Cine-Ethics: Ethical Dimensions of Film Theory, Practice, and Spectatorship*. New York: Routledge.

Chouliaraki, L. (2006). *The Spectatorship of Suffering*. London: Sage.

Chouliaraki, L. (2013). *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-humanitarianism*. London: Sage.

Christians, C.G. and Merrill, J.C. (Eds.) (2009). *Ethical Communication: Moral Stances in Human Dialogue*. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press.

Couldry, N.; Madianou, M.; and Pinchevski, A. (Eds.) (2013). *Ethics of Media*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Curran, J. (2002). *Media and Power*. New York: Routledge.

Eberwein, T.; Fengler, S.; Lauk, E.; and Leppik-Bork, T. (Eds.) (2011). *Mapping Media Accountability – in Europe and Beyond*. Köln: Halem.

Fawkes, J. (2015). *Public Relations Ethics and Professionalism: The Shadow of Excellence*. New York: Routledge.

- Fengler, S.; Eberwein, T.; Mazzoleni, G.; Porlezza, C.; and Russ-Mohl, S. (Eds.) (2014). *Journalists and Media Accountability: An International Study of News People in the Digital Age*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Fitzpatrick, K. and Bronstein, C. (Eds.) (2006). *Ethics in Public Relations: Responsible Advocacy*. London: Sage.
- Fortner, R. and Fackler, P.M. (Eds.) (2011). *The Handbook of Global Communication and Media Ethics*. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley Blackwell.
- Johannesen, R.L.; Valde, K.S.; Whedbee, K.E. (Eds.) (2008). *Ethics in Human Communication*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland. Sixth Edition.
- Marlin, R. (2013). *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*. New York: Broadview Press.
- Martín-Barbero, J. (1993). *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations*. London: Sage.
- Muller, D. (2014). *Journalism Ethics for the Digital Age*. London: Scribe Publications.
- Plaisance, P.D. (2013). *Media Ethics: Key Principles for Responsible Practice*. London: Sage.
- Pruchnic, J. (2014). *Rhetoric and Ethics in the Cybernetic Age: The Transhuman Condition*. New York: Routledge.
- Shaw, D. (2012). *Morality and the Movies: Reading Ethics through Film*. Maiden, New York: Continuum Books.
- Spence, E. and Van Heekeren, B. (2004). *Advertising Ethics*. New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Waldman, E. (Ed.) (2011). *Mediation Ethics: Cases and Commentaries*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- Ward, S.J.A. (2011). *Ethics and the Media: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ward, S.J.A. (Ed.) (2011). *Global Media Ethics: Problems and Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley Blackwell.
- Wilkins, L. and Christians, C. (2009). *The Handbook of Mass Media Ethics*. New York: Routledge.
- Wyatt, W. (Ed.) (2014). *The Ethics of Journalism: Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Influences*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co.

5.3. Academic journals

Journal of Mass Media Ethics, Taylor & Francis

Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society, Emerald Group

Journal of Media Law and Ethics, University of Baltimore School of Law

Visual Communication, Special issue: The ethics of images, 12(3) (2013)

5.4. Other learning resources

Center for Journalism Ethics (University of Wisconsin):

<https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/>

Ethics of Journalism (Pompeu Fabra University):

<http://www.eticaperiodistica.org/index.php>

6. Methodology

The subject will consist of a combination of:

- General and theoretical class presentations by the professor
- Seminars in which readings and case studies will be discussed
- Personal enquiry and individual research and readings
- Personal tutoring

7. Schedule of activities

WEEK 1	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Introduction: the ethics of mediation	Reading and preparation of ideas regarding ethics and communication.
WEEK 2	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Introduction: power and communication	Reading and preparation of ideas regarding the political economy of communication
WEEK 3	
<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Introduction: key concepts and major -isms	Reading and preparation of ideas regarding the political economy of communication

WEEK 4	
<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Journalism and news	Reading and preparation of ideas Discussion of a case study
WEEK 5	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Journalism and news	Reading and preparation of ideas Discussion of a case study
WEEK 6	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Documentaries and films	Reading and preparation of ideas Discussion of a case study
WEEK 7	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Documentaries and films	Reading and preparation of ideas Discussion of a case study
WEEK 8	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Advertising and public relations	Reading and preparation of ideas Discussion of a case study
WEEK 9	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Advertising and public relations	Reading and preparation of ideas Discussion of a case study
WEEK 10	
<i>Classroom activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>
None	Individual tutoring sessions to discuss the preparation of the final paper. Students will meet with the instructor responsible for the chosen topic: theoretical approaches (Núria Almiron), journalism and news (Ruth Rodríguez), documentaries and film (Manel Jiménez), advertising and public relations (Blanca Fullana)